

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind all Members that although remarks in debate may level criticism against the policies of the President and the Vice President or against the nominated candidates for those offices, still, remarks in debate must avoid personality and, therefore, may not include personal accusations or characterizations.

THE HUNGER RELIEF ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Madam Speaker, as somebody who is on the left, on the other side of the aisle, I want to speak about an issue I think both sides can agree on.

Madam Speaker, in August, many of us in Congress were delighted by the catered cuisine served at various events during our party conventions. Yet, while we dined, 31 million Americans were either hungry or living under the specter of hunger. The economy is strong, unemployment is at a 30-year low, welfare rolls have been slashed. Still, every day in America, despite welfare reform or, perhaps, as some would say, because of it, there are families who need and use food stamps to eat. Every day in America, despite welfare reform or, perhaps, again, because of it, many go hungry, more have poor health, great numbers of our children, far too many, are unable to learn because they do not have enough to eat.

As we near the end of this Congress, we have a chance to change that shocking and scandalous situation.

I am so proud to have joined 181 of our colleagues in the House and 38 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, in support of legislation that focuses on food and takes notice of this Nation's nutritional needs. The Hunger Relief Act, H.R. 3192 in the House and S. 1805 in the Senate will help one in 10 families in our Nation who are affected by hunger.

There is evidence of hunger in 3.6 percent of all households in America. According to the report from Bread for the World, entitled "Domestic Hunger and Poverty Facts," 31 million people live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. That number represents 1 in every 10 households in the United States. Close to 4 million children are hungry. Madam Speaker, 14 million children, 20 percent of the population of children, live in food-insecure homes. In food-insecure homes, meals are skipped, the size of meals are reduced; and again, according to the Bread of the World, sometimes the occupants of these homes go without food for a whole day.

More than 10 percent of all households in America are food insecure. Be-

cause there is such hunger and food insecurity, there is also infant mortality, growth stunting, iron deficiency, anemia, poor learning, and increased chances of disease. Because of such hunger and food insecurity, the poor are more likely to remain poor, the hungry more likely to remaining hungry, and the sick are less likely to get well soon. It seems strange that we must fight for food for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Madam Speaker, hunger is a condition of poverty. It is really time for us to stop picking on the poor. Less than 3 percent of the budget goes to feed the hungry, and it is well documented that when we use our resources for food and nutrition, the health needs of this Nation's poor, it does make a difference.

For more than 3 decades now, the Food Stamp program has been a cornerstone of America's fight against hunger, and the first line of defense. Over the years, the program has been steadily improving, with the elimination of the requirement that food stamps be purchased, being one of the most significant breakthroughs. While many, too many continue to confront food insecurity, the situation today is far better than it was in 1960 when the Federal Government first began to focus on food. Similarly, the health consequences of this Nation's programs have experienced marked improvement. The data on birth rate, physical growth, and anemia is striking.

For example, the data shows that over a 20-year period, the incidence of physical stunting among preschool children decreased by 6.5 percent; and the improvement in the Nation's nutritional status indicates that while we need to continue our work, we can change the course of malnutrition among the poor and the needy. Over a 10-year period, according to the data, the percent of low-income households that meet 100 percent of the recommended dietary allowance grew twice as much as the improvement in the general population.

We are making progress, but we still have a long ways to go. That is why, Madam Speaker, Congress should and Congress must pass the Hunger Relief legislation before we go home this year. It is the least we can do, indeed, while we have such great prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER GALE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding individual from my community. His name is Christopher Gale, he is 18 years old, and I have had the opportunity to spend some time with him over the last few days. Christopher was in Wash-

ington as part of the Boys and Girls Club National Youth of the Year competition. Christopher was the winner of the Midwest region. He is an outstanding young person from my hometown.

Mr. Speaker, he has been a member of the Boys and Girls Club of Holland, Michigan, for the last 9 years. Today, he attends Western Michigan University where he intends on getting his degree in education and returning to the Holland community to teach history in his high school. At high school, he has been active in football, wrestling, baseball; he is also the president of the marching band in his spare time.

At home, he has been the role model for his younger brother and has also provided stability for his mother, who battles a physical disability. In his family, they have learned that love, compassion, and understanding are what has brought unity and strength to their family.

While in Holland, Christopher has been very active in volunteering for his community. He was awarded the Mayor's Youth Recognition Award for volunteering, by demonstrating his commitment to his neighborhood and the greater community. He volunteers on Project Pride, which is a community-wide cleanup effort. He has also helped with Little League; he has also helped with the West Ottawa Migrant program. So in addition to tutoring at school, in addition to tutoring his younger brother, in the summer he also tutors migrant children whose parents are working in the fields and whose parents travel from state to state. He has shown a great love for the next generation.

He is an active member of the Keystone Club, using his leadership skills again, what would you expect, to mentor young members of the Boys and Girls Club.

Christopher has been an outstanding contributor to the Holland community, to the community of west Michigan, and I am glad to be able to rise today and give this tribute to him and to say thank you for all that you have done for the community of Holland, the community of west Michigan, and to say congratulations for being the Midwest region winner this year.

EDUCATION IN TODAY'S WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, who we are proud of as a Hoosier; and, as he has announced his retirement this year, he will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about, in a bipartisan way, an issue that I think is the most important