

sure our children master the basics, this has been criticized already, that it is a bad thing to establish Federal standards.

I think the President made it clear he was not mandating these standards. He was basically saying the Federal Government can establish these standards and create incentives, if you will, to have the schools meet those standards. Again, that is the way I see the Federal role. The Federal role can well be, let us establish the standards and then the various school districts in the States on a voluntary basis try to meet them.

I was kind of shocked to see some of our colleagues on the other side suggest that somehow that that was interference and that was a bad way to go. I really believe that, as much as the decisions about education will continue to be made and should continue to be made by the local school boards, there is nothing wrong with the Federal Government trying to help out and provide some kind of a basic standard.

Mr. McGOVERN. I agree with the gentleman. The fact of the matter is the President is not advocating the Federal Government take over the role that has historically been a local role with regard to education. He is not saying that by any means, but he is utilizing the bully pulpit, he is utilizing his position to challenge school districts, schools all across this country, to meet certain minimum standards.

I do not know how anybody could object to a national standard that by third grade every young boy and every young girl has to be able to read and write. That is certainly not a controversial goal, I think, to be set. I think it is something that we should applaud.

It should shock us all that so many of our young kids at that age cannot read or write. The President has set that goal out there, he has challenged us to meet it, and we need to find ways to meet it.

Part of his call to voluntarism is that to the extent that people can, that they volunteer to help tutor young kids so they can read or write by the time they are in third grade. This is a part of the solution, again, and I applaud that.

It is important that we do set some sort of national standards and some sort of national goals, again, not to interfere with local jurisdictions or State jurisdictions, but as a Nation we should want these things. So I applaud the President on those things.

Mr. PALLONE. If we look again at every one of the initiatives in his 10-point plan, every one of them basically is organized so that the Federal Government is basically providing an incentive to local school boards.

It is not only the national standards we talked about, but the idea of a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom, the 100,000 master teachers through some sort of national certification, a teacher for every student to

read independently and well by the end of the third grade, expand Head Start.

Head Start, I hope, has gotten to the point now where everybody on both sides of the aisle recognizes its value, but I guess like everything else it is a question of how much we will provide for it. In my district—again, I have been to many of the Head Start programs—most of them have waiting lists. Most of them have a lot of kids that really cannot take advantage of the program, and it works very well. We need to expand it.

What he is basically saying is that his budget would expand Head Start to cover one million children by 2002 so that essentially every child who is eligible would have the opportunity to participate in Head Start.

Mr. McGOVERN. And I would just add that these proposals, while I welcome them and applaud them, one could argue they are modest in some respects. Some of us wish they would go farther.

On the Pell grants, the President, to his credit, advocates increasing the maximum award to \$3,000. I think they should be increased to \$5,000 to reflect inflation over the years since the Pell grants were first initiated. We must make sure there are opportunities for those who are from lower income families so that they can take advantage of a college education as well. These are reasonable, modest proposals.

I want to tell you, what the President has outlined is going to test whether this Congress is truly committed to making education its No. 1 priority or whether this Congress is not. It is that simple.

I hope, anyway, that we can have some bipartisan cooperation here. The President said that education should be a nonpartisan issue. I agree with him. I hope that all of us here can join together and enact all of these proposals. Maybe we can make them a little bolder, because I think that is what is needed.

If we truly want to see this country be the economic superpower into the next century, if we truly want to make sure we are dealing with all these other social and economic problems that we debate here on this floor every single day, then education has to be a priority and we are going to have to invest in education.

So, again, I am going to do what I can to try to advance his agenda forward. I know the gentleman from New Jersey is going to do the same thing. Clearly, education is the number one priority, and the President deserves a great deal of credit for drawing the lines in his State of the Union address.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman, and I also want to say that obviously, for both of us, this is the beginning of our effort to try to continue to bring our colleagues' attention to the fact that the President's education program needs to be enacted, and that we need to move on it as quickly as possible.

