

life. To my mind, the article reveals more about education and whether a child grows up wanting to read books than all the useless conferences on education that go on in this town. Oprah relates an incident that happened to her as a child that made quite an impression on her. Although she is an avid reader today, her mother was not, and she recalls:

I remember being back in the hallway when I was about 9, and my mother threw the door open and grabbed a book out of my hand and said, "You're nothing but a something, something worm. Get your butt outside. You think you're better than the other kids."

Mr. Speaker, this kind of attitude has harmed the education and future prospects of many children in America. They are not told that books and an education are the ticket to future success.

During all the talk about education reform, let us remember that attitudes and values placed on education are what matters most. Loving parents and teachers who teach the importance of learning matter, plain and simple.

SAFE SCHOOLS FOR OUR CHILDREN—A COMMITMENT WORTH FIGHTING FOR

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, this month our Nation's children will return to school, but for many of these children a schoolroom is not a place to learn but a place to survive. Like our roads and bridges, our Nation's schools are crumbling.

In my district in New York, children are trying to learn in conditions that we should be ashamed of, crumbling walls, leaking roofs, and overcrowding. How can a child be expected to learn to read and write when the walls are literally falling down around them?

Earlier this year the Republicans killed our plan to provide \$10 billion to help rebuild our schools. The Republicans seem to think that it is OK for children to study in trailers and closets.

Democrats are committed to making sure that every child in this country has a modern, safe school in which to learn. This is a commitment we have made to our children, and it is a commitment worth fighting for.

PLO CHAIRMAN ARAFAT MUST KEEP HIS WORD AND CARRY OUT AGREEMENTS

(Mr. SNOWBARGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, again this morning the world is horrified by terrorist violence in Israel. Once again, terrorist bombers have murdered civilians at a Jerusalem marketplace.

When I traveled last month with several of my colleagues to Israel, we met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and PLO Chairman Arafat. In our meeting with Mr. Arafat, we questioned him about the Palestinians' authority, failure to crack down on terrorists, and their continuing incitements and encouragement of violence against Israelis. He claimed to be doing all that he could to prevent terrorism.

But this assertion rings hollow when we contrast the Palestinian Authority's actions or the lack of them with the chairman's words. The Palestinian Authority is obligated to cooperate with Israeli security services but it refuses to extradite known terrorists, and officials of the Palestinian police are themselves implicated in terrorism. It has agreed to refrain from inciting violence and try to prevent others from doing so, and yet key Palestinian officials unleash violent assaults against Israelis, Jews, and Americans.

And Arafat himself has praised terrorists as martyrs. This leads me to question what his words are actually worth. Israelis want peace. They want it so their children can be safer from constant threat of terrorist violence.

Mr. Speaker, we must tell Mr. Arafat that unless he can keep his word and carry out his agreements he has already made, he cannot expect people to take him seriously as a partner in further negotiations.

IMPROVE OUR SCHOOLS AND GIVE EVERY KID IN THE NATION A SHOT AT THE AMERICAN DREAM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility as Members of this body to help ensure that every child in this great Nation has a shot at the American dream. Education has always been a critical part of that dream because it is education that opens the doors to opportunity in our society. It is our responsibility to make sure that every American child is taught to read, to write, to compute, and taught all the other skills necessary for them to compete in a global and in a modern economy.

We need to make sure that the kids in Portland, ME are held to the same high standards as the kids in Portland, OR, and that a high school diploma earned in Albany, NY means as much as the diploma that is earned in Albany, GA.

Republicans have vowed to defeat Democratic initiatives and to reform our schools and to ensure that all of America's children receive a quality education and that, in fact, we have high standards that are adhered to in this country. My Republican colleagues even want to get rid of the Department of Education. However, Democrats are united in this effort. We are going to

continue to fight to improve our schools and to give every kid in this Nation a shot at the American dream.

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER ON EDUCATION

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, do not make education a partisan issue. We have now proven that Republicans and Democrats can work together when we are doing something the American people want. We have ended up with a balanced budget, the first time in 31 years. We have ended up with tax cuts, the first time in 16 years. We have been able to work together as Democrats and Republicans because we were doing something the people want. Now we need to work together in education.

My wife was a teacher. My daughter, Juliana, is a teacher in Grand Rapids, MI. My daughter-in-law, Diane, is a teacher. We need to get back to some of the old-fashioned dedication where parents are interested in what their kids are doing in school, and spend time with their kids as well as attending school meetings. We need a renewed respect for teachers in their schoolrooms.

Look, when great people are interviewed and they are asked what was the greatest effect on their lives, they say, my parents, teachers that helped me and inspired me.

We need to get rid of 30 years of liberalism in the classroom. Republicans and Democrats need to work together, not to have the Federal Government manage education, but to develop an environment that encourages parents to be more involved in the decisions that affect their children's educational lives.

GET OFF THE TEST ISSUE AND BACK TO EDUCATION

(Mr. GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Michigan, and I agree education should not be a partisan issue. In fact, the bipartisan budget agreement, the education tax cuts to help parents prepare to send their kids to college, increased Pell grants, HOPE scholarships, put our money where our values are. That was bipartisan although it was not part of the original budget package until Democrats talked about it. But now he is right; we need to focus our attention on kindergarten through the 12th grade, public education.

