

Committee on Ways and Means

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Chairman Thomas and Subcommittee Chairman Herger Praise 10 Years of Welfare Reform

WASHINGTON – August 22 marks the 10th anniversary of the enactment of the 1996 welfare reform law. To commemorate the adoption of these historic reforms, Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas (R-CA) and Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Wally Herger (R-CA) issued the following joint statement:

“Ten years ago, one of the most successful social policy reforms in our country’s history was enacted into law. During the past decade, welfare reform helped lift millions of Americans out of poverty and away from welfare dependence.

“Since 1996, the number of people receiving welfare has declined by nearly eight million. As dependence declined and work increased, poverty has been reduced. In comparison with 1996, today 1.4 million fewer children live in poverty.

“These positive results confirm that Americans - including welfare recipients - are eager to work for the American dream of building a better life for themselves and their children. Families want the dignity of working for a paycheck instead of the dependence of collecting a welfare check. Our nation’s history and the experience of welfare reform since 1996 have repeatedly shown that work is the only true path out of poverty.

“Earlier this year, our nation strengthened and extended these reforms when the President signed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2006. This law encourages more welfare recipients to work, which will further lessen dependence and poverty, while providing increased funding and tools to help families make the transition to work.”

For more information on the outcomes of the 1996 welfare reforms, visit:

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/ResourceKits.asp?section=2314>

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