Obviously, we feel very strongly that that is the case. Most of what is in the President's program was basically put forward with the Democrats' family first agenda last year. I think it is really crucial that we keep making the point that we need to move on it; that we cannot waste any time, because it really can make a difference in terms of investing in our future and that bridge that we keep talking about to the next century.

So I thank the gentleman again and yield back the balance of my time.

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PEACE FOR AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNOWBARGER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, as I ran back and forth today trying to cast my votes on this very important issue of term limits, I was visited by four individuals who have trekked halfway around the world in order to visit this capital of the United States of America in an attempt to bring peace to their own country. Those individuals represent one of the factions that continue to struggle in Afghanistan. Those individuals 10 years ago were engaged in a struggle to defeat the most powerful enemy and the most powerful dictatorship in the world, the Soviet Union. The people of Afghanistan rose up against their invaders and it was their courage and their determination that helped bring an end to the cold war. Yes, it was the little Mujahedin 110-pound man with a turban on his head and a beard who jumped from behind a rock and faced a Soviet tank and said: You shall not impose your will on Afghanistan. You will not destroy our faith in God. You will stop here. You will not control my country. I will die before you succeed.

It was that bravery and that courage of that perhaps uneducated man from Afghanistan who was willing to give everything that eventually brought the expansion of the Soviet empire to an end and reversed the course of the cold war. The United States has a lot to be grateful and all the people of the free world have a lot to be grateful for to the people of Afghanistan. Yet the struggle goes on. For the last 3 hours, I have been speaking with these gentlemen who have trekked halfway around the world in order to find peace for their country, in order to find a peace for Afghanistan. The American people owe a great debt of gratitude to Afghanistan. We would still be in a cold war today. There would still be nuclear missiles aimed at the United States of America by a belligerent power from the Soviet Union had not the people of Afghanistan risked everything in order to defeat the Soviet empire and to defeat the Communist thrust into their country. For this, the entire world and

the people of the United States owe the people of Afghanistan a great debt. Yet right after the Soviet Union collapsed, the United States ran at a quick pace away from Afghanistan and never looked back. And every day, even to this day, young people in Afghanistan, children, are blown apart by land mines, some of which were provided by the United States of America. We have not done our best to try to bring peace to a country and to a people to whom we owe so much. It is my hope that, in Afghanistan, the leaders of the Taliban movement who now control much of that country and the leaders of other factions who control the northernmost regions of that country can come to an understanding that will bring peace and will bring free elections to that strife-torn country and will provide for the people of that country, those brave people of Afghanistan, who stood against Soviet tyranny and Soviet armor, will bring them at last to a time when they can rebuild their water ducts, they can rebuild their villages and mosques, they can rebuild their schools and they can begin again to have a country devoted to Islam, their religion, devoted to their families and to their honor. The United States owes it to the people of Afghanistan to do what we can to help bring peace to that country.

Tonight, as I say, I have spoken to these leaders who have trekked halfway around the world trying to seek help from the United States in bringing peace to their country. I personally believe that the King of Afghanistan represents an option that could unify all of the people of Afghanistan because they know that he will soon die, he is over 80 years old, and will pass away and thus is not a threat in the long run to any one faction. The King of Afghanistan would like to bring democracy to his country. What we have learned, if we have learned anything in these last 50 years, is that free elections bring peace. It is democracy that will bring peace to the world. When Ronald Reagan confronted the Soviet empire, he stressed our belief in freedom and the support for those who struggle for freedom around the world, and that is what changed the world and has made this a more peaceful world. Let us hope that in the years ahead, there will be a more peaceful Afghanistan and the people there can live in dignity and honor and prosperity that they have earned with their blood and their honor.

AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION: 50 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO PROGRESSIVE IDEALS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the topic of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, and many of my colleagues will submit statements to the RECORD to support this special order, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of a great organization called Americans for Democratic Action, an organization we fondly call ADA, an organization that has worked tirelessly for 5 decades to improve American society.

