

and in 1959 the village board approved the development of the first shipping center in the community.

Currently, the village of South Chicago Heights provides many services to its residents. From fire and police protection to water and sanitary services, the families in this community receive outstanding services while paying low taxes. South Chicago Heights should be given special commendation as a community which takes care of those who have given so much of themselves. The village has devoted a great deal of time and effort to assisting its seniors by building a senior citizens center. This center should serve as a model for all communities.

The 90th anniversary of the village of South Chicago Heights has been celebrated this year by village President David L. Owen, trustees Lou Bednarek, Tony Capua, Donald E. Cull, Bonnie S. Hudson, Joseph F. Kudra, Jr., John M. Ross, and Clerk Melinda Villarreal. These outstanding elected officials joined the residents of the village at a dinner dance and all-day festival this fall.

It is truly fitting that this village celebrate 90 years of history and progress. I extend my best wishes to the village, its community leaders, and its residents for many more prosperous years to come.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS, MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORM, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. JULIAN C. DIXON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 9, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2607) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998:

Mr. DIXON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2607 and in support of the Moran substitute. As you will hear during this debate, there are a litany of reasons why the House should pass the substitute and adopt the Senate language. From micromanagement of the District to tort reform to the controversial provisions on school vouchers, this bill represents a step backward from efforts to bring fiscal sanity and reform to the government of the Nation's Capital.

What we should do is work together with the locally elected government of the District of Columbia and the federally appointed Control Board to move forward on implementation of the D.C. reform plan passed in the budget agreement. What we choose to do is to put roadblocks in the way of that forward movement by adopting extraneous provisions that have absolutely no business on this appropriations bill.

I have no illusions about the prospects for passing this substitute amendment. It would be too reasonable to assume that Members of the majority might put their leadership's zeal to make ideological points aside in the best interests of the Nation's Capital. Every Member

should understand that by voting against the Moran substitute, we dispense with the possibility of quick enactment of this bill; we set up a clear possibility for veto; and we do a disservice to the very people we profess to be so concerned about—the citizens of the District of Columbia.

Much of the debate today will focus on the most controversial aspect of this legislation which the majority will maintain is essential to the well-being of D.C. children—the so-called Student Opportunity Scholarship program. I regret that I find it necessary, as others will, to spend my debate time concentrating on this issue, rather than broader concerns facing Washington, DC.

It is inconceivable to me that the leadership of this House believes that it is more important to hold up enactment of a bill that is a vital piece of our efforts to revive the District for all its children, in order to make its ideological statement on the value of school vouchers. But since that is the course they choose, let's look at the program that the majority argues is an answer to the problems besetting the District of Columbia public schools.

H.R. 2607 authorizes \$45 million over 5 years to fund tuition and tutoring scholarship—vouchers—for D.C. students. Rather than a boon to D.C. schools and her students, this provision is a vote of no confidence in the newly appointed school leadership committed to improving public education; it injects the controversial issue of funding religious schools with public money; and it is a structurally deficient piece of authorization legislation on an appropriations bill.

Voucher proponents often refer to the failures of the school system, documented in a November 1996 study conducted by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority. The study "Children in Crisis," revealed numerous problems with the District's public school, noting that the system "has failed to provide our children with a quality education and safe environment in which to learn." The Authority found that D.C. students consistently rank below national average scores on tests of competency and student achievement, school administrators fail to adequately manage resources, and the infrastructure is in need of major improvements.

I do not stand here in defense of the management and instructional quality of the D.C. school system. However, the story of the public schools should not end with the bad news. We all hear about what's wrong with the D.C. schools, but what about those public schools that are doing things right?

Walker Jones Elementary School in Northwest Washington is working with the Laboratory for Student Success program using Community for Learning, a research-based school reform model. The concept is called whole school reform, and is characterized by intensive teacher training methods and materials geared toward better student learning. As a result, student test scores have improved. After 6 months in the program, the school raised its ranking in the District on reading scores from 99th in 1996 to 36th in 1997. In math, the school climbed from 81st in the District to 18th.

All of Eastern Senior High School's 1997 graduates of its Health and Human Services Academy—more than 400—were accepted to college. The Health and Human Services

Academy is a special high school program that prepares its participants to enter the health and human services field immediately upon graduation or to pursue postsecondary education in a related field. The Academy was developed through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

At Stuart Hobson Middle School, the school's Odyssey of the Mind team won second place in the national competition's classics category—in which 5,000 teams competed nationwide. Hobson features a museum magnet program in which the school offers courses, seminars, labs, and field experience in conjunction with the Smithsonian.

