

what we are charging goods coming into our country. In theory, these two organizations, NAFTA and World Trade Organization sound good, but most of the farmers I talk to are not happy about implementation. They do not feel that we have a level playing field and that we have been aggressive enough in our trade practices. We need to open up markets and fully fund the programs that we have in place to help our marketing procedures.

The President needs fast track authority, the ability to negotiate quickly trade negotiations. In the last few years, we have had over 200 international trade agreements drawn up, and the United States has participated in 2, 2 out of 200. So the President needs to be given this authority. This is something that will be coming down the road fairly quickly.

We have touched on value-added agriculture. That is a big part of profitability. We have talked about ethanol, which will add 15 to 20 cents per bushel of corn; and ethanol could triple with MTBE going by the wayside.

We currently have 62 ethanol plants in the United States, and that should double or triple in the United States. We have 200,000 people employed in the ethanol industry, and \$4.5 billion a year being brought in by ethanol. And again, those numbers could double or triple very quickly, which would be a huge shot in the arm for agriculture.

Co-ops need to spring up. Some are occurring right now, where the farmer participates in all levels of the process, and, of course, makes more profit in the process. We think that value added is going to be very important.

Let me just touch on one other thing, and that is the research issue. So far the advantage that we have had in the United States has been technology in agriculture and infrastructure, the ability to move our products. As the gentleman from Kansas mentioned earlier, the infrastructure advantage is quickly disappearing. Other countries are beginning to move their products equally as well.

So the thing that leaves us with that is an edge in technology. So often groups that come before the Committee on Agriculture and present their ideas, research is sometimes left out. It is left out of the equation. For instance, in ethanol alone right now we can get a better conversion rate. It takes so much energy to produce a gallon of ethanol. The ethanol that is produced produces more energy than what it takes to produce the ethanol; but that could be double or even triple. We could use switchgrass and all kinds of products. We could plant switchgrass on CRP acres, which would make CRP more profitable. We need to keep working on BSE. Foot and mouth disease. Karnal bunt was mentioned earlier in regard to the wheat industry. This is a great concern. So I am a great advo-

cate of making sure that we can ensure and maintain our edge in technology.

Of course, one last comment would be simply the fact that we are losing young people and losing population in rural areas. The reason we are losing them is that they are going places where they can get more money. And the reason that they can make more money is there is more technology and more telecommunications. So the digital divide has hit rural America very hard.

People will tell you that roughly 90 percent of new industry is not willing to go into an area unless there is broadband service and high-speed Internet access. We have to do everything that we can to make sure that the rural America has the ability to provide those kinds of services which will allow us to keep more of our young people at home.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from South Dakota for allowing me to participate in this dialogue.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I would reinforce what the gentleman from Nebraska just said about technology. We do have a digital divide in this country. One of the things that separates us from more populated areas of the country is that having access to broadband services, high-speed Internet services, all of those things that improve the quality of life, allow for greater speed and efficiency in conducting business, and connecting rural areas with the rest of the world in a very timely and convenient way.

So as we talk about the issues that impact rural areas, obviously agricultural policy is at the heart of that, energy policy is at the heart of that. Also appropriate investment in our education for our young people, rural health care, quality of life, as the gentleman from Nebraska mentioned. We have aging population areas of this country which present some unique challenges and unique needs.

One of the things that we want to see is the young people have the opportunity, if they choose to, to grow up and raise their families in rural areas of this country, in our small towns and farms and ranches. We have seen a continual decrease in the number of farms across the country. In my State of South Dakota, we have about 32,000-plus farms and ranches. The average size of those operations is about 350 acres. So it is the small, it is the family farms that constitute the real backbone of the economy in rural areas. So many of these issues tie into that.

