

On Tuesday, June 10, the House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for morning session and 12 noon for legislative business. Members should note that we do expect recorded votes soon after 2 p.m. on Tuesday.

As our first order of business on Tuesday, June 10, the House will consider the following four suspensions: H.R. 848, Extending the Deadline for AuSable Hydroelectric Project in New York; H.R. 1184, Extending the Deadline for Bear Creek Hydroelectric Project in Washington; H.R. 1217, Extending the Deadline for Hydroelectric Project in Washington State; and H. Con. Res. 60—Relating to the 30th Anniversary of the Reunification of the City of Jerusalem.

After suspensions, the House will resume consideration of H.R. 1757, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act. The House will also vote on previously ordered amendments to that bill.

On Wednesday, June 11, and Thursday, June 12, the House will meet at 10 a.m. and on Friday, June 13, the House will meet at 9 a.m. to consider the following bills, all of which will be subject to rules: H.R. 1758, The European Security Act; H.R. 437, The National Sea Grant College Program Reauthorization Act of 1997; and H.J. Res. 54, Proposing an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution Authorizing the Congress to Prohibit the Physical Desecration of the U.S. Flag.

Mr. Speaker, we should finish legislative business and have Members on their way home by 2 p.m. on Friday, June 13.

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION DISASTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, we have had two important pieces of legislation in the past few days, one related to disaster. As the gentlewoman from Texas has just related, we had a bill to deal with the disaster relief. I think the whole bill is about \$8 billion, and \$5 billion of that was for disaster relief for places that are very much in need of help and they need it now. We recognize in this Nation and repeatedly the Congress comes to the aid of any States, any communities that have natural disasters.

Today I want to talk about the continuing education disaster that many of my colleagues, Democrats as well as Republicans, who just do not believe that we have an education disaster raging in our big cities, our inner city communities, and New York is just one, but Chicago, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, all over, you have a problem that cannot be resolved or solved with business as usual.

We have a disaster. It is a man-made disaster, but it is a continuing disaster

in that we are not providing education of the kind that is needed in order for young people to cope with the 20th century demands, let alone to go into the 21st century.

We talk a lot about the need for computer education, computer literacy. We applaud the fact that telecommunications are being introduced, and now at an affordable rate in schools. Recently we had a landmark action by the Federal Communications Commission where they followed the mandate of legislation that we had passed, and they created a universal fund for schools and libraries so the schools and libraries can get at a 90-percent discount in the poorest areas the wiring for telecommunication services, computers, even just more telephones, and they can have a 90-percent discount indefinitely. They will be able to pay a telephone bill that costs \$1 with 10 cents. That is what a 90-percent discount means.

The poorest districts in America will have a 90-percent discount, and even the wealthiest districts in America will have a 20-percent discount. That is a major piece of government action that creates hope. But in the big city school systems there is not enough in place at this point to take advantage of this new revolution in the provision of assistance for telecommunications to schools and libraries.

The education disaster is there now, the education disaster grows worse because of demands on our school systems and the need for education and the complexities of the kind of education needed are increasing while our schools are falling further and further behind.

I want to speak in particular about New York City because we have just returned recently from a recess where I had the opportunity to get closer to problems in my district, problems that I thought I understood very well before. I find that they are even worse than I have imagined, that there are problems with dimensions that shock even myself, and I have been in Congress now for 15 years. Before that I was an elected official in the New York State Senate, and before that I was an official in the New York City government. But the magnitude of these problems in New York City education are staggering, and an experienced observer is shocked by some of the things that happen, and I want to talk about that.

Just first a footnote on the two important pieces of legislation that passed this past few days. One, the budget conference report that passed today where the Senate and the House now agreed on a budget, and basically I think the White House has agreed on most of the elements of that budget too.

□ 2000

It is important to note that that budget agreement does not have to go to the White House for the signature of

the President. Budgets do not have to go to the White House. They are agreements between the Senate and the House.

The President started the process with his budget. In this case, the President sat in with the representatives of both Houses and they reached an agreement. I did not vote for that agreement because there were a lot of things missing there that I felt ought to be there.

One of those things, of course, is the \$5 billion for construction initiatives for schools which was proposed by the President to help stimulate construction of new schools or to renovate existing schools or to rehabilitate existing schools, to remove the danger of safety hazards from schools. If schools have asbestos problems, if they have lead pipe problems, any of those problems could have been taken care of in this \$5 billion initiative.

Now, the President initiated this, and we thought that in the budget agreement this would be a major item that would emerge intact. But unfortunately, Members of Congress, either in the House of Representatives or the other body, insisted that the \$5 billion initiative for school construction be taken out. They were adamant, and the President finally yielded. Many of them insisted it should be taken out because they want to make the argument that local governments, the cities, the States, and the citizens of the States must be fully responsible for school construction.

I want to just quickly note that they would still be mostly responsible, no matter what the Federal Government does. A \$5 billion initiative to help with school construction would be just a tiny portion of the amount of money needed. The General Accounting Office estimates that we need \$135 billion to bring our schools into the 21st century, \$135 billion. So if the Federal Government is responsible for just \$5 billion, it will not begin to solve the problem, but it will be a stimulant, and evidently, because we continue to fail to make the necessary promises at the State and local level, we need this Federal stimulant.

