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**Welfare benefits restored to legal immigrants**

WASHINGTON (AP) — In 1996, conservatives in Congress heralded a sweeping rewrite of the nation's welfare policies that changed everything from how long people could stay on welfare to who could tap into the benefits.

The welfare overhaul, they declared, would end a cycle of dependence and empower recipients to improve their lives. "This is going to be one of the greatest successes of this Congress," said one supporter, Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn.



CLINTON

Two years later, some conservatives fear Congress has gone too far to soften the brunt of the 1996 cuts. The beneficiaries are legal immigrants, who found their eligibility terminated for Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid and food stamps under the 1996 overhaul.

Arguing that the benefits served as a powerful lure to noncitizens, Republicans said needy newcomers should turn to those who sponsored them into the country rather than U.S. taxpayers already burdened by rising welfare costs.

President Clinton signed the massive welfare bill, though he made clear he was no fan of the immigrant provisions and would work to minimize their impact. Immigrant, anti-hunger and religious organizations responded with a focused outcry, turning up the heat on politicians by trotting before the television cameras elderly and disabled noncitizens with heartbreaking tales of loss. Even as they pressed their public relations blitz, the advocates also worked behind the scenes to build support on Capitol Hill for restoration of the benefits.

And, less than two years later, they have achieved success on a number of fronts. Last year, Congress restored Medicaid and SSI for legal immigrants. And last week, despite the ardent opposition of the congressional GOP leadership, Congress agreed to restore benefits for some of the 935,000 noncitizens dropped last year from the federal food stamp rolls.

For Rep. Joe Barton, a Republican from Ennis, the restoration marks the gradual erosion of a good law. "It's just a disappointment because it was a landmark reform," said Barton, a key player in the recent

effort to thwart the food stamp restoration, shame to see it kind of nickle-and-dimed. For immigrant advocates, the restoration and renunciation of policies they view as harsh. "I think the welfare reform bill was so unreasonable that, in my mind, there was they had to fix it," Jayne Park of the National Pacific American Legal Consortium said in view after the House voted last week to restore stamp aid, sending the measure to President for his promised signature.

For some, the fight is not over. "I think that we always saw this as a dream and not the full restoration, particularly food stamps," said Diana Aviv, executive of the Council of Jewish Federations, which for restoration.

She noted that the food stamp aid benefits 250,000 of the 935,000 noncitizens dropped from rolls last year and that newcomers remain eligible for assistance. "It's a very modest fix," she said.

And for Cecilia Munoz of the National Council of La Raza, the focus now will turn to states such as California and Texas, which stepped into the breach to make up for some of the lost federal assistance. "It's imperative that the states take the money they were spending on immigrant kids and reimburse their parents," she said.

Effective Nov. 1, federal food stamp eligibility will be restored for noncitizens under the age of 18, as those who are elderly and disabled — groups that were in the United States prior to the 1996 law's Aug. 22, 1996, enactment.

Nearly two-thirds of the restored aid will go to immigrants in four states — California, Florida and Texas.

The Agriculture Department, which administers the food stamp program, estimates the restoration will reach 55,000 immigrants in California, 31,000 in Florida and 21,000 in Texas.

In Texas, state officials decided to offer assistance to 15,000 elderly and disabled immigrants as federal cuts hit. In all, some 121,000 noncitizens were removed from the federal rolls last year.

Texas officials have yet to determine whether to redirect the state assistance to others once the federal noncitizens return to the federal rolls, said Department of Human Services spokesman Ron Heinemann.

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**Routier fails investigative polygraph test**

DALLAS (AP) — Convicted murderer Darlie Lynn Routier believes her husband, Darin, played no role in killing their two eldest sons and slashing her, Routier's relatives say.

She maintains that belief, they say, even though her husband failed a recent polygraph test.

"She knows 100 percent that Darin had nothing to do with this. She said that the only way she would ever believe that Darin was involved is if he confessed," Routier's mother, Darlie Kee, told *The Dallas Morning News* in Sunday's editions.

"She said she knows Darin would never do anything to hurt their sons."

Prison officials in Gatesville told *The News* Routier was unavailable for interviews this weekend. She has maintained her innocence as she waits for the outcome of her appeal.

Routier, 30, agreed to the May 22 polygraph exam at the request of Waco multimillionaire Brian Pardo, who is investigating the crime.

Routier, 28, was sentenced to death in 1997 after a Kerr County jury convicted her of the 1997 murder in the June 6, 1996, stabbing death of the couple's 5-year-old son, Damon. The couple's son, Devon, 6, also died in the attack at the Rowlett home.

The polygraph examiner determined Routier was lying when answering four key questions about the crime. During the exam, Routier denied planning the crime at her home, stabbing her wife, knowing she left a bloody sock in the alley and knowing the identity of his sons' killer.

Routier said the test was rigged for him to fail. "I do not eliminate Routier as a suspect in this investigation," the examiner said.

Routier has said she thinks an intruder broke into the home, killed the boys and attacked her with a knife. Her husband told police he was sleeping on the stairs with the couple's only surviving son, Damon, 2 1/2, during the attack.

