

REVITALIZING AMERICAN
EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. GRANGER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, the poet Maya Angelo once said a cynical child is one who has made the transition from knowing nothing to believing nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of education is not just to grant knowledge to our students, it is also to give them hope. Sadly, many of our schools today fail on both counts. Yes, it is true that many of our young people today are not able to write words or calculate numbers as they should, but perhaps more profoundly, many of our young people are discouraged and disillusioned. They have lost hope in themselves and they have lost hope in America. That is an American tragedy.

The effects of this tragedy are felt everywhere. We can sense it in our inner cities where crime is rampant and violence is a way of life. We can see it in the eyes of an 18-year-old dropout who has aged far beyond his years and lives life knowing his best years are already over. We can hear it in the voices of thousands of young people, people for whom the promise of America has long since been lost.

These precious young people are the ones who ultimately pay the price when our schools fail. These young people are the victims of schools that have failed them and communities that have given up on them. This is a situation we must and we can do something about.

I believe that no first-class nation can have second-class citizens. But being an optimist, I believe there are also answers. To those parents and students who have been failed by our schools, I say yes, you have lost much but you have not lost everything. To those teachers and principals who are trying to make a difference, I say yes, you are doing many good things, you are building their futures and you are building ours.

Tonight I rise not to condemn American education but to challenge it. I want to challenge teachers to work harder and students to study longer. I want to encourage school administrators, school board members and school principals to create safe environments, better schools, and more creative classrooms. I want to urge moms and dads not just to be parents at home but also partners in the schools.

We can revitalize American education. We have all the necessary ingredients. We have the best teachers in the world and the brightest young minds, if only we can create a climate where teachers and students can do what they do best, teach and learn. I believe we can do that and I know we should. Today more than ever our schools and our children need our help.

When our children head off to college, they need our help even more. To-

night I think help has arrived. Tonight, I am pleased to introduce, along with the gentlewoman from Washington [Ms. DUNN], the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. PITTS], the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY], the majority whip, and others, the HELP Act, the Higher Education and Learning Promotion Act.

This legislation is designed to give families an additional option for their \$500-per-child tax credit which both the President and the Congress are pledged to support. This historic legislation would allow our families to begin financing higher education through savings instead of debt.

As an incentive to encourage families to save and invest for their children's college education, this legislation would allow parents to invest this child tax credit in an education savings account. These accounts will earn interest tax free and can be withdrawn tax free for their child's education, and families will be able to double the amount of the tax credit if they choose to invest in an education savings account.

This would give families the option of using this tax credit and other savings to help plan for their children's future. A family with two children will be able to invest \$1,500 each year for each of their children in an education savings account. That is \$3,000 for their children's education.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the HELP Act is an important part of revitalizing American education, and I urge my colleagues to include this important proposal in the upcoming tax relief package for families.

Mr. Speaker, with the help of parents and teachers and the hope of our young people, we can build schools which will train fertile minds, prepare young lives and foster dreams. Our vision is a glorious one, an America where our children are not only well educated but, more importantly, an America where our children believe in themselves and they believe in their country. Mr. Speaker, the future is theirs but the responsibility is ours.

TRIBUTE TO SMALL BUSINESS
ENTREPRENEURS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this evening as well to pay tribute as we are this week to the small business entrepreneurs in our country, those who continue to drive the economic engine that makes this the greatest economy in the world. I have some personal history with that. My grandfather came to this country from Norway back around the turn of the century to pursue his American dream, and he and my great uncle, who did not speak a word of English, came through Ellis Island, ended up in the middle of South Dakota, and went into

the hardware business and had the opportunity like so many people at that time who came here, the freedom to succeed and the freedom as well to fail. But they came here because the opportunity existed in America. The South Dakota landscape just abounds with wonderful stories of entrepreneurial success, people who have taken risks. Some have succeeded, some have failed.

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But many out there have been willing to move forward in a way that will continue to advance the American dream in this country, and I look at countless examples of those, and particularly in my State of South Dakota most of the businesses in our State are small businesses. We are a State which consists of many small towns and many main streets, and without those small businesses our State would not have the economic life that it does. It is our life blood.

So this evening and this week we have paid tribute to those many people.

I had the opportunity to have lunch 2 days ago with Richard and Janet Cone of Cone Ag Service, Inc., in Pierre, which is this year's small business award winner in South Dakota. They were here to celebrate and to be recognized, and they are just one of many who have taken again advantage of the opportunity that is afforded us in this country and then part of the American dream.

As you look at those that have succeeded in South Dakota I harken back to, and for those who have traveled in my State you will know as you drive down Interstate 90 you will see countless signs for a place called Wall Drug. Wall Drug is a wonderful story about someone who started with an idea of free ice water and 5-cent coffee, and to this day those continue to be their trademarks, free ice water and 5-cent coffee, and they have turned that into a wonderful marketing masterpiece. It has been incredibly successful and provides jobs and opportunities in that small community.

I think of Mike's Jack and Jill in Webster, SD, a good friend of mine. The mayor of that community is someone who is very involved in the community. And one of the things that I think you witness when you see small businesses that have success in this country is the commitment that they have to corporate and to civic responsibility and citizenship. They have enjoyed the freedoms that we have in America, and they have also taken very seriously the responsibility to contribute and to give back, and most of the people in those small towns are those who are consistently involved in their municipal governments and their civic organizations and their service organizations and the Little League baseball teams, and I can give you many, many examples of that.