Again, as we talk about what we can do to improve the quality of life and provide incentives for investment there for the need for technology, I am co-sponsoring legislation that provides a tax credit for those companies that would go out and offer broadband services in rural areas. I believe we need

tax incentives in place for value-added agriculture, small-producer ethanol tax credit legislation which I am sponsoring. Another piece of legislation that will help lower the capital barrier to investment in agriculture, value-added-type industries; tax credit for producers that will encourage farmer-owned cooperatives so farmers can take more control of their own destinies and begin to create opportunities and increase in the overall prices that they receive for their products. These are all issues that impact the future of rural America.

Mr. Speaker, as I would simply say in closing again, I think if we look at the things that the Congress has to deal with, they are many. We have all of the appropriations bills, the Patient Bill of Rights, campaign finance reform, and they are all important. But when you come down to it, there is nothing more important to the future of this country than putting in place a solid farm policy and an energy policy for America's future that will lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy by utilizing the great renewable sources we have in America and finding those sources additional sources of energy.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to discuss these issues and look forward to engaging in colloquies with my colleagues on these important issues for all Americans, including those of us who choose to live in rural areas.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN AMERICA DENIED VITAL MEDICAL AND FOOD BENEFITS BECAUSE OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, this special order tonight is to highlight some injustices, an injustice that is not only unfair, but unwise. Tens of thousands of women and children in this country are denied vital medical and food benefits because of their immigration status. What does this policy say about our country, the richest in the world, especially now in these times of surplus? What kind of country are we building for our children when we say some are eligible and some are not, even though they have played by the rules?

These are people that are legal immigrants that have played by the rules. Today hundreds of thousands of women and children are left outside without assistance in times of need. These are people who are here legally. They have followed the guidelines. They have paid taxes. They work. They are individuals that are out there baby-sitting our

children, that pick up our trash. These people have been working hard, and they are strong Americans.

But in 1996, Congress decided that it was not the American benefit to provide safety net services to the communities that contribute so much. Last week we observed the first International French Citizen Day. It is only fitting that we recognize the contributions of this community and restore their access to the food and medical assistance that they need. I strongly believe that we need to look at this as a national public health issue.

When children go sick because their families cannot afford care, it is a public health issue. When pregnant women cannot get prenatal care, it is a public health issue. When pregnant women and young children do not have essential nutrition that they need, it is a public health issue. Ultimately it impacts on more than just our health, it hurts our educational system and economic possibilities.

□ 2130

Children who go to school hungry will not perform to the best of their abilities. Nor will they achieve the full potential that they have. We all lose when we do not provide them access to good quality care and good nutrition.

As I need to remind my colleagues, this is a Nation of immigrants, a Nation whose strength has come from hard work, of those who have fled persecution, from those who have left other countries to find better futures in our country, and who have left with their families and have come here. None of us would be here if it were not for immigration. Our country would have not had the academic, scientific, nor the industrial strength it does today without the contribution of our immigrants.

So why do we choose to raise obstacles in the way that we have? It is wrong. We should change our misguided policy as soon as possible. Numerous bills are pending in the House under the banner of health solutions for hardworking American families that offer solutions for correcting this problem. The Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act, H.R. 1143, introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families and Seniors Act, which is H.R. 2142, introduced by the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), and the Women Immigrants Safe Harbor Act, H.R. 2258, introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the gentleman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the gentleman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and others. These three bills help to basically address one of the problems that we have encountered.

Should we deny health care and nutrition to this baby? The answer should

be no. This baby should have access to good nutrition. We need to understand that these people are here legally and they have gone through the process. But because of our laws that we passed in 1996, we excluded them from participating in access to Medicare and the CHIP program that helps youngsters to be able to have access to insurance coverage; and in addition, we have excluded them from food stamps that are very critical, and in some cases we will find different families that have one that was born here, one that has come abroad, some that qualify, some that do not. So we have in our laws things that need to be corrected. Hopefully, we will have an opportunity to do this in this session.