The Nalle School and the Freddie Mac Foundation are working together to create the District's first full-service community school, to address the wide range of family needs. Working with service organizations, parents, educators, and community leaders, it is becoming a major hub of community activity.

We should be insisting on and facilitating the replication of these successes in D.C. schools. Instead, we fight over funneling taxpayer money to private schools, emphasizing failures rather than seeking to enhance successes.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that there are private school slots for the 2,000 kids eligible for vouchers with a maximum value of \$3,200. We have to assume, because as the Washington Post of September 30 stated it would be difficult to find those slots given that the vast majority of secular private and religious schools charge more than \$3,200 for tuition. Nevertheless, if we could find those 2,000 openings, what exactly does our voucher experiment prove? That we can spend public money on private schools for 3 percent of the District's students? Is the inference that if we are successful with this laboratory experiment in the District, then we can embark on a wholesale abandonment of the public schools in the District? Are we prepared to give the minimum voucher amount of \$2,400 to every District student who would be eligible? That's 50,000 vouchers at a cost of over \$100 million.

From the Republican leadership's strident support of vouchers, and their denigration of the public schools, one gets the impression that no one is working to turn the tide? That is simply not the case.

In response to their study's findings, the members of the Authority embarked on a bold initiative to shake up the school system by implementing a new management structure with a mandate to improve the public schools. On November 15, 1996, the Authority appointed Gen. Julius W. Becton as chief executive officer and superintendent of DCPS and established the Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees.

Although General Becton has been on the job for less than a year, he has already taken significant steps to improve the public schools. He has developed an academic plan focusing on high standards and accountability for results; redesigned the budget structure to hold managers accountable for spending; and implemented comprehensive security and facilities' management plans. These efforts hold much promise for the system and Congress ought to be emphasizing our support for these objectives.

Instead, we put forth a proposal which will not improve public education and is probably

unconstitutional. The Supreme Court has consistently held that public funds cannot pay, either directly or indirectly, for the religious education or the religious mission of parochial schools. Although public funds may be used for secular purposes in religious schools, regular everyday instruction at a religious elementary or high school would not qualify because such schools are seen as mainly sectarian in nature.

The Supreme Court ruled this year that public funding of certain instruction in parochial schools is severely limited. In the June 23 decision, the Court ruled 5 to 4 in *Agostini versus Felton* that title I services—remedial math and reading instruction provided to disadvantaged children—are permissible in private religious schools because the instruction offered is secular in nature and overseen by public school personnel. Rather than pave the way for vouchers, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor emphasized that under title I no Government funds "ever reach the coffers of religious schools." She further stated that this aid does not "relieve sectarian schools of costs they would otherwise have borne in educating their students."

Proponents of these scholarships or vouchers might argue there is no underlying agenda to fund religious schools. Then why include section 348, subsection (a) in the bill which reads:

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to bar any eligible institution which is operated, supervised, or controlled by, or in connection with, a religious organization from limiting employment, or admission to, or giving preference to persons of the same religion as is determined by such institution to promote the religious purpose for which it is established or maintained.

Educational choice is held up by voucher supporters as the main reason that Members should embrace this bill. Choice for whom? We agree that the D.C. schools are not doing the job we want in providing a high-quality education to all D.C. students. How do we solve that problem by providing an opportunity for 2,000 to 3,000 students to attend private schools, leaving behind the remaining 75,000, or 97 percent, of students in the D.C. schools.

D.C. residents did not ask for this. The GOP's argument that D.C. religious leaders wholeheartedly endorse vouchers has been refuted by the ministers themselves. The Washington Post of October 6, 1997 reported that the ministers feel that the program was misrepresented to them by proponents.

The process by which this provision found its way in the bill is faulty—no hearings were held—and the structure of the program is faulty. It creates another bureaucracy for the District to contend with—a scholarship corporation with a board of directors and staff. This board is to be paid a stipend of up to \$5,000 a year. Not even the financial management authority, appointed by the President 2 years ago to improve the operations of the District, receives payment for their thankless efforts.

The application and participation requirements for eligible schools are laughable. To apply, a school must show that it had more than 25 students in the preceding 3 years; submit an annual budget; and describe the proposed instructional program. To remain eligible, a school only has to provide the corporation with an annual budget statement, and

certify that it has not charged a voucher student more than the cost of tuition, fees, and transportation to attend the school.

Such lax requirements could give rise to fly-by-night schools which open just to receive voucher money. In Milwaukee, two voucher schools closed last year as a result of criminal fraud charges. At least four other Milwaukee voucher schools closed during the first 4 years of the program, three of them in the middle of the school year. We need accountability, not soft reporting requirements.

Finally, voucher supporters argue that since the D.C. schools are withering on the vine already, why not give a few parents a chance to offer their child a better education? We need a vote of confidence for General Becton, who has faced a host of problems during his brief tenure, but is making progress. We need to assist the public schools by holding administrators and teachers accountable while ensuring that infrastructure and instruction needs are met. We need a comprehensive review of the best practices in the D.C. schools and apply those models to schools that are not performing. We do not need this ill-advised voucher experiment.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for the Moran substitute and move D.C. reforms forward in a manner which accrues to the benefit of all its citizens and all its children.

H.R. 901, THE AMERICAN LAND SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, presently there is no formal international agreement defining a biosphere reserve—no treaty, no convention, no compact, no protocol—not one. Nor is there any domestic legislation authorizing and implementing the biosphere reserve program—none whatsoever. A biosphere reserve is an ambiguous concept in the field of international relations and lacks any legal definition in U.S. law.

Forty-seven biosphere reserves have been created in the United States with virtually no congressional oversight, no hearings, and no legislative authority. Congress is not notified when a biosphere reserve nomination is under consideration—nor is there any requirement to do so.

At a hearing held in March 1995 by the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, Congressman Nethercutt asked witnesses from the National Park Service, "Are there any more biosphere reserves to be designated at this time that you know of?" Mr. Kennedy, then Director of the Park Service replied, "No sir."

Yet, we now know that: Plans were well underway to designate the Ozark Highlands Biosphere Reserve and that the National Park Service was a prime force behind this effort.

The National Park Service applied for a grant in late 1994 or early 1995 from the U.S. Man and Biosphere Program—approved the following May—for "Elevation of Isle Royale Biosphere Reserve to Fully Functional Status." According to the grant description, the project would develop a Lake Superior protected

areas directory, and this would be the first U.S. step toward designation of additional protected areas and community partnerships in the Lake Superior binational region. In other words, this grant was for a study to expand the Isle Royale Biosphere Reserve.

Expansion of the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve to include 11 counties in West Virginia was—and still is—under consideration.

The current system for implementing these programs has eaten away at the power and sovereignty of the Congress to exercise its constitutional power to make the laws that govern lands belonging to the United States.

The public and local governments are never consulted about creating biosphere reserves. On October 7, 1997, during debate on H.R. 901, "The American Land Sovereignty Protection Act," opponents kept saying that biosphere reserves were designated at the request of local communities. They seem to believe that if they keep repeating the mantra that "biosphere reserves are created at the request of local communities" often enough, then somehow it will prove to be true. The Committee on Resources has now held three hearings on this issue and has yet to find one example where a biosphere reserve designation was requested by a broad-based cross-section of either the public or local officials. On the contrary, the committee has found that biosphere reserve designation efforts are almost always driven by Federal agencies and often face strong local opposition whether in New York, Arkansas, New Mexico, or Alaska.

Once again, biosphere reserves are designated with little or no input from the public or local government. They are very unpopular. In the few cases where the local citizenry has become aware of a pending biosphere reserve designation, the designation has been strongly opposed. Proposed biosphere reserve nominations for the Catskill Mountains in New York, the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas and Missouri, and for Voyageurs National Park and Boundary Waters Wilderness in Minnesota were defeated by an aroused local citizenry. The Alaska and Colorado State Legislatures have passed resolutions supporting H.R. 901, and the Kentucky senate passed a resolution opposing the biosphere reserve program, particularly in Kentucky. I would like to include these resolutions in the RECORD.

I also wish to include in the RECORD a recent column, entitled "Protected Global Soil?," which appeared recently in the Washington Times. I urge my colleagues to read the resolutions and this important commentary.

A RESOLUTION—IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

Relating to supporting the "American Land Sovereignty Protection Act."

Be it resolved by the legislature of the State of Alaska:

Whereas, the United Nations has designated 67 sites in the United States as "World Heritage Sites" or "Biosphere Reserves," which altogether are about equal in size to the State of Colorado, the eighth largest state; and

Whereas, art. IV, sec. 3, United States Constitution, provides that the United States Congress shall make all needed regulations governing lands belonging to the United States; and

Whereas, many of the United Nations' designations include private property inholdings and contemplate "buffer zones" of adjacent land; and