

whole country is interested in campaign finance reform. I am from Arkansas. I know that the influence of money in politics concerns Arkansas.

We also had a referendum in our State that was passed overwhelmingly by the people to deal with State elections. Some of the polls say people do not have that really high at the top of their lists. They have jobs and the economy and education. Well, of course, they do have those at the top of their lists. But if you ask them, is this an important issue, absolutely, it is an important issue.

I know in Arkansas people are very interested in how I think about elections, how I think they ought to be elected. They are interested in us improving our democracy. When we are talking about campaign finance reform, we sometimes get lost in all the details. We are talking about improving our democracy, the greatest democracy in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman. I know he has worked very hard in a bipartisan manner with the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON]. You and he have done great work together. The gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] is a Republican and the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] is a Democrat. I commend you for your work, and I look forward to working with you in the next few weeks. Hopefully, we can bring one of these bills to the floor before we recess.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I appreciate all his support in this area.

I would simply say, in conclusion tonight, that I thank all of the Members who have been here to discuss this issue. This issue will not go away. This may not affect people in the way that paying for an education affects them. It may not affect them in the way that losing a job or finding a new job may affect them. It is not their Social Security payment or their tax bill. But they care about this issue. I hear about it all the time. I know the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. SNYDER] and others do.

The fundamental problem is, we have to be able to take the issues that are of concern to people across this country and not just talk about them in the evening but vote on them during the day. That is what we are asking.

MORE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM AND EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PAPPAS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to address the House tonight and look forward to a good dialog with my friend, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH].

First of all, I want to say that I certainly think that it is a good time to

talk about campaign finance reform and all the things that have been going on, particularly with the shenanigans at the White House, the renting of the Lincoln bedroom, the raising money on taxpayer premises, the fundraising at Buddhist temples and so forth. I think we should talk about PAC contributions and what we should do about it. Should we limit it?

I think candidates should be forced to raise 75 percent of the money that they spend on their campaign in their own district, rather than having money sent to them from Washington special interests. Let us raise it in hometown America, make as many of those contributions individual.

I am not sure if we should outlaw PAC's, but I do think it is proper to say maybe 25 to 35, maybe 40 percent of the money should be the maximum limit for PAC contributions in the aggregate, but beyond that you should have money raised individually. You need to have public disclosure in all of that.

But, Mr. Speaker, one thing we have got to do is enforce existing laws. It is a little ridiculous to blame all the problems on campaign finance reform on the need for a new law when we have laws on the books right now that would apply to a number of the situations that are going on.

There was a great article in The Washington Times on September 2, written by Mark Levin on the subject. He says any time a politician wants to get a good response from an audience, all he or she has to do is say, we need campaign finance reform. Everybody claps. Then somebody else stands up and says, we need to protect the first amendment, freedom of speech. Then the group claps again.

So you have this kind of a very win-win dialog when you go back home and so forth. But let us talk about some of the laws that are already on the books.

The 2 U.S.C. 441(e) prohibits foreign nationals from directly or through others contributing to any political campaign or soliciting acceptance or receiving such contributions; in other words, no foreign money.

Clearly, then, foreigners may not attempt to influence an American election by giving money to such groups as the Democratic National Committee or to the Republican National Committee. But it seems to be the Democratic National Committee that had the biggest problem with this on the last go-around, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure of the number, but I believe it was something like \$3 million in foreign contributions. Again, U.S.C. 441 clearly prohibits that.

Then there is section 18 U.S.C. 1956, which prohibits the solicitation or acceptance of laundered campaign contributions intended to conceal the nature, source, ownership, or control of the funds. This would apply if you were going to, let us say, go to a Buddhist temple and have a huge fundraiser from dirt poor Buddhist nuns who have taken an oath of poverty. Where do they suddenly come up with \$140,000?

If it is the case that they were used simply as a fence, if they were laundering the money, then here we have this law, 18 U.S.C. 1956 that prohibits it. It is on the books now, Mr. Speaker. We do not need new legislation.

Then there is 18 U.S.C. 600, which prohibits promises of contracts or other benefits as consideration, favor, or reward for any political activity. Among other things, this would prohibit, for example, the Department of Commerce from selling trade missions in exchange for political donations. And as we know, there seems to be some suggestion that the Department of Commerce rewarded heavy contributors to the administration with trade trips and so forth like that.

Along with U.S.C. 600, there is 18 U.S.C. 601, which prohibits the withholding of a benefit or program of the United States from any person who refuses to make a campaign contribution. In other words, you cannot withhold something because somebody supports your opponent. I think that is very important and something that all of us in Congress need to be aware of.

A couple of other things: 18 U.S.C. 595 prohibits employees of the Government from using their office in any way to affect Federal elections. This law seems to have a problem with it for politically appointed employees who seem to be using taxpayer premises for a campaign purpose. And we have learned a lot about that recently.