So it is unfortunate that the budget conference report that went forward today does not have that \$5 billion for school construction.

We will not cease the fight, we will not give up. We are not elected to give up, we are not elected to stop the fight. Between now and the time that we adjourn sometime in the fall, we will continue to fight. The members of the Congressional Black Caucus have made this a priority item. We appeal to all of our comrades, all of our colleagues, to make certain that they keep sight of the fact that this is a major item of the budget.

There is a bill that has been introduced by my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY], and 190 signatures were on that bill to carry forward the President's \$5 billion construction initiative. So we think

there is enough support to keep this item on the agenda. We think that it is not incompatible with the budget agreement that has already been made.

Within the context of that budget agreement there is room for the school construction initiative to be revitalized. In the area of capital gains tax reductions, maybe corporate tax credits, corporate tax writeoffs of some kind could be used as a device to return to some kind of school construction initiative of an appropriate magnitude.

We also passed the supplemental appropriation that I just mentioned before, which contains the disaster relief for communities that are suffering from floods and from exorbitant amounts of natural disasters that have occurred in the last 6 months. We think that is very much in order, but as I said before, disaster relief of another kind is needed in our big cities.

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with voting for disaster relief. I voted for \$8 billion for California with its earthquakes and mud slides. I voted for \$6 billion when we had to give money for the hurricane that took place in Florida, and \$6 billion for flood relief in the Midwest several years ago. We apportion large amounts of Federal resources into helping people who need help.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, New York does not have earthquakes, it does not have floods. We have not had any mud slides. So New York is a donor State. We continue to pay more into the Federal Treasury than we ever get back, so we deserve some consideration, and probably most of the big cities deserve some consideration in terms of another kind of disaster relief. First of all, of course, our colleagues here in the Congress have to recognize that it is a disaster. What is happening in our big city schools is a disaster.

I had a discussion with one of my Democratic colleagues just yesterday who insisted that we should not have the Federal Government involved in school construction. It is a disaster. We find no other way to relieve the disaster. Bad decisions have been made, the wrong decisions have been made by local officials in some cases and by State officials. We have unfortunately allowed a situation to develop which is so far out of hand now that it has to have help from the outside, we must have help from the outside.

Most of the help, as I said, will not come from the outside, but we need the stimulus. We need every public official at the city level, county level, and the Federal level, every public official should be put on the spot by having the Federal Government say, "Here is part of the money, a small part of it. If you will just match it, if you will show some incentive, some initiatives, then we can go forward and provide the additional share to accomplish the task."

I am not apologizing at all for local officials or for State officials. The mayor of the city of New York cut the school budget by more than \$1.5 billion

over the last 3 years. Part of the cuts that took place there were cuts that had an effect on the budget for renovation and for repairs and for school construction. So decisions being made by local elected officials are part of the problem. The State has not come forward with any great new initiative on construction in a long time. Decisions being made at the State level are part of the problem.

Recently we had a State environmental bond initiative on the ballot, and the Governor came out and campaigned for that, identifying with the environmentalists, whom he had previously called beatniks and in various ways ridiculed, but suddenly the power of the environmentalist vote led the Governor to come out and campaign. The Senator from that State came out and campaigned, and they all are now on the environmentalist bandwagon.

We are happy about that. We passed the bond. I was happy to note that in that bond issue they specifically said that they would give some small amount of the environmental cleanup money to New York City so that New York City could get rid of its coal-burning schools. Coal-burning schools in New York City. We still have coal-burning schools.

They said in the brochure that urged people to come out and vote that funds would be available for 30 schools to change their boilers from coal-burning boilers to gas or oil boilers, eliminating the coal dust in the air that is perpetuating and increasing epidemic asthma and some other respiratory diseases. So we were proud of the fact that specifically they had mentioned relieving us of coal-burning furnaces.

Despite the fact that I have been in New York a long time, I thought well, that would be the elimination of a major problem, 30 coal-burning schools will be no longer there. I did not know it at the time, but throughout the city we have almost 300 coal-burning schools, almost 300, and 30 means that we are going to eliminate 10 percent with this environmental bond issue.

I know the numbers, when we start talking about New York City, always people's eyes glaze over or they just lose track because the numbers are so great. We have 1,100 schools in New York City, 1,100 schools serving nearly 8 million people, so the numbers are great. But out of that 1,100 schools, we have some which are way back in the previous century. They burn coal, and that coal in a city of 8 million people living in a relatively small space, we can see how the coal dust alone is a major environmental hazard being perpetrated at a place where young kids congregate on a regular basis. So we are creating a major problem. It is a disaster.

If one will not accept the general condition of the school system as a disaster, then at least accept the fact that when it comes to safety and health, we have a disaster in 300 schools that burn coal. In our Federal construction ini-

tiative, if nothing else, the Federal construction initiative should set us free from those coal-burning schools, but that is not the case.

