

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily
Reflect Or Represent The Views Of
The Portland Observer

By a vote of 74-24, the U.S. Senate passed the right wing's so-called "welfare reform" bill.

After the bill goes to conference committee, it will go to President Clinton, where JaxFax hopes the President will exercise his veto power.

In Reverend Jackson's words, this bill is an act of "domestic violence" aimed directly at "the least of these," America's women and children. Jackson stated, "This is decision time--does Bill Clinton really want to be the one to drive the final stake into the heart of the 60-year, FDR/New Deal commitment to providing a safety net for our children? Bill and Hillary Clinton are long-time advocates for America's children--I cannot believe they want the history books to record that they allowed this mean-spirited, right-wing bill to become law."

The Senate's only African American woman kept her cool and stood tall when the heat was on. Senator Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL) took the floor to make the case against the bill (emphasis added), "Mr. Presi-

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

A shame on this Senate

dent, I believe that the Senate will rue the day that we pass this legislation. This day, this bill opens up the floor under poor children which in our lifetimes no child has ever had to fall below, no matter how poor, or how irresponsible, its parents might be. This day, in the name of reform, this Senate will do actual violence to poor children, putting millions of them into poverty who were not in poverty before.

"No one in the debate on this legislation has fully or adequately

answered the question: What happens to the children? They are, after all, the greatest number of people affected by this legislation.

"Mr. President, 67 percent of the people who are receiving welfare today are children, and 60 percent of those children are under the age of 6 years old. This bill makes a policy assault on nonworking parents, but it uses the children as the missiles and as the weapons of that assault.

"I believe that this bill does not--move in the direction of

reform. Reform would mean that we give people the opportunity to work, to take care of their own children. It would have a commitment to job creation, to adequate child care, to job training, to job placement. But this legislation, Mr. President, does none of those things.

"This legislation does not give able-bodied people a chance to work and support their own children. It simply is election-year politics, and rhetoric raised to the level of policy. I believe this bill cannot be fixed--not in conference committee, not on anybody's desk--and I believe that this bill is a shame on this Senate."

As Senator Moseley-Braun had pointed out earlier, there are 14 million people on welfare; 9 million of these are children, 60% below age 6. She reminded the Senate, to no avail, that 1.5 million American children would be pushed into poverty if this bill becomes law.

1.5 million more American children pushed into poverty...This truly is domestic violence. We urge the President to veto this bill. This is not about politics; it's about pre-schoolers.

perspectives

If You Say It, Say It Right

Let's hear it! Some resounding applause for all those parents, grand parents and guardians who are right on top of things when it comes to the proper education of their wards at an early age, within a day of the publication of last week's column "Watch Your Tongue," they were on the phone and FAX (Phone 284-7080, FAX 284-0484).

And it was quite rewarding for yours truly to have two Beaverton, Oregon parents, who have their kids enrolled in the Riggs Institute "Super Summer Spelling Camp," remark that they first got interested in phonics when attending my classes at Portland State University. Not a shabby accomplishment for an instructor who was teaching "Urban Economics at the time--mid 1970's."

These were interesting times when I was teaching a rather diverse class of minorities, public officials, social program administrators and a middle-class throng that simply wanted to know what the inner city (black) economic experience was like. These two white Beaverton parents remembered that at the time I was chairperson of the Minorities Teacher's Association--and that I was going hammer-and-tongs after some school administrators who thought phonics weren't necessary ("Good Speech is an economic necessity").

And as usual, I was taken to task for extolling the virtues of some (Mr. Michael Grice and his very excellent "Saturday Academy" program)--and for not pursuing the accomplishments of another program designed to enhance minority academic performance (EXCEL, recently combining forces with the National PTA).

Well, for one thing, the latter organization, unlike Mr. Grice, has never acknowledged my existence, let alone avail themselves of my services.