In addition, the Women Immigrants Safe Harbor Act, which is the third piece of legislation that is important, we have a lot of women that are abused. They do not have the opportunity to be able to get the services that they need. It is important. The third piece of legislation that we are going to be talking about tonight is the Women Immigrants Safe Harbor Act. I want to take this opportunity to also thank my fellow colleague who is here from Texas, Congressman GENE GREEN from Houston, who has been in the forefront on a variety of issues. He just spent some time talking about the Patients' Bill of Rights. I know he is up here tonight to talk about these issues. I thank him for being here with us.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. I thank my colleague for yielding, Mr. Speaker, and also for his taking this hour, 9:30 Washington time, 8:30 Houston and San Antonio time. We have thousands of immigrants who come to this country with the hope that they will be able to fulfill their own American dream. They want to work, pay their taxes, and contribute to their and our society. They want to raise their children in a democracy where all people are created equal.

Unfortunately, our current laws do not treat all people equally, especially legal immigrants. Most Americans who pay their taxes can count on food stamps, Medicaid or other safety net programs if they fall on hard times. But as my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ), mentioned, the 1996 welfare reform act denies this kind of assistance to many lawfully present immigrants, including children up to 5 years. As a result, immigrants and their children who played by the rules and are here legally face the impending threat of hunger and sickness in a way that no other taxpayer in our country could fathom. Additionally, because of the 5-year ban, U.S.-citizen children in immigrant families are less likely to be enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP programs even though they are still eligible for these programs.

Mr. Speaker, each year immigrants pay approximately \$1,800 more in taxes than they use in services; but in their time of need we slam the door in their face and say, Come back when you've been here 5 years. This law is arbitrary, unfair and I think we should overturn it. That is why I am proud to speak in support as my colleague is of H.R. 1143, the Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act of 2001. I was a cosponsor of this in the last Congress and a cosponsor in this Congress. This legislation gives the States the option of allowing low-income legal immigrant children and pregnant women access to Medicaid and the State Children's Health Improvement Program, the CHIP program. If States opt to cover pregnant immigrant women and their children, then Federal matching funds would be available, because again if you are here legally and you are pregnant, we want that mother to have a healthy child. And if we provide those women with prenatal services, we will make sure that child is healthier; and in the long run it is to the benefit of all of us because we want healthy children.

I also support H.R. 2142, the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families and Seniors Act. This important legislation restores food stamp program eligibility for low-income legal immigrants and makes other modest improvements in programs for working families and our elderly. I represent a very urban district. We have Hispanic elderly who literally have been here almost their whole life, although in the last few years they have been becoming citizens at a record pace; but there still are individuals who have built this country and need this assistance.

I am also a strong supporter of the Women Immigrants Safe Harbor, or the WISH Act, which would provide vital support service to immigrant women who must endure the tragic and difficult situation of domestic violence. Immigrant victims of domestic violence are especially dependent on their abusers because of the restrictions passed in the 1996 welfare reform act. This law inhibits battered immigrant women from accessing the resources they need to leave their abuser. The WISH bill would allow legal immigrants who are victims of domestic violence to apply for critical safety net services such as medical and food assistance if they are victims of battery or extreme cruelty by a family member; and, two, demonstrate that receiving benefits would significantly lessen the risk of that battery.

Mr. Speaker, eligibility for vital support services should be based on need and not just your immigrant status. Many tax-paying legal immigrants work in low-wage jobs and their families could use these vital support services to continue to succeed in our country.

I want to thank my colleague for asking for this Special Order tonight to highlight the need for our immigrants because he is right, we are an immigrant Nation. Some of us just got here sooner than others. We need to be able to have them conform and succeed in our country because we all came from somewhere. That is why I am proud to be not only an American but also allow for legal immigrants to come and build this country, to continue to build this country like our forefathers did whether you be in San Antonio, Houston, or anywhere in our country.

I thank the gentleman for taking this time tonight.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) as he so eloquently indicated was the fact that we are talking about legal immigrants. We are not talking about individuals that are here illegally. These are people that went by the rules and played by the rules and abide by all the laws that we have. They have not become citizens as of yet and find themselves in this situation. At this time to make the system fair for everyone, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor these important pieces of legislation that I have mentioned.