We have in the budget conference report a proposal for tax cuts, and some colleagues have said well, since we did not get the President's initiative in terms of the budget as an outright item, then let us look at the tax cuts that are proposed in the budget agreement. There is a provision for 85 billion dollars worth of tax cuts over a period of 5 years, \$85 billion in tax cuts are part of the agreement, and \$35 billion of that \$85 billion are related to education, related to tax credits for tuition, to merit scholarships, to a number of items that are important, and they belong in there and they should be in there.

However, in addition to that, we ought to have at least \$5 billion more of that tax cut dedicated to doing something to deal with the construction crisis, the school facility crisis, the safety and health crisis in our schools with respect to the big cities. Fifty billion dollars in tax cuts, somehow there ought to be created an imaginative way to get corporations and businesses involved to the tune of \$5 billion in tax writeoffs or tax credits, or some way to have \$5 billion of that \$50 billion in tax cuts contributed toward solving the construction problem, the facility problem, contributed toward being a stimulant to solving the construction and facility problem in our school systems.

Construction is a major kingpin in the whole effort to improve our schools. Construction is at the core of it in the sense that if we do not have buildings that are adequate, then nothing else that we do will have the proper impact. If children are in overcrowded schools as they are in New York City, we had a finite, very dramatic example of what the problem is last September, when on the day the school opened 91,000 children did not have a place to sit.

Now, it did not mean that we did not have 91,000 seats, but it meant we had a lot of the 91,000 with no place to sit anywhere. No matter how much we adjusted the system, transferred the schools from one community to another, busing youngsters further away, we still had large numbers who had no place to sit and places had to be found in hallways, places had to be found in storage rooms, places had to be found in corners of cafeterias, in assembly halls, all kinds of places that were not classrooms.

In addition to that, we had to increase the size of the classes. Even if we had the money for additional teachers, we did not have a place for the teachers to teach, so the number of children in each class had to be increased. So all of the classes in certain areas of our city have more children than they are supposed to have according to the agreed-upon contract with the teachers. Instead of 26 at certain

grade levels, you have 35. That is a big difference in terms of the quality of teaching.

So just the magnitude of the problem that you see in numbers and in overcrowding creates a situation that makes it harder for the teacher to do their job. But of course if you add to that the safety hazards, the asbestos that is a problem that we still have not dealt with in many of the schools, and we add to that the lead poisoning, lead being in some of the pipes and the paint.

We add to that of course the fact that some schools are so old that the top floor, they have two floors, if one goes up to the second floor one will find that the walls of the classrooms on the second floor are continually shedding off because of the dampness, and the roofs that have been repaired over and over again no longer can be repaired to keep the water out, it just keeps coming in, or the money needed to properly repair the roofs and the walls is just not there.

So we have manifestations of a physical problem that directly impacts upon the children in the school. If the walls of the room are damp, there is a health hazard and a distraction. If windows are knocked out and not replaced right away, that is a distraction. If the lighting of the school is improper, that is a distraction. We know what good schools look like. We can travel from New York City to the suburbs and find what good schools look like.

□ 2015

Even within the city we have a two-tiered system. There are some neighborhoods that have excellent schools that would pass muster anywhere, but there are too many that have schools that belong to another century. Instead of carrying us forward to the 21st century they are still lingering in the 19th century.

So we have right now a window of opportunity to do something about education in general, and the effort to improve education in general has to start specifically with the physical facilities, or the physical facility improvement becomes symbolic of what we really want to do. If we are not willing to do the basics, if we are not willing to give a child a comfortable place to sit, a place to sit which is conducive to learning, then the other efforts become a little ridiculous.

We talk about all third-grade children should learn to read and be reading on third-grade level when they get to third grade. We talk about the fact that we want all students when they graduate to be able to measure up to certain standards. We want to be first in math and science. We have six goals that became eight or nine goals. They are all laudable goals, but how do you recognize these goals when you cannot provide a safe place to sit? How do you talk about a national curriculum, we would impose a national curriculum, where every subject of five or six sub-

jects will be more or less taught the same way and have the same outcome aspirations, the same attempt to get to certain levels? When we talk about that in the context of falling schools, walls crumbling down, leaking roofs, and asbestos in the wall, you begin to generate cynicism and hopelessness.

We have a revolution going on with telecommunications, but if you cannot bore a hole in the wall because when you bore the hole the asbestos comes out, then we cannot wire the schools that have the asbestos problem. So construction becomes a symbol. It becomes a kingpin.

Construction of facilities, if they are not proper, then we usually find that other matters are not being taken care of either. Where we have construction problems, when we start asking questions, we find we have other problems. If we do not have school facilities that are proper, then usually those same schools do not have adequate supplies. The same schools have broken machinery or broken equipment. The same schools do not have quality teachers.

In my district, one of the districts that we have, they have the largest number of substitute teachers in the city, teachers who are not really certified teachers. The requirement is that you be certified, or the requirement is that teachers have to meet certain standards, but if they are not there and you have to hire substitutes, you take people who are not well trained.

This problem takes place in the same places where you have the space and facilities problem. It is symbolic. Communities that do not take care of their schools physically are not doing other things that are necessary to promote opportunities to learn.

