

I would like to congratulate the organization on a very constructive and sensible program which, in my opinion, also is long overdue. I am not involving any other member of this committee in this particular aspect of my comment, our very able chairman is a member of the committee in question, the Committee on Ways and Means. Some of the action that needs to be taken will have to be taken in the Congress. But I think it is very important to have a clear understanding that Congress is going to be involved, and specifically the House, in any collective action that is taken on a variety of these programs, since all of them require national standards to be significant and effective. I think that will be the one generality concerning about everything that can be said today, that there have to be national standards.

I think it is very important to understand the kind of skew that exists in the way the Congress is organized. I will cite just one illustration, without using names. I will speak of the Committee on Ways and Means.

In the Congress preceding this one, the 89th Congress, after many years—in my judgment, approximately 30—a small beginning was made on a national health insurance program, a very small beginning, a beginning that dealt only with people who were elderly. That program has been discussed as an idea in this country for I do not know how many years, I think probably 75 or 80. It has been an active political issue in this country for at least 20 years, to my certain knowledge.

Mr. Truman proposed a much broader program of medical care in 1949. It had never been debated on the floor of this House as a legislative matter until the last Congress. That was a fact because of the way the Congress organized itself, because we have allowed for years a coalition to dominate the key committees of the Congress, and we have formed a habit of allowing conservative Republicans and conservative Democrats to be the majority of key committees. And not even medicare could be brought to the floor of the House for public debate, resulting in public education.

Now, what happened? At the beginning of the 89th Congress, the overwhelming majorities that the Democrats had made it possible to change the ratio on the Ways and Means Committee from 15:10 to 17:8, which for the first time in all my years of service—and I am in my 20th year in this institution—meant that the Ways and Means Committee had a majority in both parties which was favorable to at least debate on the issue. After all these years of delay, finally the Congress itself had the right to act.

Now, I think it is safe to say that you have a law, that you have properly decried, changing the welfare system to a very substantial degree in this Congress because of one event: When this Congress was organized, the Committee on Ways and Means differential was changed from 17:8 to 15:10, which put the control of that committee back in the hands of the coalition which believes that anybody who does not earn his own living is therefore bad, which is at the root, as the first witness said, of the whole attitude that exists in this country, and everybody can have a subsidy except the person who needs it the most.

I am not proposing to grind this ax specifically, but those of us who recognize that much of the action is doing to have to be taken in the