

the Department of Education, school enrollment is projected to climb to a whopping 54.6 million by the 2006 school year.

In addition to the need to repair decaying schools, we also need to modernize schools so our students will have the resources they need to compete in today's economy. The National Center for Education statistics have noted that only 4 percent of schools have enough computers to allow regular use by each student. Forty-six percent of schools lack the electrical wiring necessary for computers in all classrooms. A mere 9 percent of classrooms are currently connected to the Internet. More than half the Nation's schools lack the needed infrastructure to access the Internet or network their computers.

The Department of Education estimates that over the next 10 years, 6,000 new schools will be needed in response to the increases in student enrollments.

I wanted to mention, Madam Speaker, that in addition to the effects deteriorating schools can have on the health of children, we must also keep in mind the harmful effects that overcrowding and decaying schools can have on the quality of education to students. I know from my own experience in my own district, having gone around to some of the schools, how limited classroom space, cramming students in the gyms or labs or other facilities can really have a very negative impact on students' attitudes, as well as teachers' attitudes in the classrooms. For these reasons, Madam Speaker, the Democrats are making school construction one of our top priorities within our education agenda.

Last night I was joined in a special order by the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY] who has introduced legislation that proposes to provide local school districts with 50 percent intrasubsidies for new construction and renovation. The plan includes a \$5 billion Federal jump-start and has the goal of increasing school construction by 25 percent over the next 4 years. This is the type of thing that we need.

We finished the budget about a month ago, and a big part of that was addressing the needs of higher education, more accessibility, more affordability for higher education. But right now there is this big gap in the whole effort to upgrade our education programs in this country, and a big part of that gap is the need for new schools and to upgrade existing, crumbling schools and to address the issue of overcrowding.

I want to pledge that we, as Democrats, are going to make this a major priority. We are going to pressure the Republicans, the Republican leadership, into addressing this issue and endorsing a plan similar to that of Mrs. LOWEY or some other plan that addresses the need for school construction. It is not something that is going to go away; it is something that is only going to get worse, and there is a need

for a Federal partnership with local governments and State governments to address this issue.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I want to talk about campaign finance reform this morning. I want to say that campaign finance reform does not have to be a partisan issue. It is becoming a partisan issue, but it does not have to be. The question before this Congress is whether we are going to spend millions of dollars and months of time investigating and never get to the step of actually doing some legislating.

I believe that we came here to legislate reform and that we ought to do it. Investigations, millions of dollars and months of hearings, are not enough.

I said that campaign finance reform does not have to be a partisan issue. The freshmen have proved that. The gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON], a Republican freshman, and I from Maine, have been cochairing a bipartisan freshman task force composed of six Republicans and six Democrats.

After 5 months of hearings, after 5 months of negotiations, after 5 months of consultations with experts from outside this Congress, with people who represented organizations, who participated in the 1996 election in one way or another, with advocates ranging from those who want to take all limits off campaign spending to those who want to put more limits on candidate spending, after all of that activity, we came up with a proposal, with a bill. It is H.R. 2183. It is the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act of 1997. It is truly bipartisan.

What does this act do? Well, quite simply, it takes the biggest of the big money out of politics. All of the hearings that are going on on the House side and on the Senate side involve what is called soft money. These are the \$500,000, the \$1 million contributions to the national parties, and they did not used to be able to be used for television ads, but that is what they are used for today; that is what they were used for in 1996. We need to stop that practice. We need to ban soft money.

The Campaign Integrity Act does that, H.R. 2183. We take the biggest of the big money out of politics by banning soft money. No Federal candidate, no Member of Congress, no Member of the Senate could raise soft money either for the national party committees or for State party committees.

We also make sure that we speed up the process of candidate disclosure so those of us running for office would have to report our contributions on a monthly basis and do so electronically.

Third, we make sure that people will not be able to run third party ads and

not tell the public who they are. So there would have to be a filing with the Clerk of the House and with the Secretary of the Senate to make sure that third party independent groups identify who they are and identify how much money they are spending.

As I said, this act is truly bipartisan. The question is, when will the Republican leadership of this House allow a vote on the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act? When will it happen? We are not asking for a vote next year, we are not asking that this issue once again be put off sometime into the indefinite future. We are saying, act now, do not just investigate now.

This issue will not go away. The American people will not let this issue go away, and this House should not go home, this House should not adjourn without having a vote on a bill to ban soft money.

I suggest to my colleagues that H.R. 2183, the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act of 1997, is that bill. We need a vote on that bill and all we ask from the Republican leadership is a vote on this House floor.

EDUCATION AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. ROGAN. Madam Speaker, I have been intrigued by the comments of my two colleagues who just preceded me in addressing the House, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE]. I am compelled, based on their commentaries, to make a few observations.

First, with respect to the challenge that was made to Republicans on the issue of supporting school construction, neither party has a monopoly on virtue on this particular subject. The question is, how are we going to fund school construction, and which party is truly standing for proposals that will increase school construction?

Back in my home State, when I was majority leader of the California State Assembly, we passed more money for education last year than had been appropriated in almost 30 years. Members then went home after the session and congratulated themselves for that accomplishment. But the reality was that the victory was somewhat Pyrrhic in nature, because in California the manner in which school construction is funded is impeded in two significant ways.

In California, like with the Federal Government, we pay construction contracts with a labor union prevailing wage. The California prevailing wage law works like this: if a school is being built in a rural area of the State, the government pays those with whom it contracts the highest union wage paid to workers in urban areas like San

Francisco or Los Angeles, where the cost of living is significantly higher. Rural government contracted construction workers earn wages and benefits averaging some \$26 an hour on the cost of the contract. This has a significant negative impact on the number of schools that can be built or have infrastructure repairs.