Opportunity to learn standards, as I said before on this floor many times, is a set of standards that nobody wants to talk about. Everybody wants to talk about new curriculum standards, all across the Nation to have the same set of curriculum standards. They want to talk about new testing standards, where we test students across the Nation and compare their achievements. But in order to have students master the new curriculum, in order to have them pass the test, we need to create an opportunity to learn. It is simple common sense and simple logic. Part of the creation of an opportunity to learn, of course, is they have to have a safe place to sit, a place that is conducive to learning.

So cities are neglected. They are neglected partially for racist reasons. Large numbers of minority groups are congregated in cities. Cities are neglected partially because of income numbers. Large numbers of poor people are congregated in cities. Poor people do not vote in the same percentages as other people. It is a political problem. It is a problem that local officials and State officials have neglected.

How do we break out of it? Large percentages of our population live in

cities. Large percentages of our population that are the work force of tomorrow are not being appropriately educated. We have an anti-city bias in this country. The anti-city bias is played out in the compromise that we have to make on the Constitution.

The Constitution appropriates Representative's seats by population, so that is a one man-one vote ratio. Places which have the most population get the most power, the most votes in the House of Representatives. But the great compromise was that each State should have two Senators. No matter how small the State is, they have two Senators, so we have Senators in large numbers who are elected by rural and suburban constituencies and they do not have big city populations, and the policy-making in this country has gone that way over the last 50 years: more and more neglect of big cities by the Federal Government, and the same pattern is played out often at the State level, where you have Governors being elected by non-city populations also.

So we have a problem that cries out for resolution. We have a disaster that needs attention. We have a window of opportunity now. I am standing here because I will not give up. I hope my colleagues will not give up. I appeal to everybody out there with common sense to understand this magic window of opportunity.

The cold war is over. We do not have to dedicate large amounts of resources to fighting the evil empire of the Soviet Union anymore. We have a President who wants to be known as the education President. He has put forward a very progressive, a very comprehensive program.

We have the leadership of the majority in the House of Representatives stating that they are committed to the improvement of education in America. There is a disagreement on how we should approach it, but we can resolve that disagreement probably sometime in the future, maybe, but the important thing is that both parties, both houses of Congress and the White House, are committed to improving education.

We have a window of opportunity. There is a need for people to come to this floor and talk specifically about how we take advantage of that window of opportunity. There is a need for us not to allow a Potemkin Village approach to be taken to education; that is, we have a few outstanding examples of what is happening that is progressive and positive in the country, and we hold up those examples and say, great, we are doing a great job, and we fool ourselves and we fool the American people in general, and make them think that we are really progressing and we have an appropriate education system.

Any system of education in America which does not educate most of the population is a failure. We cannot exist, we cannot survive if the total population is not educated. The elite

education may be the best in the world, the education of the graduate students and the scientists and technicians at the very top. The Ph.D. degrees in our higher education institutions, they may be the very best education in the world but they are educating a very small percentage of the total population. The world does not run on the basis of Ph.D's, top scientists, or top technicians. The world runs only when people all up and down the scale have some degree of education.

The example I have used before is when you get on an airplane, do not worry about the pilot. The pilot has the best training in the world. I think we spend more to train pilots than we do any other occupation. Pilots of airplanes in America especially have the best training that you can get, the most up-to-date training. They have rigorous standards imposed upon them.

We may complain about the FAA not being tough enough on airlines in terms of certain safety requirements of the planes and certain equipment failures, et cetera, but nobody ever complains about inadequate training of pilots. So they are well educated.

But when you get on a plane, you had better worry about the guy who put the oil in the oil pits. You have to worry about the man who put the gasoline in, if he read the meters right. You have to worry about the mechanic who tightened the bolts, and a whole array of people who did not go to graduate school, who did not receive very expensive and thorough training. All of them, too, they have to be educated.

It is true of our total society. There is hardly an operation within our society where we do not have people all up and down the scale who need more education in order to do the job well. If they do not do the job well, then we may have some disasters resulting. Serious things happen when people who do not necessarily have high education credentials do not have the education they need to do their job at whatever level they have to do it.

We have serious consequences when the productivity of the total society goes down, because the people who are needed for those production jobs at various levels are not there. We cannot exist and compete as a Nation if we neglect large numbers of our students in our inner-city communities. We need an across-the-board approach where the suburbs, the cities, everybody is keyed to being given the best education possible. Opportunities to learn and opportunity to learn standards have to be important to everybody.

I want to describe the comprehensive approach that we talked about when I was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Select Education. We reorganized the Office of Education, Research, and Improvement. We said, you have to take a comprehensive approach. I am talking mainly about construction and the need to address ourselves to school facilities and provide a safe environment, a healthy environment as step

one. But we have to have an overall comprehensive approach. That is basic and that is No. 1. The comprehensive approach means that every aspect of the problems related to education have to be examined.

A comprehensive approach means that Americans should stop oversimplifying what is necessary to educate our children. Everybody is an expert on education. They think they are experts in education.

While it is important that everybody be in on the dialogue, because the dialogue means that maybe they will wake up to how important it is, and when the time comes to vote for elected officials, the time comes to select the people who are going to educate our children, we are aware; everybody needs to be aware. But let us not assume that everybody is qualified to determine how our schools should operate.