Then there is 18 U.S.C. 607, which prohibits the solicitation of campaign funds on Government property. Records show that in the administration a number of people violated this law over and over again. Not only did they make dozens of calls for cash from such places as the White House or auctioning coffees at the White House or selling the Lincoln bedroom, but it seems to be there was certainly a pattern of covering up from it, which is interesting because 18 U.S.C. 2 prohibits anyone from helping or furthering a criminal act.

Eighteen U.S.C. 371 prohibits two or more persons from conspiring to commit a crime; 18 U.S.C. 1001 prohibits anyone from making false statements to Federal investigators; 18 U.S.C. 1621 prohibits lying under oath which is, of course, perjury; 18 U.S.C. 1623 prohibits lying to a grand jury.

These are criminal statutes unaffected by campaign finance reform, Mr. Speaker. These are already on the books. All the folks who seem to be crying about the need for campaign finance reform are strangely silent on the laws that are on the books right now that are not being enforced.

While I think that we need to look at our campaign finance laws, see if we can improve them, I think it is very important to do it on a bipartisan basis. I also think, Mr. Speaker, we should be able to investigate folks who have broken Federal law on a bipartisan basis. There is nothing Democrat

or Republican about somebody breaking the law. It is simply a matter of enforcing what we have.

Mr. Levin goes on in this article to say that if somebody, for example, Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary, she has been accused by Johnny Chung of being asked or forced to donate to one of her favorite charities, \$25,000 to AFRICARE in exchange for a private meeting.

Now, either Mr. Chung is lying and former Secretary O'Leary ought to be outraged and want to investigate that or if he is saying that is something serious we need to know about it.

Again, this is a bipartisan question. This is not a matter of Republicans looking good and Democrats looking bad. It is a matter of the laws of the United States apparently being broken. And if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, then let us go after everybody, Democrat and Republican, who have apparently broken laws.

This is a great article, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to bring this up in view of the fact that so many of the campaign finance discussions we are hearing, particularly from the other side, do not seem to say, let us enforce the existing laws. Let us investigate this in a bipartisan manner. Let us get down to brass tacks. We will be having lots of debates about this. So I think it is very important that we all talk about the whole picture and not just politically being selective about what we choose to talk about.

There are a lot of issues facing the House right now. One of the key ones is education. I want to talk about education a little bit.

In America today there are approximately 3 million teachers, most of whom have gone back to work now. Summer is over and school is back in. We have about 111,000 private and public schools. We have 51 million students in secondary and elementary education. In fact, my father and my two sisters have been educators. The student/teacher ratio is 1 to 17 and the average salary for the teacher ranges from about \$21,000 to \$38,000.

The United States spends \$286 billion on secondary and elementary education. Among the top 12 countries in the world in terms of education spending, Hong Kong, Japan, Britain, Sweden, and so forth, we rank No. 2. We spend approximately \$6,000 per student in Washington, D.C. It is \$10,000 in Utah. It is as low as \$3,400.

□ 1945

So there is a lot of range in there. Got a lot of Federal involvement in education. Approximately 760 Federal education programs, 39 boards, agencies and commissions, and that excludes the noneducation department-type programs, and there are other programs being taught by agencies that are not part of the Department of Education.

I think a lot of this Federal involvement, Mr. Speaker, is not in the best

interests of the local schoolteacher in the classroom. It seems that the direction of the debate is, do we want to put money into Washington commands and control bureaucrats or do we want to send the money to the teacher in the classroom. I think that when we have a deep Federal involvement in education, we have a lot of unintended consequences.

I will give an example. Some of the consequences are just plain political. Right now on Federal math programs there are nine Federal math programs and 14 Federal reading programs. Sounds reasonable, but listen to this: There are 27 Federal environmental programs and 39 Federal arts programs.

Now, if we ask the businesses in our communities what is important for them, certainly they want their new employees to be educated in environment and arts and so forth, but if we are to compete on the global front we have to have a strong math and reading background. And again nine math programs, 14 reading programs and 27 environmental programs and 39 art programs. It is done because it is politically popular to pass environmental education, and it is lackluster to pass math programs.

We also take away a lot of the academic freedom. When we mandate from Washington what has to be taught by the local teacher in the classroom then we lose a little bit in terms of what can happen. Kids may need a lot of this drug education. They may need a lot of environmental education and so forth, but their primary goal still has to be the reading and writing and arithmetic and science, that core curriculum.

And speaking personally, I can say this. I have four children, ages 6 to 14. And if my daughter, age 14, gets on drugs, it is not the school system's fault. It might be my fault, it might be my wife's fault, it might be our parenting skills are lacking, but it is not the school's fault. At 14 certainly it is partly my daughter's fault, if not 90 percent her fault.

