



# NEWS

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## Welfare Reauthorization or Bust

*Landmark 1996 welfare law set to expire in ten days. The U.S. House reauthorized the legislation on May 16<sup>th</sup>, so what in the world is the Senate waiting for?*

WASHINGTON — Since the passage of the 1996 landmark welfare reform, 9 million welfare recipients have joined the workforce and 2.3 million children have been lifted out of poverty. This success would be improved by encouraging work and promoting healthy marriages, but only if Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) would give the renewal an opportunity on the Senate floor.

In the last 6 years, the poverty rate for families headed by single mothers has dropped significantly, and is now the lowest that it has ever been. The Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act only has 10 more days to be voted through the Senate before the law expires, and Sen. Daschle has not yet set a date for the floor debate.

“There is no reason why this bill should be held up by Mr. Daschle,” said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) in Washington. “The Senate is playing games with people’s lives by preventing a program that will help them progress towards self-sufficiency.”

The success of this work-based welfare reform has been astounding. The number of people dependent on welfare has plummeted from 14 million in 1994 to just 5 million today. Because this decline in welfare caseloads has been matched by an unprecedented increase in work among poor single mothers, the child poverty rate has dropped sharply as well. After six years since passage of this welfare reform legislation, just 8.6 percent of families are in poverty--the lowest rate ever; the poverty rate for families headed by single mothers is the lowest ever; the poverty rate for black children is the lowest ever; and a total of 5.5 million people, including 3 million children, have risen out of poverty.

“Liberals in Congress crowed and shrieked that welfare reform would leave pregnant women on the street and turn Americas cities into the favelas of Brazil,” continued Norquist. “It turns out that they could not have been more wrong had they tried, and for that same group of politicians to hold up this legislation’s renewal – the most significant social policy reform in the last half-century – is a disgrace to every American.”

*Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at [jcollegio@atr.org](mailto:jcollegio@atr.org)*