Once again, it is the Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act, H.R. 1143 and S. 582; number two is the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families and Seniors Act, which is H.R. 2142; and the third is the Women Immigrants Safe Harbor Act. These are three important pieces of legislation that I feel will correct some of the injustices that exist out there and try to correct the situation where these individuals will be able to apply.

As the Congressman has also indicated, when we look at those two pieces of legislation, first the Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act, it is one about making sure that people get included into Medicaid. The legislation does not require any State to cover these immigrant children and pregnant women. It merely allows the State to draw down Federal moneys to be able to provide the care. And so if States choose to do that, they can; but it is not mandatory. Secondly, the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families, once again it allows the State the option of creating a fixed 6-month transitional food stamp benefit for those moving from welfare to work in addition to providing them access to those food stamps that are critical.

I want to take this opportunity to look at the specific problem that we have encountered with the existing piece of legislation. Current law bars legal immigrants, including pregnant women and children who arrive after August 22, 1996, for 5 years from receiving health benefits under Medicaid or under the CHIP program. Remember the CHIP program is that program of those youngsters, those families that

are working hard and making money but yet do not have access to any kind of coverage. They are not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid, but they are finding themselves that they could qualify for CHIP; but because of the fact that they are in this status that they arrived here after August 22, 1996, they have to wait 5 years. Children and pregnant women who are denied coverage through the CHIP and Medicaid 5-year ban usually can get other vital health care coverages.

We all know and recognize that preventive care minimizes emergency room visits, a costly and inefficient way of providing health care. More alarming is a recent Kaiser study that was done which reports that even though noncitizens are more likely to be without usual sources of care, they are less likely to go to emergency rooms than citizens. This particular study finds that if you are a noncitizen but here legally, you are less likely to have access to health care. This means that noncitizens are less likely to be able to have those opportunities, to be able to have preventive care, to be able to get to the emergency care when it is needed.

The second piece of legislation, the Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act, gives States the option to allow low-income legal immigrants, children and pregnant women to have access not only to Medicaid and CHIP, but it also looks in terms of access to additional services. When we look at the health of children in immigrant families, it is important that now the States are having a crisis in this particular situation. Certain States are burdened, in addition, more than others. Some have more noncitizens than others. So we see the disparity that exists.

According to a recent Urban Institute study, children of immigrants are three times as likely as children of natives to lack the usual sources of health care and more than twice as likely to be as fair or poor in health. For pregnant women and their children, regular prenatal care and early intervention saves lives and dollars as we all know. Children who have routine office visits and immunizations grow to be healthier adults with less medical complications. Children monitored by pediatricians are less likely to be victimized by chronic and communicable diseases. The 5-year ban on providing Medicaid and CHIP coverage has been the greatest barrier to health care for legal immigrants. As a matter of decency and as a matter of economics and as a matter of public health, legal immigrant children and pregnant women deserve the same access to essential health care coverage offered to citizens.

We are talking about people who also pay their taxes, and we are talking about individuals that are here legally.

This group has been singled out, and they are forbidden from accessing the very programs their tax dollars support. Studies show that each year, immigrants pay approximately \$1,800 more in taxes than they use in services. This is according to the National Academy of Science.

I would like to point out that the vast majority of immigrant families are mixed-status families that include at least one U.S. citizen and typically a child. The mixed status makes it impossible to have continued good continuity of services for the family. For instance, one foreign-born child may rely on emergency room care while a U.S.-born sibling might qualify for Medicaid.

And so you find those situations in particular households where you have the parents that are here legally, then have children and now find themselves that the children might qualify, but they do not or the other children do not. The same complications are true for accessing other services such as food stamps. The Second Harvest National Food Bank Network study that was recently done found nearly 38 percent of emergency food assistance for clients that were children. That is, 38 percent of emergency food assistance clients were children. So we find a situation where children are lacking good nutrition.