The fact is, if my daughter gets on drugs, gets pregnant and so forth, it is not a reflection on the school; it is a reflection on me, and we have to come up with that. There is inefficiency in Federal Government command and control.

Let me give an example here. AmeriCorps right now spends about \$25,000 to \$30,000 per volunteer, and their books are in such disarray they could not even be audited. This is not a productive-type Federal Government.

In terms of the results, in 1972 the average SAT score was 937; 1995, the average SAT score was 909. And all during this time we had more Federal Government involvement with the local education scene.

We have the gentleman from Minnesota here [Mr. GUTKNECHT], who has joined us and I will certainly be glad to yield time to him on this topic of education; and I know the gentleman has other topics, but I wanted to kind of

stick on education for a few more minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and education is something that obviously all Americans are very concerned about. And we were very fortunate the last several days we had our Governor Arne Carlson from the State of Minnesota, who has been with us here in Washington and been visiting with a number of educational groups.

He has spoken to a number of different organizations while he has been in town. He was on C-SPAN. He gave a speech yesterday at the Heritage Foundation, talking about real educational reform and what has been happening in Minnesota.

I think the real excitement, like welfare reform, the real reform that is happening in the United States today is not happening at the Federal level; it is happening at the State and local level, and it is happening primarily where we empower local school boards and, more importantly, parents themselves to become much more involved in the education of their kids.

There is a tremendous success story that is happening in all of the States, but I think Minnesota has been one example where we had a courageous Governor who was passionately involved in doing what he could to try to improve the overall quality of education. He told us today in a meeting that I attended that in the city of Minneapolis, and we pride ourselves on great schools, but the results more and more are demonstrating that even in States like Minnesota and in cities like Minneapolis, the quality of the education that kids are receiving is just not what they need. Fifty percent of the kids are either dropping out of school or they are graduating with diplomas which are virtually worthless.

So on one hand has always been the answer, we need more money, we need more money, we need more money, and certainly more State and local and even Federal funding is part of the solution. We certainly do not want to say that we are totally opposed to making certain there is adequate support financially for our public schools or private schools or education in general.

But what the Governor said very emphatically is that the real answer is not just in more money, and it certainly is not more mandates from Washington; the real answer is empowering parents to take a much more active role in the education of their kids.

Again, we get back to one of those fundamental principles that I think has made this country so strong and so great through the years, and that is the whole issue and principle of personal responsibility. What they have done in Minnesota with tax credits and deductions is, they have empowered parents to become much more actively involved in their kids' education.

Mr. KINGSTON. If the gentleman will yield back to me, want to underscore that, because I think that is

something that is so true. As I talk to teachers they are very, very frustrated in two things: No. 1, that they cannot control their own classroom anymore because there are so many Federal rules that have been passed down to the State education bureaucracies and then to the local and then to the teacher in the classroom tying her hands up, because sometimes some kids need different things.

But one of the results of it, not only is she frustrated with the bureaucracy she works for, but the parents of the students are frustrated, and so they are not involved in the PTA's or the PTO-type organizations, the parent-teacher groups, because they know that they cannot do anything about it.

They have a great idea, they get real fired up, they hear about it working somewhere else and rush to tell the teacher, and he or she signs off on it and says it is great; they go to the principal, the principal likes it, they go to the school board and, bam, brick wall.

And today the average student, the average 13-year-old, spends 8 hours a week doing homework and 30 hours a week watching TV.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Sad story. And the problem is, we are graduating kids or kids are dropping out of high school; and whether we like to admit it or not, they will face a much more competitive marketplace out there for their skills. And if we have high school graduates who really cannot read at the fifth grade level or sixth grade level, we have placed them at a permanent disadvantage not only relative to other American students, but I think more importantly, as we move into a world economy, it places them at an enormous competitive disadvantage to students from Korea or Japan or Germany, Great Britain, and other industrialized countries around the world.

Mr. KINGSTON. That is right. And teachers, if given the opportunity to be creative, can light the fire in the students' minds and get them enthusiastic.

If the gentleman will remember, today we had the Reverend George Dillard give the opening prayer. His wife Renee is a 4th grade schoolteacher at Cannongate Elementary School in Peachtree City, GA. When I introduced George, at Renee's request, I introduced Nellie, who is the fourth grade class's little teddy bear; and Nellie was on the floor of Congress today. Nellie met Speaker GINGRICH and TRENT LOTT and anybody else that Nellie could shake hands with.

It captures the minds of those fourth graders. Those 9- and 10-year-olds suddenly say, what is Nellie doing in this Chamber, this place where all these men and women are talking sometimes in such lofty terms? What is that group?