Voluntary national standards should be adopted by the States. Many States are already doing it. Texas has already

done this. Education is a national concern, but a State and local responsibility. But Congress needs to help. Congress needs to provide assistance to those parents and those teachers and those principals and those people who are working every day to provide that quality education.

The Republican majority was convinced last month, or in July, that college education was helped. Now the American people need to convince this Congress we need to work on public education, kindergarten through 12th grade.

We talk about national tests today, but we are not talking about really quality education. Let us get off the test issue and get back on just talking about education.

□ 1030

THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROCKMART, GA

(Mr. BARR of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the city of Rockmart, GA, which I am proud to represent, on its 125th anniversary, which it celebrated just last week on August 26, 1997.

Rockmart has a distinguished history as the birthplace of social, economic, and religious trends that have spread across northwest Georgia. Sam Jones, the internationally known 19th century Baptist evangelist, lived in Rockmart. The last survivor of the Revolutionary War in the South, Micajah Brooks, was buried in Rockmart following his death in 1863 at the age of 101½ years.

Rockmart is renowned for the slate and bricks it has exported across the world. Rockmart bricks can be seen on the bricks of London, England, and even occasionally wash up on the shores of Florida.

Rockmart's rich traditions are continued today by its citizens who have the privilege of living in one of the most friendly and beautiful communities in the entire country. The Rockmart of today combines the charm of smalltown America with economic opportunities with an envied quality of life that continues to grow on a daily basis. It is a fortunate person indeed who can claim Rockmart, GA, as their home, and it is a fortunate Member of Congress who has the honor of representing such a beautiful, all-American community in the U.S. House of Representatives.

SOFT MONEY MUST BE BANNED

(Mr. MEEHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, as Congress reconvenes this week after suc-

cessfully passing a balanced budget deal, we have a major piece of business that we need to finish, campaign finance reform. Yet when the Republican leadership was asked what was on the agenda for the rest of this year, campaign finance reform was nowhere in sight.

So far this Congress, the Speaker has delayed over and over, refusing to bring up campaign finance reform, refusing to schedule a vote in the first 100 days, refusing to schedule a vote and accepting the President's challenge by July 4. Now he wants to end this year without dealing with campaign finance reform.

Well, many of us feel it is not too late. In fact, the only way to affect the 1998 elections and change the campaign finance system is to pass campaign finance reform now.

We have proposed ending soft money, abolishing soft money. Surely all of us can agree with all of the political hearings that have been held in Washington that there is a need to end soft money. This is a simple thing to do.

The only way we can affect the 1998 elections is to end soft money, and we are going to begin that battle this week.

SPEND EDUCATION DOLLARS IN THE CLASSROOM

(Mr. COOK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quickly go on record before I talk for a minute about education to say AL GORE has some interesting things in the news today in respect to what my Democratic colleague just indicated on campaign finance reform.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the concept that no one knows more about the educational needs of a child than his parents and his teacher. No one knows more about the educational needs of a community than local school boards.

To most of us, this is just common sense. It is obvious. But it is apparently not obvious to those who for decades have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into a Federal education bureaucracy that has done little, if anything, to improve education in the classroom.

It is time to turn that around. It is time to focus our attention on what goes on in the classroom and the community and not what goes on in Washington, DC.

I support the initiatives in Congress that give parents, teachers, and school boards a stronger voice in the education of our children. Initiatives like the Dollars for the Classroom resolution, which puts children first by calling for 90 percent of Federal education dollars to be spent in the classroom and not on the perpetuation of a Federal bureaucracy.

AMERICANS DESERVE A VOTE ON SOFT MONEY

(Mr. TIERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in rising and asking for a vote on campaign finance reform. I understand the desire of many Members of this House to go home and talk about the things that have been accomplished to date, and no doubt there is much that has been accomplished.

But we have unfinished business, Mr. Speaker. Education obviously is one piece of that business, but when we do it, we need to speak with a credible voice. We are not going to speak with a credible voice unless the American people really believe that the people here are voting on their interests, the interests of the American people, and not on special interests. We can do that if we address campaign finance reform. We should talk about it in the most comprehensive terms, but we should at the very least talk about doing away with soft money.

No matter what party may have had grievances in the past, no matter what individuals may be called into question, the only way that this body gets any bit of comprehensive faith and trust from the American people is if we take on the issue, we debate it, we deliberate, and we vote on campaign finance reform before we go home this session. It is the American people's business; it is our business to see to it.

FIRST SURPLUS IN 30 YEARS ANTICIPATED

(Mr. NEUMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to encourage my Democrat colleagues who are calling for campaign finance reform to start with the Vice President and the hearings today, and let's make sure the laws on the books today are being adhered to.

I rise today with good news for this country. CBO put out new numbers yesterday, and it is more likely than ever that next year, 4 years ahead of schedule, for the first time since 1969 we will have a balanced budget. For first time since 1969, it is going to force Washington to deal with something they haven't dealt with in 30 years, and that is a surplus. For first time since 1969, next year we start looking at a budget surplus.

We need to remember, however, that even after we reach a balanced budget, we still have a \$5.4 trillion debt. In order to address this issue, we have introduced the National Debt Repayment Act. It would require that one-third of the surplus be used to reduce taxes further, and two-thirds go to pay down the Federal debt; and in paying down the