We Republicans have tried to reform rules like this and make them more reasonable, because we know that only one-half of a school can be built under these windfall agreements for the market price of a whole school. We have not yet been able to overcome the political clout of the labor bosses who contribute heavily to our friends on the other side of the aisle. Is it a coincidence that we get very little support from these colleagues in our calls for reform?

The other thing that impedes school construction on a national and statewide basis is the degree and extent of the topheavy government education bureaucracies that siphon away money from schools.

As a Republican, I believe we ought to block-grant education dollars directly to our schools, and not pour them down the rathole of bureaucrats in Washington. Why should bureaucrats steal 30 to 40 percent of education dollars to feed their bureaucracies, and deny those funds to our children and teachers and local schools? With reform, we would have more school construction, we could pay teachers more, we could end the problem of oversized classrooms.

Why hasn't this occurred? Because time and again, those who support the status quo and derive political and financial support from the status quo obstruct reform. They would much rather see 30 to 40 cents of every education dollar go to pay bureaucrats in Washington or in State governments, rather than see that money returned to our local school districts and go directly to school construction and education needs.

I make a pledge to my friend and colleague from New Jersey, Mr. PALLONE: I will consistently vote in this Chamber at every opportunity to take money from bureaucrats and send it directly to the schools.

I return a challenge to him and to my friends on the Democrat side of the aisle. Our colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. PITTS, will be bringing up a bill shortly in this Chamber, that is very simple: it would require 90 cents on every education dollar must go directly to the schools, and not to bureaucracies. I challenge them to support this bill, and let their rhetoric match their actions. My guess is that when this bill comes up for a vote, Republicans will almost unanimously vote for it. I also suspect we will not get significant support from our friends on the other side of the aisle. Why? Because they would have to stand up to

those who profit from the status quo—those from whom they draw so much political financial support.

Finally, when my friend from Maine, Mr. ALLEN, talks about campaign finance reform, he joins the daily refrain from Members of his party proffering the same sentiments. Why is that in their indignation they never talk about the one real, meaningful degree of campaign finance reform injustice? I have yet to hear a single colleague from the other side of the aisle stand up and condemn the compulsory taking of union dues from working Americans, and having that money used for political purposes contrary to the wishes of those workers. They cry foul over hundreds of millions of dollars taken without permission from working Americans, and having that money funneled almost exclusively into the campaign coffers of Democrats, despite the fact that 40 percent of every AFL-CIO worker in this country is a registered Republican.

In California, if a Republican wants a job in a union shop, he or she must join that union as a condition of employment. When they join that union, money is taken from their paychecks without their permission to fund the political causes of the labor bosses. That is not right, yet these same "guardians" of good government who pontificate on campaign finance reform each day here have yet to condemn it.

If we are going to have meaningful campaign finance reform, let us start from the ground up and end a system of compulsory stealing of money from those who earn it at the expense of democracy—and freedom.

COMPASSION AND DEMOCRACY GO HAND IN HAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Madam Speaker, the world lost two well-known, highly respected and dearly loved women in the last week, Mother Teresa and Princess Diana.

Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa, early in her life, committed herself to an order of the nunnery and that would have been sufficient in itself, because she had a high calling, and it was indeed commendable and honorable that she did that, but that is not the reason she was dearly loved.

Princess Diana was both titled and wealthy and had style. Again, those attributes and privileges were advantages for her, but again, that is not the reason there was such deep love and emotion for her. In both of their lives, I think we learned that the attribute of compassion was the quality that people endeared from them, or were endeared to them because of.

It was their compassion, their ability to reach out, their ability to be concerned, their ability to embrace others, to reach out beyond their own points of comfort. It was their ability to support and embrace the poor, their ability to support and embrace the lepers, to care enough for the aged or to hug a person with AIDS, their ability to welcome the unwanted, their ability, or certainly Mother Teresa's ability, to comfort the dying.

So as we give tribute to their lives, we have an opportunity, as legislators, to reflect to what extent do we reach out beyond our ability of comfort?

We are having the opportunity to appropriate resources. Do we appropriate resources that also will benefit the poor, the hungry; or have we, as legislators, in the recent years found it very fashionable to have the poor as a political football, to make them scapegoats for our frustration? Has it become very fashionable in this land of immigrants to now have a harsh reality, a harsh attitude? And the reality of that is to find ways to not extend the full service and benefit of our country.

In this country where we say equality and access and fairness are landmarks of our democracy, it has become fashionable to say that affirmative action is no longer the byword, fair play is only for a few and privileged.

I think we have an opportunity to reflect, as we reflect on their lives, what makes this country great. This is a great democracy. It is great beyond its great defenses. That makes us strong. It is certainly great beyond our technology and our great wealth. That makes us competitive and the envy of the world. What makes this democracy great is its compassion, its ability to open its arms to all of the people.

As we continue our legislative responsibility, I think we have the opportunity and the privilege, and I hope also the desire and the need to make sure the appropriations and the promulgation of policies and laws we make also reach to those who are unfortunate, the poor, the hungry, the unwanted.

There are two bills that I would commend to my colleagues to consider. One is Hunger Has a Cure. It simply is a bill now that has more than 100 cosponsors, and I encourage all my colleagues to consider it. It simply says that we care enough about those without food to make sure we provide it.

The second one is to make sure we have equal opportunity for minorities to have access to agriculture resources to end the discrimination that has been documented.

My bill simply says, it is agriculture, equity, and accountability.

I commend both of those bills in the spirit of compassion, fairness of opportunity, what makes this country great in the life of Mother Teresa and the life also of Princess Diana. It is an opportunity to remember our caring about people and our compassion.