We should not oversimplify. We do not oversimplify in the area of defense and armaments. We know experts are needed. All of us have a stake in what happens in terms of the protection we receive from the Department of Defense, but we do not oversimplify and assume we can do it. We should not oversimplify in education. We should understand everything across-the-board, and that is one point we tried to make when we reorganized the Office of Education, Research and Improvement.

We called for certain institutes: an institute for the education of at-risk students to deal with some of the problems that our inner cities face with our students.

We called for an institute for early childhood education. More and more we are learning that early childhood education is critical, because children learn more in their early years than we imagined, and what happens in those early years can set the tone for the ability of a child to learn for the rest of their lives.

We called for an institute for curriculum improvement. We also called for an institute for governance and management. I am going to talk a bit about governance and management of schools, because I think that governance at the macrolevel, governance at the level of the Congress of the United States, means we ought to make decisions here about education which are really going to promote the improvement of education.

Governance at the microlevel means that down at the local education level, the superintendents of schools, the school principals, we have to have the best governance and the best management there, too.

Although improving facilities and physical environments is critical, there are other problems. One of those problems I stumbled upon when I was in my district for the past district work period that surprised me greatly.

We have a space problem in New York, as I said before. There were 91,000

young people that did not have a place to sit when school opened last September. As a result of that space problem, one group that I worked with, the Central Brooklyn Martin Luther King Commission, which is dedicated to improving education in central Brooklyn, that group decided to join with me in making a survey of the schools in my congressional district.

We wanted to make a survey to find out who are these schools, which schools still have a major space problem, which schools have overcrowding to a degree that is unacceptable. As we started to make the survey, we started by checking written documents and found that they were of little use, because people were not telling the truth. You would have a situation where a school would state that they had no overcrowding problem, but when you went to the school you found out that they had three lunch periods. One school had five lunch periods.

□ 2030

Why do schools have three lunch periods? Because they are overcrowded, and they cannot get the students a lunch period in a reasonable amount of time. So instead of having one or two lunch periods, there are so many children they have to have three. I found one school that had to have five. Most people cannot comprehend this because even I find it hard to comprehend.

I discovered in my district a school where children start eating lunch at 9:45. They have to eat lunch at 9:45 because the school is so crowded that is the only way they will get lunch served. The last ones are served at 2:30. The first lunch period begins at 9:45. It is that overcrowded. So no matter what they say on paper about not being overcrowded, you can tell by just asking how many lunch periods do you have.

But then you can walk around and find groups of kids sitting in the halls. You can find storage rooms which have groups of kids, obvious things are happening when you walk around and look that you see that indicate that you still have a major overcrowding problem.

There is one overcrowding problem, there is one aspect of this problem that really shocked me that I could not see with my own eyes, and that is in one of the districts, district 23. I do not want to bore anybody, but in New York City we have 32 school districts which are subunits of the local education agency. The board of education comprises the local education agency for New York City. It is broken down into 32 subdivisions. Each one of the subdivisions has a superintendent. And the overall board of education has a chief executive officer who is called the chancellor.

So in my district I have parts, in my congressional district I have parts of five subunits, five local school districts. These local school districts are all shaped by natural neighborhood

boundaries so they are not all the same size. But if you have a situation in a city as a whole where overcrowding is taking place, the last thing you expect is to find any district that does not have an overcrowding problem. You certainly do not expect to find a district that has empty classrooms, that has a situation where construction is not the problem but governance and management are the problem. And because of the governance and management of this particular district, because of its problems, you have overcrowding increased in the surrounding districts. And I am talking about district 23, which covers an area that became famous in 1967 and 1968, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville District.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville became famous because it was one of the first experiments of community control and the local community control effort clashed with the teachers union. And we had a long strike in New York City that got national and sometimes international attention. So Ocean Hill-Brownsville is the place, a district that comprised the district boundary of district 23.

Our overcrowding survey led to this discovery: that district 23 does not have an overcrowding problem but a shrinkage problem, where despite the fact that districts all around it are overcrowded and getting worse in terms of their population increase, the number of pupils going to school at district 23 is shrinking. It was a phenomenon which I decided to look at in far greater detail, and you cannot examine the overcrowding problems in this district without knowing some of the history.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville had national attention when they had the great teachers strike, but then it moved off the front page when peace came. There was a settlement. Unfortunately that settlement included a takeover by the local political club, the assemblymen of the local political club politically moved in in an election and they gained control of the local school board. And you had peace, but the peace was a peace with corruption, a peace with violence in the schools, low attendance. The district became known as a place which was an extension of the patronage system, the local clubhouse. It did not matter whether people did their job right or not, as long as they were approved by the local clubhouse.

It took a long fight to get rid of the political takeover of district 23, Ocean Hill-Brownsville. I was a part of the struggle to set the district free. We finally freed it of political control, and one of our rallying cries was, stop political interference and let the educators educate.

As the State senator for that area, I certainly worked hard to make certain that other elected officials would not get involved anymore in hamstringing the quality of education within the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district.

The problem is that that was a stupid position to take.

Politicians, public officials should never say that they are not going to be involved in local schools or education at any level. Yes, public officials should not interfere. They should not seek to use schools for patronage, but district 23 is a perfect example how when the public officials back away, they are no longer looking, leave it to the educators, terrible things can happen.