But we have a small business culture in this country, an entrepreneurial culture that we want to continue to promote, and one of the things I think that we can do is encourage the self-sufficiency, the independence that will allow and give those people the environment they need in which to prosper and to continue to succeed in their businesses. Most of the people who are in small business are people of character. They are visionaries. They are people of incredible commitment and dedication, and they have a very, very strong work ethic, and that is something I think we want to continue to encourage.

One of the things in the debate that we are about today, this week and just earlier today approved the budget resolution which includes some tax relief for those who are out there creating the jobs and making the investments and taking the risks that continue to drive this economy forward, and I believe that we need a government that lends them a helping hand, that will be a partner with them and that reinforces those values and those traditions rather than destroying them. And one of the things that we are talking about doing in this budget resolution is bringing estate tax relief, and that is something that I think will encourage the family farms to continue, the small businesses to continue as we allow and make it easier for small business entrepreneurs to pass on that family business to the next generation.

We are talking about lowering the tax burden on savings, investment and job creation, the capital gains tax, and that is something as well that I think will be an enormous benefit to the small businessowners in this country and enable them again to continue to do what they do best, and that is to make those investments that build the economies in those small towns and continue to contribute to the fabric of this Nation and to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship, and many things and many qualities that we look to in this country and the things that I think have for so long defined what we have come to know as the American dream, and that is that when you come to this country, we have the opportunity again to succeed, the freedom to fail. But we have remarkable success stories out there, and I think it is very fitting that this week we pay tribute to those small businesses that continue to drive this economy and renew our commitment to making, creating an environment that is conducive for them to succeed and to prosper.

So I look forward to working toward that end.

THE CENSUS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HELPING FLOOD VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to bring some light and some sense to the actions of this House just a few minutes ago. Unfortunately, I think that there was more of an eagerness to play politics as opposed to responding to a simple question that my 11-year-old son, Jason Lee, raised with me last evening, and that was a concern for those individuals in South Dakota and other parts who suffered a lot this spring, Americans who we have a great concern for and have really attempted for the past couple of weeks to effectively and through the right way provide funding for their needs. Unfortunately, a political game was played tonight, and in this emergency supplemental appropriations we did not do the right thing. We did not do the right thing because we did not get to the bottom line, and that is to provide the support needed for those in the military who needed training to be able to provide assistance to these communities that have suffered from this terrible flooding and fires. We did not do the right thing by providing the moneys for community development funds for rebuilding of their housing.

Mr. Speaker, what we actually did was play politics. We proceeded to cut the moneys less than what was already included in the budget. We proceeded to cut discretionary funding and defense funding, although there are some who think that that money was included.

We also tried to do damage to a very important aspect of the American psychic and the American responsibility, and that is to count its citizens.

We did tonight something that had nothing to do with helping the citizens in South Dakota and other places that were negatively impacted. We put a straightjacket on the census. We declared Americans uncountable. We said that they are not important to find out who lives in the rural communities and urban centers. In an emergency appropriations bill we put in a straightjacket on taking the census for the year 2000.

I would argue does that make any sense? It certainly does not. Apples and oranges; somebody said mangoes and papayas.

What we did was to deny to American cities and rural communities the right to get their fair share of the tax dollars by denying the procedure of sampling and taking the census. Do you realize that we counted some 6 million people twice in the last census in 1990 and did not count 10 million citizens? It does not make sense when we began to distribute funds that we would find a circumstance where this Congress will straightjacket a function that is so very important to this Nation. In fact, the Constitution said the actual enumeration shall be made within 3 years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, with every subsequent term of 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, the census is written into the Constitution, and yet playing

politics instead of voting and putting forth the response to those citizens in the West who need our help, we now have intermingled and strangled this emergency supplemental appropriations bill so that the President will veto it because what it says is that we are not going to count our citizens and distribute our tax dollars fairly.

I almost wish we could go back to the drawing board and answer the question of my son, age 11: Why can we not simply just give them the money and give them the money fairly and straightly to deal with their problems and stop the politics?

I hope that we will be able to clear the air, if you will, to take this terrible language out of this supplemental appropriations bill so that we do not stranglehold the counting of citizens and we be able to move forward in the year 2000 and use a sampling that gets every one of our citizens. No matter where they are, whether they are homeless or not, they deserve to be counted so that we in America can distribute funds for education, the environment, Medicare and Medicaid, and not use your moneys frivolously, so that States who need more money because there are more people can fairly receive those funds instead of looking into smoke and mirrors and trying to decide who is in our State and who is in our country.

Every child, every senior citizen, every working man and woman, every person in this country deserves to be counted in the census, and yet on this day of June 5, 1997, instead of giving money to the people who need it, we are fooling around and hiding the ball in the census in the year 2000.

Someone said it does not seem to match two things: census and money for the folks who need it. You are right, it does not. Let us do the right thing and make sure that we pass a appropriations bill that serves those folk in South Dakota and other places who just simply ask to be treated like Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BRADY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BRADY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the House has finished its legislative business for the week.

The House will meet for pro forma sessions at 9 a.m. tomorrow and 10 a.m. Saturday. Of course there will be no legislative business and no votes on those days.