It was on January 3, 1947, that 130 people gathered at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC, to form Americans for Democratic Action. Included were political activists, academics, housewives, labor union leaders, and former New Dealers. They were idealists, the well-known and the unknown, all dedicated to the basic principle that government has a positive role to play in the lives of its citizens in promoting individual liberty and economic justice.

Among the founders of ADA were such well-known figures as Eleanor Roosevelt, John Kenneth Galbraith, Walter Reuther, David Dubinsky, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Reinhold Niebuhr, Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., and Hubert Humphrey. And because I had the opportunity to work for Senator Humphrey back in the 1970's, I was able to learn from him firsthand about the importance of the role of ADA. I truly value my membership and my current position as a member of the board.

The contributions of ADA have been many. In 1948, ADA's efforts led to the adoption of a strong civil rights plank in the Democratic Party platform which has defined our party's commitment to civil rights for over a generation. In subsequent decades, ADA has taken early principled stands on civil rights and civil liberties, nuclear arms control, apartheid in South Africa, workers rights, women's issues, and the Federal budget and tax policy. ADA was the first national organization to call for an end to the Vietnam war and the impeachment of Richard Nixon. The Humphrey-Hawkins full employment bill saw its genesis at an ADA convention.

The values and ideals of ADA members are just as relevant today. For example, the increase in the minimum wage, preservation of Medicare and the passage of health care portability can all be traced directly to the influence of the members of ADA and similarly thoughtful people. Today ADA continues to be dedicated to building a better world with rising standards of living for all. Its members, in Congress and out, work for the values of promoting basic human rights at home and abroad, ending all forms of discrimination, ensuring full employment and balanced growth and more equitably distributing our resources.

During the 105th Congress, ADA will continue to press for a national commitment to full employment, comprehensive campaign finance reform, universal and quality health care, access to a full range of reproductive health care for all, an end to discrimination, full access to quality education, a safe and healthy environment, and national economic priorities that reflect today's social and defense needs.

It is quite a list, it is quite an agenda, it is quite a full plate. But it is normal for the members of ADA to take a comprehensive approach to the problems and opportunities that we see in American society.

So I want to take this opportunity, as do many of my colleagues, to sincerely recognize and thank ADA and its members. The influence that ADA has exerted over national policy has led to several defining moments in our Nation's history. I welcome its participation in the debates of the future and wish for ADA a continued commitment and involvement worthy of its great founders.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it was Eleanor Roosevelt who said, "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face * * * You must do the thing you think you cannot do." The Americans for Democratic Action has for 50 years been an organization that has looked the sometimes cold and heartless agenda of some in this Congress and fought it head on with its more just and compassionate ideals. The Democratic agenda has long been rooted in the principles that the ADA espouses and we are pleased that this organization reminds us of our responsibility to be tough in the face of injustice.

I rise tonight as a proud member of the Board of the Americans for Democratic Action. I am particularly privileged to stand here as a New Yorker as the ADA has an extraordinary history in the Big Apple. Founded in 1947, by David Dubinsky and the ever remarkable Eleanor Roosevelt, and ADA began as part of a labor movement and since then has developed a progressive agenda that spans from equal rights to jobs to economic justice to education. The ADA has been a strong voice for those whose voices are drowned by words of intolerance and fear.

We are truly fortunate that the ADA has not only been completely dedicated to justice within U.S. borders, but has also been instrumental in advancing human rights throughout the world. From Vietnam to Sarejevo, in its support of the United Nations, in its struggle to promote simple human dignity in the smallest villages to the most thriving cities, the ADA has reminded us that it is essential that the United States lead with more than just its own interests in mind.

The ADA is a proud and vigilant conscience of progressive causes during a time when being called a liberal is sometimes the harshest political epithet that can be hurled. There is no way to adequately thank the ADA for its 50-year fight for peace and justice. I can only say thank you for allowing me to be part of your dynamic organization and I look forward to being a part of the next 50.