What has happened in district 23, because we took it out of the spotlight for 14 years, minimum political scrutiny, certainly no political interference, a superintendent was selected 14 years ago. And that superintendent has been there 14 years in a situation which is very unusual in New York City. Most school superintendents do not survive, do not stay in one place for 14 years. So we have a superintendent of this particular district who has been there 14 years.

The district is so bad, however, parents are fleeing the district. They have no overcrowding problem because parents have decided they do not want their kids to go to the school, to the district schools. So large numbers of schools have empty space in a city which is racked by the problem of overcrowding. District 23 has no overcrowding problem. The parents are pulling their kids out in great numbers.

The same district, the State has been observing the quality of education there. The overall citywide school board of education has been observing and several schools are under probation to make it simpler. They call them cert schools, schools which are under review. At least five schools are under review. Two schools recently were taken over by the chancellor for the overall school system. And the chancellor has what he calls a chancellor's district where he has created a district out of the 32 districts. Any long time, low performing schools are taken and put into a special supervisory situation where the chancellor's office oversees these schools. So two schools have been taken and at least three more are on the list in district 23.

I am giving you a case history related to governance and management and how governance and management in this particular case exacerbates our space problem.

The parents have made a decision. They know what is going on. Instead of fighting to improve the school district, they are just pulling the children out. Parents voted, nevertheless, to get rid of the old school board. They voted out the old school board. So in addition to understanding what is going on to the extent where they refuse to let their children go to school in the district, they also put forth an effort to get rid of the old school board and voted a new school board.

The new school board now decides that the district superintendent who has been there for 14 years has had an

opportunity to prove that he can educate children and can run a decent system. He can meet the challenges of that particular district or he cannot. They assume he cannot. Things have steadily gotten worse. District 23 is now at the very bottom of the list in terms of math and reading achievement. They have citywide tests, and you compare the scores from one district to another, this district is on the bottom. So it is pretty clear that the superintendent cannot, who has been there 14 years, cannot do the job.

The new school board votes not to renew his contract. Instead of him gracefully admitting he cannot do the job, this particular superintendent has decided to wage war against the new school board. They voted not to renew his contract. That is the procedure. You start advertising for other superintendents and they are in the process of doing that. But in the meantime the present superintendent is using the resources of the school system, the children, the parents to fight against the policy decision of the present local school board and he is determined to stay there. They are now reviewing resumes of people who want to become superintendents in the district. Among the resumes the old superintendent, who has been there 14 years and failed miserably, has submitted his resume. The old superintendent, still the present superintendent until June 30, also recommended five principals for tenure. As he is going on, he recommends principals for tenure. Once principals are recommended for tenure and receive tenure, they cannot be fired. According to the way the system operates, tenure means you are there and you cannot be moved.

Three of these five principals that were recommended were from these lowest performing schools. Again, the new school board decided to meet the challenge. They challenged the superintendent's recommendation of the five principals for tenure and said these are people who have failed and the failure is illustrated dramatically and documented by State records and by the chancellor's own criticisms of the district. Nevertheless, because of the arcane laws that relate to tenure, they will receive tenure, five failed principals will receive tenure. That is the way the law is written. If the superintendent recommends you, all the years that you have been there he has given you a satisfactory rating, there is no way to deny tenure.

So we are saddled probably with five principals who have created a problem by overseeing the lowest performing schools. The majority of the teachers in this district are also substitute teachers, because the word gets around that it is not a good place to be and it is hard to get good teachers to come in. Those old teachers who were there, were the best, lured out to other districts or they were even encouraged to retire because part of the mayor's reduction of the budget for the board of

education in the past 3 years has been an incentive plan to encourage the most experienced teachers and administrators to retire. More experienced people make higher salaries. If you get rid of the experienced people with the higher salaries, you lower your budget. But nobody bothered to use common sense and said, if you get rid of experienced people, you also lower the quality of everything there: administration, teaching.

So we have a massive failure that is exacerbated by the fact that the city and the State are encouraging experienced people to leave the system and new people coming in have no mentors, no way to be trained.

We have one element after another which piles on this disastrous situation within district 23. Most of the teachers who teach math and science in junior high schools did not major in math and science in junior high schools. You have a situation where there is a total collapse. There is a total collapse.

Education is not taking place in district 23, Ocean Hill-Brownsville; 11,000 children go to school here. Again, the figures in New York are very grandiose figures. This is one of the smallest districts in New York City. Each school district is supposed to comprise no less than 15,000 youngsters. They only have 11,000 because so many have fled. They have fled the disaster.

The district right next to it, district 17, has 30,000 pupils. District 18 has 20,000 pupils. They have an overcrowding problem in that district because the parents do not want their children to go to school in district 23.

You have a situation where education is not taking place in district 23. There has been a total collapse. But nevertheless the superintendent, Michael Vega—I am using his name because I think it is outrageous what is happening there—Superintendent Michael Vega is still insisting that he should remain a superintendent. He is waging war against the school board that is trying to remove him.