I had one caller to get rather ugly, "vitriolic" is the word, I believe. He wanted to involve me in the support of a House bill, "To Make English The Official Language Of The United States". He

came close to having a stroke when I used the description of Rep. Gene Green, D-Texas, "a phony-issue in search of a problem...this is nothing more than an attempt to try to divide us based on where we came from."

Obviously, the legislation is a racist slap at the Hispanic people, I reminded this gentleman that in the St. Louis neighborhood where I grew up there were an awful lot of

Polish, German and Italian immigrants who spoke little if any English--and no one advocated a law to "remedy a national problem."

In New York, of course, the cacophony of languages and dialects was (is) as strident as anywhere in the world, and the city has persevered quite well.

And, yes, I did catch Tony Browns "Chataqua Speech" "Gone are the days when a parent can launch a kid on a 17-year education journey (\$100,000 or more) and feel that his goal has been accomplished. Not so! "Tony launched into an ebullient description of his new, and latest, concept. He promises (already there?) to have 6 year-old can do." Praise be the saints, Tony. Is this another of those well-intentioned, but too-far-out programs of yours?

Closer to earth, much closer, is the feed back I get from parents who heeded my advice last year and bought a copy of "Roget's International Thesaurus: Fourth Edition (or later).

They swear by it, and many teachers, made curious by the sudden improvement in the performance of certain students, made inquiry and are now enthusiastic advocates for learning tool.

The \$15.50 you will spend for the paperback edition will be repaid a thousand times as you escalate all of your language and communication skills with this 'far-more-than-a-dictionary' publication.

Just the table of contents (Synopsis Of Categories) will provide you with a new way of looking at the world, its ideas and the objects in it and the processes that involve them. Get it and expand the horizons of your child and yourself.



By Professor McKinley Burt

Gop Assault On Medicare Turns 31

America Celebrates 31 Year of Medicare Security. Thirty one years ago today, Lyndon Johnson traveled to Harry Truman's house in Independence, Missouri to sign Medicare into law. Truman had spent 20 years of his life fighting for dignity and security for America's seniors, so it was fitting that the bill be signed in his home. Today we can all be thankful for the vision and persistence of all who fought for Medicare: a good idea that is still working well for seniors.

31 Years Of Opposition to Medicare: Bob Dole counts among his

proudest moments his vote in 1965 against the creation of Medicare.

12, voting against Medicare in 1965...because we knew it wouldn't

helped keep them out of poverty. Medicare has nearly doubled the number of seniors with health coverage, from 51% in 1964, to 99% today--and the poverty rate for seniors has dropped from 30% in 1966 to 12% in 1993. Americans who work hard, raise their families, pay their taxes and play by the rules deserve a healthy and secure retirement. That's why President Clinton and the Democrats in Congress will continue to fight the extremists in Congress, led by Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich who persist in trying to cut Medicare.

"I was there, fighting the fight, 1 of 12, voting against Medicare in 1965...because we knew it wouldn't work."

--Bob Dole

His now famous speech in 1995, some 30 years later, underscores his strident opposition to Medicare. "I was there, fighting the fight, 1 of the

work." Medicare Works. For 31 years Medicare has provided health insurance coverage to America's seniors

The Dole Policy: No Policy at all

BY THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

After 35 years in the Congress Bob Dole, the author of the Largest Peacetime Tax Increase In History, still doesn't have an economic plan. Now even the Republicans are getting testy over Dole's omission. Donald Lambro, Chief Political Correspondent of the Washington Times, wrote that "without fully formed economic growth plan to sell, Mr. Dole is essentially without an agenda,

without vision of where he wants to take the country."

Republican criticism of Dole's lack of an economic agenda is growing. A nervous Newt Gingrich, fearing the worst, is meeting with GOP leaders to draft an economic plan.

Dole Abandons Attack Strategy. At first, all Dole could do was attack President Clinton and his successful economic plan, which passed without a single Republican vote from the Dole/Gingrich Congress.

After a while, even Dole began to realize that attacking the Clinton Economic Plan which cut the deficit by 60% and created 10 million new jobs, was a loser. The Washington Post reported yesterday that Dole "has backed away from his earlier denunciations...in part because continued news of a stronger economy undermined the credibility of the charges."

