

legislature, and I met with House and Senate committee members who have jurisdiction over insular issues. We were energized with the understanding of the issues and especially the renewed commitment by Chairman DON YOUNG to conduct a hearing on the Guam Commonwealth Act, perhaps this summer after the committee has concluded its consideration of Puerto Rico's political status legislation.

We thank Chairman YOUNG and the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER], the ranking member, and Members of the other body for their commitment to work with me and other elected officials from Guam to move the Guam commonwealth process along.

As often is the case, congressional action on an issue is the driving force for change. By moving Guam commonwealth to the congressional level, it will force the administration to seriously decide whether to help Guam craft a new relationship or to oppose our quest for commonwealth. It is my hope that by the time we hold the hearings in Congress that the administration will conclude its review and consideration of Guam commonwealth.

The people of Guam are relying on the Congress, the branch of government which represents all of the people of this Union, to be fair to us and to be receptive to our quest for an improved relationship. One hundred years is too long.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS IN OUR LIVES

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

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, for many of us, what we are doing today and the person that we are today can be traced back, at least in part, to the influence that a particular teacher had on us. In so many ways, teachers, whether in grade school or high school, have encouraged us and inspired us as we grew.

The formidable years, those years in which we begin to think about what we want to be and the path of how to get there, are so many times guided by teachers. I know many people have chosen a profession or excelled in an area based on the influence of a teacher. That influence sometimes reaches well beyond guiding us through the four R's.

For anyone who has logged onto my web site or was at the Speaker's opening day reception, they know that I enjoy singing. Aside from recently joining with one of my colleagues, one of which was the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], in forming a congressional quartet, music has been a part of my life since childhood.

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My lifelong love of music and singing has been inspired by my elementary

school music teacher, Mr. Erin Sanders. Mr. Sanders led us in song each week while he played the accordion at the Pine Grove Manor School in Franklin Township, NJ, where I attended.

He also taught each of us that was interested in learning to play a musical instrument. I recall with fondness how he would enthusiastically direct at both practice and especially at concerts.

I remember one day I had traveled into New York City with my father and, among other things, I purchased a conductor's baton. When I returned to school, I lent the baton to Mr. Sanders to use for an upcoming concert. At the end of the school year, I wrapped it and I left it for Mr. Sanders in his office, and I can still remember the smile on his face when he thanked me for it. It was a small offering to him for all he had given to me.

All of us should take the time to reflect on our own school experiences and remember those teachers and programs that made a difference. Sometimes it was not just what we were encouraged to do but also what we were encouraged not to do. Whether it was just talking, being confident, challenging us, or developing a talent, I hope we remember how Mrs. So-and-so or Mr. So-and-so took the time to make us feel special. Each of us are gifted in one way or another. Maybe you are an artist, mathematician, writer, runner, or singer, but whatever it is, never forget who was there when you needed someone's prodding or encouragement.

So as we celebrate National Teacher's Week, I want to say a special thank you to Mr. Sanders for the difference he made in my life.

HONORING OUR NATION'S TEACHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from Kentucky [Mrs. NORTHUP] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, on this day when we honor our Nation's teachers, I would like to highlight the work of one accomplished educator in my district of Louisville, KY.

Jacqueline Austin spent 13 years as a classroom teacher before being named as principal of John F. Kennedy Elementary School. In her first year as principal, Mrs. Austin would arrive early at work and phone students to wake them up and ensure that they were coming to school. She says it was the only way she knew to improve the school's attendance rate, which was near the bottom of all of Jefferson County elementary schools.

Kennedy could be found at the bottom of a lot of other lists, not only in attendance but also in test scores and failure rates. In fact, more than 30 percent of John F. Kennedy's kindergartners and 23 percent of its first graders had failed a grade.

Located in one of the toughest housing projects in the city, Kennedy Elementary seemed to be a lost cause. But in the tradition of outstanding educators, Mrs. Austin set about finding ways to solve her school's problems. Her good friend, Ethel Minnis, wife of director of Career Workforce Education Bernard Minnis, made her aware of the Montessori style of education, which, as Jackie says, encourages students to be actively engaged in their own education.