He is using the resources of the school, sending notes home with kids to parents. He has parent-teacher associations that he has cultivated over the years, very small groups, only a handful of parents involved. But they are the ones who get involved so they are elected. They are the officers. He has cultivated them and they are assisting him as he wages war against the district to try to remain in the district where he has been for 14 years, failed totally. The district has collapsed all around him and we have a war going on.

For that reason, Michael Vega becomes a parasite. Michael Vega in that district becomes the enemy of education. All the parents need to understand, he is the enemy of education. We have a situation where moral indignation is appropriate from every level. We should have moral indignation by every elected official in the area.

The chancellor of the whole school system was given new powers by the

State legislature just this year in early January. No, late last fall, he was given new powers, and he can move in and do things that he could not do before in local districts. So the moral indignation of the chancellor is needed. The chancellor has criticized the system for its failure. Nevertheless, Michael Vega continues to move in ways which might result in him being reappointed as the superintendent.

We have a commissioner of education for the State. The moral indignation of the commissioner, the powers of the commissioner should be brought to bear to get rid of a situation with respect to governance and management which is totally unacceptable.

We have a powerful United Federation of Teachers, a union. They should weigh in against this immoral situation. The mayor should weigh in against this situation where because of our arcane procedures and laws, a superintendent who has been there 14 years, failed, and an attempt is being made by the newly elected board to move him out, he still feels that he has the power. And he is still using the resources of the taxpayers, the resources of the district to fight the decision to be moved.

□ 2045

I have given this case history example, because I want to admit that all of the problems of our schools are not going to be resolved by any action by a government at the Federal level or by action at even State level. There are problems at the local level that have to be taken care of, and we have to deal with them as elected officials by confronting our own constituencies with the problems.

I served as a commissioner of a community development agency in New York with responsibility for the community action program, and we were major proponents of community control. We pushed hard for community control. And when the law was changed to set up community school districts, we were the major advocates and major proponents of community control.

What we have witnessed is that when we put local people in control, parents of the students in that area, poor people who live in the neighborhood, we can have some dramatic results that we would never expect. Corruption is not limited to middle class or rich people. Corruption takes place quickly also among people who are poor and who are local and who have something at stake in the system.

We were shocked to find that we could have a situation where one job, maybe pays \$15,000, to get one job secured, a member of a school board will move to ruin the lives of 15,000 youngsters. They do not care. They logroll with each other about jobs and they put in people who are not responsible and they allow all kinds of horrible situations to go on when their kids are in the schools and their neighbors' children are in the schools. It is shocking.

And for that reason, of course, I supported reforms which allowed the chancellor to have the power to step in.

Well, superintendents, like Michael Vega, chief executive officers, they are paid very well. They are supposed to make certain that laymen do not get away with these kinds of excesses. But instead of being the force that makes certain that professional education goes on, many superintendents become part of the problem. The corruption is driven from the office of the superintendent, a kind of corruption which we cannot arrest anybody for, a corruption which is an acquiescence to low standards, an acquiescence to mediocre, incompetent people in order to gain friendships.

For this superintendent, the most important thing is that he maintain friendships with enough people to get the votes he needs in order to continue there. And since the votes were taken away and the old school board that supported him was thrown out, he now is attempting to go to another level and get the power of the parents in each individual school, those few that he has nurtured along, and will promote a little revolution to maintain himself in power.

We should not let this exist, and I am taking this opportunity to give this case history here because I want to sound the alarm for people back in the 11th Congressional District, those who live in the District 23 area. The people who live in District 17, which is next to District 23, this is their fight too because their district is overcrowded as a result of kids fleeing from District 23. People whose children go to school in District 18, their district is overcrowded because children are fleeing from District 18.

It is a ridiculous situation, because throughout the whole city we have a shortage of places to sit, of classroom space, and District 23 has a surplus because nobody wants to go to school in District 23. We must deal with that situation.

We have a window of opportunity to really improve education in America. From where I stand, from where we are placed in the hierarchy of decision-making, the Members of Congress are not to take lightly this opportunity. We have a window of opportunity where the Nation is not faced with any great crisis, the Nation can focus its attention on education in a way it never could before, starting with the Federal Government.

We are not the major players in the education scenario. At best, we have only a minor role, but that role is important. The Federal Government is the stimulant. The Federal Government pushes things. The percentage of money spent by the Federal Government on education at most is about 7 percent. States and local governments provide the rest of the money for education, but despite this small percentage, Federal participation in education, through title I, through Head

Start, through various programs at the higher education level, Federal participation has a stimulant effect that is a very positive one.

We would not have certain kinds of standards that exist in our school settlements if it had not been for the impetus of the Federal Government. The education of children with disabilities, special education programs, would not exist if it were not for the Federal Government. The States and the localities are paying a greater percentage of the money, but the standards are being set and the high quality of education is being driven by the fact that the Federal Government is involved.

We have an opportunity to take advantage of certain historical events that have occurred recently. The fact that the Congress passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and in that act they mandated that the FCC should find a way to give some kinds of special attention to schools and libraries with respect to lowering the cost for telecommunications by having the providers pay into a universal fund, that has happened now. It has come to pass.

On May 7 the Federal Communications Commission voted to establish a universal fund for libraries and schools. That universal fund will provide the necessary funding at a 20-percent discount for the richest schools and a 90-percent discount for the poorest schools. That is an opportunity we should not pass up.