**Memorial Student Center 1998 Summer Calendar of Events**

**Dive into Summer!**

**June**

- 9 Film Society *Ghostbusters* 9:30 p.m. Rudder Fountain
- 10 L.T. Jordan Institute for International Awareness Community, Household & Status of Hacienda Tabi, Yucatan, Mexico and Environmental Policies in Bolivia 7 p.m. Rudder 510
- 11 Town Hall *Poolside with Polygram* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 13 Visual Arts *Tour of San Antonio's Art Museums* (Cost: \$10 Texas A&M students; \$20 all others)
- 13 Cepheid Variable *Anime Series* 2 p.m. Biochemistry 107-108
- 16 Great Issues and Political Forum *Open Microphone* 11:30-12:30 p.m. Rudder Fountain
- 16 Town Hall *Hypnotist Rich Ames* 8:30 p.m. Rudder Theater
- 18 Town Hall *Lunch Box Concert* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 18 NOVA *Gaming Night at Hullabaloo* 6-9 p.m. MSC Bowling and Games Area
- 19 Black Awareness *Juneteenth Celebration* 12:30 p.m. MSC Flag Room
- 20 NOVA *SurduKahn* 18 a.m.-11 p.m. MSC 138-146
- 25 Town Hall *Poolside with Polygram* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 25 Cepheid Variable *Pleiades Reading Circle* 7 p.m. MSC 145
- 27 Cepheid Variable *Anime Series* 2 p.m. Biochemistry 107-108
- 30 Film Society *Sixteen Candles* 9:30 p.m. Rudder Fountain

**July**

- 9 Great Issues *Drawing the Line--Technology and the Ethics of Cloning* 4 p.m. Koldus 110
- 9 NOVA *Gaming Night at Hullabaloo* 6-9 p.m. MSC Bowling and Games Area
- 9 Town Hall *Poolside with Polygram* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 10 Visual Arts *Tour of Houston's Corporate Art Collections* (Cost: \$10 Texas A&M students only)
- 14 Film Society *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* 9:30 p.m. Rudder Fountain
- 16 Town Hall *Lunch Box Concert* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 18 Cepheid Variable *Anime Series* 2 p.m. Biochemistry 107-108
- 23 Town Hall *Poolside with Polygram* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 23 Cepheid Variable *Pleiades Reading Circle* 7 p.m. MSC 145
- 24-26 NOVA *Battle. Con* 3 p.m. Fri.-2 p.m. Sun. MSC 224-225
- 25 Visual Arts *Tour of Galveston's Historic Homes* (Cost: \$10 Texas A&M students; \$20 all others)
- 28-29 OPAS *Broadway Cabaret* 7:30 p.m. College Station Conference Center at 1300 George Bush Drive (Cost: \$2 Texas A&M students; \$5 all others)
- 30 Town Hall *Poolside with Polygram* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)

**August**

- 1 Cepheid Variable *Anime Series* 2 p.m. Biochemistry 107-108
- 6 Town Hall *Poolside with Polygram* 2-4 p.m. Rec. Center Outdoor Pool (A valid Texas A&M ID is required.)
- 26-28 *Fall Leadership Conference* Trinidad, Texas
- 27 Cepheid Variable *Pleiades Reading Circle* 7 p.m. MSC 145

**All events are FREE, except as noted.**

Dates and times may change. Check out the MSC web site: [wwwmsc.tamu.edu](http://wwwmsc.tamu.edu) and the MSC Hotline at 847-5463.

Please call 845-1515 for special needs.

**Funeral home sued for giving improper burial**

HOUSTON (AP) — The body of a Pasadena man who died 2 1/2 years ago requested a funeral home, including an expensive-but-dignified price. What they actually got had them to tears — and to court.

Mainly, they want to know what happened to the body of John T. Mitchum was laid out in a cardboard box.

"We had to go as economic as we could," Mitchum's sister, Udiz of Pasadena, told the *Chronicle*. "But we paid for a different funeral than we got."

After receiving a tip, Mitchum's family had his body exhumed months ago from Rosewood Memorial Park in Humble. They found the mechanic's remains in the soggy, deteriorating box.

The family is suing Budget Home and Rosewood Memorial Home. Budget is owned by Fields of Humble. He and his brother, former U.S. Rep. Jack Fields, owned Rosewood. The owners deny any involvement in the fraud case.

The case is set for trial June 15 in state District Judge Tad Brown in Houston.

Mitchum, who died at 65 of cancer of the larynx, was living on a disability check after retiring from Stanley Hardware. His large family saw to his needs in his final years.

No family members witnessed the burial on Dec. 30, 1995. A rainstorm forced them to hold a graveside service the next day.

Funeral home attorneys said Mitchum's burial bill remains unpaid. Jim Mitchum said his attorney asked him to hold onto the \$2,000 received from an insurance company.

Mitchum's remains are still in a cardboard container because the funeral home refused immediate reburial in a casket until after the case is settled.