Under the direction of Ms. Austin, Kennedy became the only public Montessori school in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Now, 10 years after Jackie Austin was given this seemingly impossible task, John F. Kennedy Elementary is a model school. The student scores on the State tests have earned the school acclaim. It was recently named a Kentucky Pacesetter School for consistent academic achievement. Mrs. Austin herself was given the Milken Family Award for Excellence in Education.

Students run the school's in-house TV network, WJFK. Not only do they appear on air, but they also operate the cameras, produce, direct, and stage manage the broadcasts. Students run their own post office and take a mini civil service exam, and students run the Kennedy Financial Services, which teaches skills associated with banking as well as investing in stocks and bonds.

Jackie Austin's enthusiasm and work ethic have proven to be contagious. Parental involvement in the school is at an all-time high. Kennedy teacher Patti Barron says, "When you have a principal that works as hard as she does, we're willing to work as hard as we can." John F. Kennedy Elementary has risen like a Phoenix from the ashes of a once failing school.

Jackie Austin was on the front lines of this Nation's war against ignorance. She was innovative and determined not to let the enemy win. The results she has achieved exemplify what happens when educators are allowed to be independent and creative.

Mrs. Austin says, "Every child is a learner. With all of the outside distractions, we have to make learning dynamic and exciting." Jackie Austin has done just that. I was honored to meet her and tour her school, a modern day success story, where education and learning are paramount.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT AND HOUSE AND SENATE LEADERS FOR BUDGET AGREEMENT

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate all the parties that were involved in the budget agreement reached over the weekend. While

many of the details still have to be worked out, and of course many will say the devil is in the details. I think Members of this body would be hard-pressed to speak against a budget agreement that for the first time since 1969 gives us a real chance to balance the budget, to get our fiscal house in order.

I would have preferred that we postpone some of the tax cuts pay for more of them through savings in the tax Code. We are doing much of that. Each of us may find, as I say, particulars in programs that we think may be more endangered than before the budget agreement, but that is a product of compromise. Politics is the art of compromise, and it is about time we were able to get together to work in a constructive, cooperative spirit.

I congratulate the President and I congratulate the leaders of the House and Senate on both sides for coming forward with that spirit and getting the kinds of results they have.

If we oppose this, we invite far more harmful consequences to ourselves and particularly to future generations than any of those items we specifically object to could ever cause. Let us not blow this opportunity to do what is in everyone's best long-term interests. The bipartisan budget agreement will allow us to reach balance in the year 2002 without wreaking any havoc on the most important domestic discretionary programs, nor will it wreak havoc on the Defense Department budget.

We as Democrats can be proud of this agreement, since it will allow the Federal Government to continue to be an agent of positive change. We will be able to expand health care coverage to 5 million more needy underinsured children. We will be able to restore the safety net to legal resident aliens who were disenfranchised under last year's welfare bill, and we will be able to go home and justify our actions to a public that is too often skeptical that we are not doing anything that is in their best interests.

This agreement builds on the accomplishments of past deficit reduction efforts, most notably the 1993 deficit reduction package. Since adoption of that 1993 budget package, the deficit has been reduced 4 consecutive years to where it is now the lowest since 1981. It is down to \$74 billion. This past year it was \$107 billion; now we are talking about \$74 billion. That is phenomenal, given where we started, from \$290 billion in 1992.

The tax increases and the spending cuts enacted in 1993, contrary to much criticism at the time, has kept interest rates and unemployment low and the economy booming. The stock market has gone through the ceiling because they have to put their money on their analysis of where the future of this economy is going. That is why the stock market is booming. They see a rosy outlook. They know that our budget is in control.

Now, we hope that this agreement will also lay the foundation for more fundamental entitlement program reforms that must be dealt with before us baby boomers begin to retire. But this agreement deserves our support. The President and the leaders of the House and Senate deserve our support. We congratulate them.

At this point I would like to yield to my colleague and good friend, the gentleman from California [Mr. DOOLEY].