We have an opportunity in that there is agreement between both parties that the Federal Government has a major role in education, and in this Congress, the 105th Congress, there is a greater possibility that we will have some positive steps taken on a bipartisan basis than ever before.

So let us not fail to understand how serious it is. We have a disaster out there. It may not be in all our communities, in the suburbs, in the rural areas, but we might want to take a look and accept the fact that in the inner cities of our Nation we have a disaster.

We have a disaster that is not unique to New York. It exists in practically all of our inner-city communities. We need help. We need disaster relief. We do not have floods, we do not have earthquakes, we do not have mud slides. God did not do it directly, it is a man-made crisis, and partially it is made by bad decisions that have been made at every level, bad decisions by the Governors, bad decisions by the local mayors, and of course at the local level the school boards often make bad decisions also, but the Federal stimulus is the best thing that we have to offer, and we should make certain that from where we are we continue the Federal stimulus to assist education, starting with a revival of the construction initiative that the President put forth before.

Let us not give up. We need the \$5 billion construction initiative in the Federal budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RULES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KLINK] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, my colleague in the chair, and to everyone else who is here, let me first of all apologize for making you stay late, but I have delayed my own departure this evening. I could be almost home with my family. I have delayed my own departure this evening by better than 3 hours, because I think what I have to talk about is very important.

And regardless of what my colleagues may think about my legislative voting record and regardless of what they think about anything else, I hope they realize that I am not one of the Members of the House who rises to speak every day; I am not up on every subject every day acting as though I am an authority on everything, but when I do know something, and when it is important to my district and when it is important to this Nation, I think I have a responsibility to speak up on it.

The matter I am going to talk about now is a matter that is of importance to everyone throughout this entire Nation. It is going to mean whether or not our economy expands, it is going to mean whether or not we have jobs or whether or not our industry moves offshore. That is what I believe. That is what many other people across this country believe. That is what many other Members in this Chamber believe.

We will get the answer to this question, I believe, by the middle of July. We do not have to wait very long. Probably, at most, about 6 weeks. Because the Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of recommending new air quality standards, this at a time when we have been cleaning our air, the air quality. And, believe me, my district is around Pittsburgh, PA, once described as hell with the lid off. Back in the days when people had to sweep off their lawns because of the dust that came from the mills. Back in the days when if we hung our clothes out, they probably were dirtier when we took them off the line than when we washed them and hung them out. We had to shake off those clothes to get the dust off. People would go to work in the morning, and by the time they got to work they had black rings around their collars from the dust that would settle on their bodies.

We had tremendous problems with air quality. Towns like Donora, PA, saw people dropping dead in the street from the pollution. We know about air pollution.

A group called GASP, the Group Against Smog and Pollution, was born in Pittsburgh out of this fear for people's health. As a news reporter for 24 years, I covered our city as we were cleaning up the air. As a father of two young children, I want clean air. But I

am convinced by the EPA making these standards more stringent, while we are cleaning our air, that in fact our air will remain dirtier longer, and there are scientists who agree with me on that.

We have already set the finish line in this race to clean our air. We have definitive goals that we want to reach. And once we begin this process, those goals are erased and we extend the time out 10 years, 12 years, in fact, we really do not know how long, until we will actually have to hit those very same goals or goals which may be a tiny bit more stringent.

So if we are concerned, for example, about the health of that asthmatic 8- or 9-year-old child on the playground, and we do not want that child to breathe dirty air, to have to gasp to get air in their lungs, then we should agree with what Carol Browner of the EPA is about to try to do, unless we want action now. Because what she wants to do will perhaps clean the air up, but it will do it when that 8- or 9-year-old child is in college.

So instead of hitting ozone targets that say, for example, if we have a goal that we have to reach by 1999, well, we may not have to hit that goal until the year 2010. So we are going to wait 10 more years, 11 more years, 12 more years until we hit those goals.

There is not only the problem of making that asthmatic child wait longer for the air to be clean, there is the problem that we have with our economy. Industries across this Nation have spent tens of millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars individually, billions of dollars untold since the 1990 clean air amendments to clean the air. And now, all of a sudden, we are saying, wait a minute, what we said to spend money on, the particulate matter, that is the soot that is in the air, the soot which rises up out of the smokestacks of this country, we are not measuring it in a small enough measure. Instead of 10 microns, we want to make it 2.5 microns.

Sounds very scientific, but what we are saying is we want to measure smaller particles, but we are not saying what those particles should be. And we do not have enough science because, understand, we only have 50 monitors in this whole Nation which can measure 2.5 microns of the soot, the particulate matter, that EPA now wants us to go to. Fifty monitors are not enough and do not supply enough data that we can be sure that we are going to take this course of action which will cost over a million jobs, I believe, and others agree with me, and will cost untold billions of dollars.

Let me tell my colleagues about my district a little bit and why I am probably a little more concerned, and other people who are from what we call Rust Belt regions, have the same concerns.

In southwestern Pennsylvania, as we cleaned up that air that I talked about a few moments ago, partly because we were cleaning that air up, partly because the companies were investing in