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Republicans Are The Party of Compassion

**How Welfare Reform Helped
Merlinda From Mississippi**

In 1996, Republicans reformed welfare and lifted millions of Americans out of poverty. Even more compelling than the [statistics](#), however, are the stories of the individual Americans whose lives were turned around by Republican welfare reforms.

Merlinda Burnett was a single mom working hard to support her six-year-old son. Merlinda was making ends meet when she became pregnant with triplets in November of 1997. Faced with the daunting task of raising four children and working full-time, Merlinda moved her family back home to Oxford, Mississippi.

Upon returning home to Mississippi, Merlinda enrolled in the Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF placed Merlinda in her own home and provided her with financial assistance so that she could stay home with her newborn sons for a year. After the year had elapsed, Merlinda completed a two-week TANF job training program. Once Merlinda found a job, the TANF program provided daycare assistance that enabled her to achieve self-sufficiency. Merlinda is no longer relying on public assistance, her sons are enrolled in the Head Start program, and she is in her second year of working full-time for the Ole Miss Law School.

For 30 years, Democrats fought a losing War on Poverty. Thanks to a Republican Congress, America is finally winning that war.

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Adapted by RPC intern Jared Oren from information provided by the office of Representative Wicker (R-MS).

[The underlined text indicates hyperlinks in the electronic version of this RPC paper.]