Dole Tax Increase Largest In Peace Time History. The fact is,

the Dole Economic Plan is written in the stone of his 35 year career in Congress. Every credible source identifies the '82 Dole tax increase to be the largest in peacetime history--an increase so large it prompted Newt Gingrich to call Dole "a tax collector for the welfare state." Delivering an economic plan, based on a 35 year record of taxes, taxes and more taxes, is a stiff challenge indeed.

Drug prosecution efforts defended

BY MICHAEL D. SCHRUNK, MULTNOMAH COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

A number of questions have recently been raised regarding the drug prosecution policies of the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office.

It is clear to me that misinformation has been circulating, particularly regarding prosecution of drug dealers. I have prepared the attached article in the interest of clarifying the concerns I have heard. It is my hope that you will consider including this in your publication.

A recent front page article in The Oregonian did the public a disservice by representing that a major

shift in drug occurred. It has not. I want to assure the citizens of Multnomah County that they can be proud of the record and the policies on drug prosecutions in this county. To those who have interpreted local drug policies as "giving away the courthouse," we need only to look at the facts.

Drugs continue to plague our community. In 1995 there were 185 drug-related deaths in Oregon, the largest number ever. In the same year in Multnomah County we prosecuted over 4,500 felony drug cases. Approximately one-third of these cases involved drug distribution. Aggressive prosecution of these cases and recommendations to the court for strong penalties for those who sell drugs are a priority.

Sentences in drug cases vary according to the severity and criminal history of the defendant. One dealer, arrested for distribution, had multiple prior convictions for various felonies. Currently, he is serving a 16 month sentence in prison. Another, a first time offender caught selling a small amount of cocaine, was convicted of a felony distribution charge and sentenced to 30 days in jail, three years probation, and a long list of conditions including treatment. A third individual, arrested for possession, entered a drug diversion program through the Multnomah County Drug Court. Under the watchful eye of the court, he began the treatment program and, after one year, successfully graduated.

In the neighborhood we have established Drug Free Zones throughout the city to limit drug trafficking and close down drug houses. We have created a Drug Court which has allowed over 2,500 persons who were arrested for possession of controlled substances to enter treatment and overcome their addiction. We will continue to pursue these avenues and to develop other methods to reduce the drug problem in this community.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office prosecutes drug cases as vigorously as any other major metropolitan areas. We will not tolerate people who have chosen to sell drugs as a way of life to operate in this community.

Republican platform calls for suggestions

The Republican Party has launched an unprecedented effort to invite Americans across the country to participate in the development of the 1996 Republican Platform.

This effort would not be complete without support from the African-American community. As Chairman of the 1996 Platform Committee and Chairman of the RNC, we are writing to you to encourage you to submit your ideas to help shape the Republican Party platform for the next four

years. Like other Republican leaders, we have benefitted enormously from the policy ideas gleaned from Americans at the grassroots by the National Policy Forum. Now, the Platform Committee is following through, adopting an open door policy for everyone who wants to share with us their vision for a better America. The Republican Platform Committee now encourages African-Americans at the grassroots to play an active role in shaping the Republican vision for

America as it will be articulated in our 1996 Republican National Platform.

The RNC has set up a Web site on the Internet for submitting ideas to the 1996 Republican Platform. The Internet address is www.rnc.org. Or, you can send your ideas to Dave Gribbin, Executive Director, Republican Platform Committee, 310 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C., 20003.

The platform adopted at the 1996 Republican National Convention will

serve as the statement of principles and policies that will guide the Republican Party for the next four years.

The 1996, Republican Platform Committee will convene on Monday, August 5, in San Diego, California. The Republican National Convention will be held August 12-15.

Sincerely,
U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde (R-III.),
Chairman, 1996 Republican Platform Committee;
Hailey Barbour, Chairman,
Republican National Committee.

Letter To The Editor

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