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN] in congratulating the President and the Republican leadership and the Democratic leadership that played such an instrumental role in negotiating what is a very responsible budget that is going to benefit all American families. It is going to build upon the good work that has happened in this House in the last 4 years, when we have been able to reduce the deficit from what was \$290 billion to what might be \$75 billion this year. It is almost one-quarter of what it was 4 years ago.

This is not an achievement that belongs solely to the President; it is an achievement that also belongs to some of the Democrats who had the majority in the first 2 years of his Presidency, and also the Republicans who had control in the second 2 years. We have a package now that I think gives the promise and the hope to American families that we are going to eliminate the deficit in the next 5 years; that we will be able to start repaying the national debt while still protecting the priorities of our families in education and health care, as well as providing some much-needed tax relief with capital gains and inheritance tax.

I thank the gentleman for coming to the floor today and honoring some of the leaders of this country who have put us on the right track.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very fine words and his message that needs to be listened to by everyone.

PRESIDENT CLINTON DELIVERS THE FIRST BALANCED BUDGET IN A GENERATION—HISTORIC AGREEMENT PROMOTES THE COUNTRY'S PRIORITIES

President Clinton has achieved a balanced budget agreement that includes critical investments in education, health care, and the environment while strengthening and modernizing Medicare and Medicaid—just as he promised last year. We have cut the deficit 63%—from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$107 billion last year. This historic achievement will finish the job, giving the American people the first balanced budget in a generation, while meeting the President's goals.

GOAL: TO ENSURE THAT EVERY 8-YEAR-OLD CAN READ, EVERY 12-YEAR-OLD CAN LOG ON TO THE INTERNET, AND EVERY 18-YEAR-OLD CAN GO TO COLLEGE

Largest Pell Grant Increase in Two Decades—4 million students will receive a grant of up to \$3,000, an increase of \$300 in the maximum grant.

Tax cuts targeted to higher education to make college more affordable for America's families.

An America Reads initiative to mobilize a million tutors to help three million children learn to read by the end of the third grade.

Expansion of Head Start—to achieve goal of one million kids in 2002.

Doubles funding to help schools integrate innovative technology into the curriculum.

GOAL: EXPAND HEALTH COVERAGE FOR AS MANY AS 5 MILLION UNCOVERED CHILDREN

Medicaid improvements and added Medicaid investments.

A new capped mandatory grant program that provides additional dollars to supplement states efforts to cover uninsured children in working families.

GOAL: SECURE AND STRENGTHEN MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

Extends the solvency of Medicare Trust Fund to at least 2007 through long overdue structural reforms.

Expands coverage of critical preventive treatments of diseases such as diabetes and breast cancer.

Preserves the federal Medicaid guarantee of coverage to our nation's most vulnerable people.

GOAL: STRENGTHEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Accelerates Superfund cleanups by almost 500 sites by the year 2000.

Expands the Brownfield Redevelopment Initiative to help communities cleanup and redevelop contaminated areas.

Boosts environmental enforcement to protect public health from environmental threats.

GOAL: MOVE PEOPLE FROM WELFARE TO WORK AND TREAT LEGAL IMMIGRANTS FAIRLY

A Welfare-to-Work tax credit to help long-term welfare recipients get jobs.

Restores disability and health benefits for legal immigrants.

Restores Medicaid coverage for poor legal immigrant children.

Preserves food stamp benefits for people willing to work.

Provides States and cities with additional resources to move disadvantaged recipients into jobs.

GOAL: CUTS TAXES FOR AMERICA'S HARD WORKING FAMILIES

A Child Tax Credit to make it easier for families to raise their kids.

Tax cuts targeted to higher education to make college more affordable for America's families.

A Welfare-to-Work tax credit to help long-term welfare recipients get jobs.

Establishes additional Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

A MESSAGE FROM WEI JINGSHENG

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

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, today from this center of freedom in this people's House, I come to raise my voice in support of a lonely voice for freedom halfway across the globe. I speak of Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Yesterday, in a New York Times editorial notebook piece, Tina Rosenberg wrote an article called Letters From a Chinese Jail: The Blunt Demands of Wei Jingsheng. She wrote:

For nearly 20 years, the Chinese Government has sought to silence one of the world's most important political prisoners, Wei Jingsheng. Once an electrician in the Beijing