□ 2145

The food stamp program has played a vital role in helping low income working families, the elderly and the disabled make ends meet. It is a crucial support for hard-working families trying to make ends meet. For families who are in mixed immigrant status and that is where they have some kids that are citizens and some that are in the process of becoming citizens, it is the child that is hurt the most. Children who are U.S. citizens may not receive food stamps because their parents have immigrant status. Participation in the food stamp program among citizen children with legal permanent resident status declined 70 percent from 1994 to 1998. So we have actually had a decline in the participation from 1.35 million to 350,000. Twice the overall rate of participation declined in the food stamp program.

I think that a lot of this is attributed to the piece of legislation that we have now and we will hopefully be able to correct that. I find this appalling, especially when you consider the reports that document hunger among children in America. This year the Urban Institute reported that nationwide 37 percent of all children immigrants lived in families worried about encountering difficulties with purchasing food. Should we deny food and nutrition services to children that are babies and would you deny this particular baby the right to have access to good quality nutrition and to good care?

I think it is important for us that we be responsive and treat everyone in an equitable manner. So you have thousands of children throughout this country that find themselves in this particular loophole that I feel that needs to be corrected and these three pieces of legislation helped do that.

So as we move forward, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families and Seniors Act, which would restore food stamp benefits to qualified immigrants and primarily affecting families with children.

I also want to say a few words about a bill recently introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) on Women Immigrants Safe Harbor Act, which is H.R. 2258. This particular legislation allows legal immigrants, who are victims of domestic violence, to be eligible for public benefits such as food stamps and Medicare and SSI for the period of time long enough to allow them to escape from their abusers. I will say that time and time again we need to care for the most vulnerable in our communities. Individuals fleeing domestic violence certainly need our help. It is time to talk about compassion, about fairness, about keeping our community healthy. Now is the time to give legal immigrants a chance to escape their abusive relationships. Under the present situation, they cannot. Now is the time to restore both the medicaid and the CHIPS benefits to lawfully presenting in any event women and children. Now is the time also to restore the food stamp benefits to working families and children and the seniors who rely on the assistance in time of need.

I urge my colleagues to support the healthy solutions of American hard working families. This is the right thing to do for the immigrants, for the children and for all Americans.

I want to take this final opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to just indicate that it is three pieces of legislation that will help correct the problems that we see now. Once again, it is the Legal Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act that talks about only people that are legally in this country. I am not talking about illegal. These are people once again that went by the rules,

played by the rules and now they find themselves in that 5-year gap. I ask for assistance and for people to sign up.

Secondly, when it comes to nutrition and food stamps, we want to make sure that the Nutrition Assistance for Working Families and Seniors Act also is passed so they will have access to food stamps if they are in need.

Finally, the Women Immigrants Safe Harbor Act allows women that are being abused the opportunity to qualify for these programs as they flee from those situations that are not healthy.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order tonight.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business.

Mr. POMEROY (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness in the family.

Mr. PAUL (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of family illness.

Mr. PLATTS (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and the balance of the week on account of his father's illness.

Mr. SHADEGG (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of undergoing a medical procedure.

Mr. TOOMEY (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of personal business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legis-

lative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GUTKNECHT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REFERRED

A concurrent resolution of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. CON. RES. 54. Concurrent resolution authorizing the Rotunda of the Capitol to be used on July 26, 2001, for a ceremony to present Congressional Gold Medals to the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers; to the Committee on House Administration.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1029. An act to clarify the authority of the Department of Housing and Urban Development with respect to the use of fees during fiscal year 2001 for the manufactured housing program.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, June 26, 2001, at 9 a.m., for morning hour debates.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports and amended reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for official foreign travel during the third and fourth quarters of 2000 and the first quarter of 2001, by Committees of the U.S. House of Representatives, pursuant to Public Law 95-384, and for a miscellaneous group in connection with official foreign travel during the first quarter of 2001 are as follows: