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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for 5 minutes.

HONORING OUR NATION'S TEACHERS

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today marks National Teacher Day, and I rise to recognize the important contributions and the hard work of our Nation's educators.

Our teachers will inspire our children's path to their futures, whether it is through teaching history, mathematics, English, or science. They will provide children with the framework for independent thought and innovation.

We in Congress are fighting to improve our education system. In order to be successful, we must shift power away from Washington and back into the hands of parents, teachers, and local officials, those who know our children the best.

I recently visited the Sunset Hills Elementary School in Tarpon Springs, FL, in my congressional district. While

I was there, I met with teachers, students, and administrators. This school was built in 1958 and has approximately 500 students. Sunset Hills is often characterized as being a true neighborhood school, something which fosters a special pride within the community it serves. The school has a motto, Mr. Speaker, which is indicative of the character of its teachers and students. The motto is, "Where the future meets every day."

During my visit, I met the promising young boys and girls who are tomorrow's leaders. As soon as I entered the school, I was struck by the pride and dedication of the students, teachers, and school administrators.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time to talk about some of the special people I met while visiting there. I want to commend Mrs. Kathy Davis on her hard work and dedication to the students of Sunset Hills. To my left here is a photograph which I took with Mrs. Davis and her students. She teaches the first grade and has done so for 20 years. During her tenure, Mrs. Davis has shaped the minds of hundreds of young people. I applaud her commitment to guide our children during their formative years in school. Her efforts help lay the foundation for her students' future years. I would also like to thank her students for welcoming me into her classroom. What a fine group of first graders.

Behind me, as I said earlier, is a picture of Mrs. Davis and her students which the class sent to me shortly after my visit to the school.

During my visit, I also met Sally Wakefield, who teaches English and language arts to fourth graders. She has taught at Sunset Hills for 19 years and is a wonderful and inspiring educator. Not only does she encourage her students to better communicate their ideas, she also oversees the student council, a body elected by the students. It was a privilege to meet her and I

commend her commitment to excellence.

While at Sunset Hills, I took the time to speak with school administrators who shared with me the importance of school breakfast and lunch programs. I want to especially thank Dolores Ford, Joe Hornberger, Susan Honey, Betty Muzio, Stella Makryllos, Kathy Protus, and Gray Miller for their time. While teachers provide the basic tools for learning, these individuals help the Sunset students focus on learning by ensuring that they have adequate and nutritious meals every day.

School meals, as we know, are an integral part of our children's educational experience. In addition these programs enhance a child's physical and mental development.

Finally, I want to commend William Brewer, the principal of Sunset Hills Elementary. He is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. Let me say how impressed I was by the school's organization. Mr. Brewer is responsible for this success. His leadership serves as an inspiration to all of those at Sunset Hills.

Mr. Speaker, the teachers and administrators at Sunset Hills Elementary are meeting the rewarding challenges of educating their students. As we search for ways to improve our Nation's education system, I want my colleagues, teachers, parents, students, administrators, and local officials to know that I am dedicated—I think all of us are—to improving our Nation's education programs. Why? Just look at the faces of the Sunset Hills Elementary first grade class. They are responsible for our Nation's future.

INTRODUCTION OF POLICE COORDINATION ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced a bill that is of importance to every Member of this House if they have constituents who come to visit this city. It is called the District of Columbia Police Coordination Act of 1997.

What it does is very straightforward. It would make mandatory cooperative agreements between the Metropolitan Police Department and the Federal agencies so that they would have to come to terms with sending agency personnel to patrol areas around their own Federal buildings, donating or sharing equipment and supplies, sharing radio frequencies, and streamlining the process of arresting suspects. The U.S. attorney would be the coordinator.

This is so straightforward, why is it not happening already? We have got thousands of police, we have got 30 police forces in Washington, DC, and they all operate as private police forces. No coordination goes on. And so the hard-pressed District police, faced with violent crime, are duplicating efforts that could be going on downtown.

My bill seeks to introduce rationality and cost efficiency into a totally uncoordinated, very inefficient, and wasteful use of Federal police power.

We send many of our Federal law enforcement officers to the state-of-the-art facility at Brunswick, GA. Then we come back and capture them inside Federal buildings. One of the officers told me that in this day, when we are concerned about security, a Federal police officer in a Federal building, if he sees a van, a suspicious looking van outside a Federal building, does not have the authority to go outside and ask that van to move along. We need to empower these police to do police work.

There is already good coordination between the Park Police, which has jurisdiction all over the whole city, but there are multiple police forces, such as the Government Printing Office police force, the Naval Observatory, the Federal Protection Service for the Federal buildings, the Library of Congress. The list goes on, and it is very long. Most of these officers are unable to make arrests except in the building or in the immediate environs of the building. Most do not even patrol the block around their Federal agency. Worse, on the few occasions in which they do intervene into unlawful activity, many call 911 to get a District police officer as if they were a regular citizen. Instead, they are people with arrest powers. I am talking about people who carry guns and cannot come outdoors to play with the thugs.

My bill says, hey, you get more money than the D.C. police, you get better pensions, you face a whole lot less crime. Come out here where the real crime is.

When the high crime rates went up in the District, there was a lot of blame to go around and a lot of it belonged to the District. Always, the District gets stinging criticism. Criticism of our own local police or death penalty rhetoric is not going to do anything to assist our police on the streets today, right now. Federal law enforcement officers should not be left underperforming when—by the way, they desperately want to perform because they lack the authority to render service commensurate with their police power and their arrest authority.

There is ample precedent for my bill. In 1992, this body passed my bill that freed the Capitol Police to go beyond the few blocks around the Capitol, and so they now patrol the high crime Capitol Hill area. This body understood immediately that we should not be training cops at the level we do and then failing to get the highest and best use of them. This is a period when we are losing policemen as if they were fighting wars. The high crime areas will always be patrolled by our own District police; but surely in the middle of town, thousands of police officers assigned to Federal agencies, who carry guns, who have police power, ought to be freed up to use that police power.

We are requiring greater efficiency from police these days. We are not responding simply to the call for more money. The call for greater efficiency is paying off. We see it in the large cities where crime rates have tumbled down. They can tumble down in this city, too. We are doing saturated arrests, and the crime rates have come down remarkably. How long can our police keep it up if we do not get help from police who are perfectly willing to, indeed, help?

I appreciate that many of those uniformed police came to stand with me this morning in a press conference. I ask the Congress and this House to pass my police coordination bill and help me get rid of crime in the District of Columbia.

TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. PICKERING] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Teacher Appreciation Day to express my gratitude to teachers who have helped shape my life, and to my family, many of whom have taught, and continue to teach today. The theme of this year's National Teacher Appreciation Day is: One teacher can shape a child, one child can shape the world. I am thankful for this day so that we can praise those who shape not only our lives individually and our children and our communities but also shape our future.

My grandparents on my mother's side were both teachers; W.C. Thomas and Ivon Thomas. They came of age during the Depression. My grandfather became a principal at a small rural agricultural high school and then went on to teach at the junior college that serves my area. I had the benefit during the period in which I grew up of having adults come to me as a child and saying, "If it had not been for your grandfather, I would not have stayed in school, and I would not be what I am today."

It gave me a true appreciation and an understanding for the role of what teachers and those in the education community give to people. My mother was a teacher and was a director of a kindergarten program. I have three sisters. Today, one teaches fifth grade in Opelika, AL. My oldest sister has six children and home-schools. My other sister taught freshman composition at the University of Mississippi. My aunt, Karen Pickering, teaches fifth grade at Calhoun Elementary School.

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I come to this day with appreciation for what teachers give, and I want to give specific praise to one teacher, one coach, who had a specific influence on my life and to whom I am not sure that I would be here as a Congressman today if he had not given me encouragement at a critical point in my life. His name is Lonnie Meaders. He began teaching and coaching in 1950, and he served the Jones County-city schools for almost 30 years. He was my junior high football coach. When I finished junior high, most people thought that I was too small and too slow to continue at the high school level. He encouraged me to continue playing when no one else did.

My 10th grade year, my first year in high school, I was the smallest on the team. I made up for the lack of size with an even greater lack of speed. In my 11th grade year, I began to play. In my 12th grade year, I had enough success on the field to earn a college football scholarship.

It was that experience of continuing to play when no one else thought that I could or should that gave me the confidence and gave me a foundation to believe that with hard work that I could succeed. It was Coach Lonnie Meaders who influenced not only my life, but countless others who went through the Laurel city schools. He was also the tennis coach, his 9th grade team went 18 years never losing a match. We are blessed to have those like Coach Meaders who teach us and encourage us at critical points in our lives.

I now have four children ages 7, 5, 3 and 1, and I want to thank Mrs. Harper, who teaches my oldest child today. She has brought a young, shy, 7-year-old out, and he is beginning to blossom as she encourages him on a daily basis.

My job in representing the teachers and the families of my district is to