Nellie, the little teddy bear of Cannongate Elementary School, has been to over 80 countries and has sat on the Great Wall of China. It is exciting,

and Renee Dillard, their teacher, is excited for them. She is showing them a gateway, but she is using a prop. She is using something that was a local idea.

It was not a Washington bureaucrat that all fourth grade classes will get teddy bears from here on out. It was local. And when Nellie's novelty has worn off, they will put her on the shelf. But as long as Renee Dillard and other fourth grade teachers can come up with creative and fun ideas to excite these kids into learning, we are going to have kids who are enthusiastic about learning.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. That is an excellent point, and one of the other points that our Governor made today is that for too long, in terms of education, we have been so concerned with process, and we have not really been concerned with outcomes.

The good news, I think, is that at all levels the cause is being driven that we have to be far more concerned with what kids actually can do and what they understand and what they know rather than the overall process of education.

I do want to make a point, and I think the gentleman makes it well, that the truth of the matter is there are literally hundreds of thousands of incredibly dedicated teachers in this country and sometimes we get confused when we start debating education policy.

And some of our critics like to say, you are just trying to bash teachers. That is certainly not the case, because the gentleman knows and I know, and I think since I have been elected I have visited something like 24 schools. I try to do that often.

When I meet with teachers, I find groups of people, particularly at the elementary level, who are incredibly dedicated. But because of the bureaucratic redtape and rules and regulations that go with it, sometimes they are prevented from doing what is best for their kids.

So when we talk about empowerment, we want to return more of the decisionmaking back to the classroom and back to the parents.

Mr. KINGSTON. On that same subject, I was talking with some executives at BellSouth from Georgia earlier today, and they are very, very involved in education and trying to get kids on line and computer friendly on the Internet and all the good stuff we need to do to compete in a global economy.

They were giving me an example of Salem High School in Georgia, in Rockdale County, I believe, but what he was saying is, the principal came into this high school and said we are going to do pass-fail. I am going to teach you how to think, not just how to make an A. I am going to teach you how to think.

Everyone was up in arms and so forth, and it was a very tough storm he had to weather. But now 4 years later, according to the BellSouth people, this principal at Salem High School is one

of the most popular in the State because he did something different, and people bought into it; and once they understood it, they liked it, and the parents got behind it. But, again, they did not need a Washington bureaucrat to tell them to do it.

But there may be a Washington bureaucrat that can tell them they cannot do it, and that is very, very harmful.

Another example. I was in Camden County talking to a school board member down there in Camden County, GA, which is where Kings Bay is, and they have lots of growth. And most of the schools are new, but they had a lot of problems because of the growth problems.

This school board employee was telling me she had just returned from a seminar in Athens, GA, on sensitivity. Sensitivity is a bureaucratic concept, and basically what it says is teachers cannot be alone with the student because they might do something wrong. They cannot touch a student because they might touch them too long or in the wrong place or something. They cannot be too familiar with the student. They cannot use any slang or joke around with them because they may be offended by it.

She said the heartbreaking part of that is that so many of the kids, 6 and 7 years old from broken homes, the No. 1 thing they need is not learning the math tables, but getting a good hug and not just one but two. And she says, now I am coming back from this taxpayer-funded seminar to tell my teachers in their classroom that we cannot hug our students anymore when they do a good job.

And, again, as a parent of four, we have to hug each other four or five times a day just to kind of get things moving, and actually that is just by the morning time. But we are hug friendly, my family, and I think in most places in America there is nothing unique about it, but it needs to happen.

Another thing maybe on a different side is, as the gentleman knows, we cannot spank anymore, we cannot have prayers, we have to be careful not to offend anybody and so forth. And I think about the times when I was in school, one time in particular when a guy named Bennie Lacount and I were sitting in the gymnasium, and Mr. McBride, the vice principal, came and sat down in front of us on the bleachers, and we were behind him. And across the gym floor were all the seventh and ninth grade girls, and they were looking good, and Bennie Lacount slipped me a piece of bubble gum. And we were not supposed to chew gum, especially in gym, because it could damage the gym floor, but we just started chewing.

And seeing how the vice principal was sitting in front of us, we thought we would blow a few bubbles to the girls across the gym floor and get away with it and kind of be young and studly

and impress the women. So we started blowing bubbles.

Well, Mr. McBride did not see us, but we did not anticipate Coach Stalvi, who was watching from the wing; and he called me over and said, were you chewing gum? And I was 13 and I said, no, sir. And he said, you were not chewing gum? And I said, a little weaker that time, no. And he said, I saw you chewing gum. You were chewing gum, weren't you? And I said, yes, sir. And he said I would have spanked you twice for doing it, but now I'm going to spank you five times for lying.

□ 2000

So he took me in his office, spanked me, Benny only got it twice because he told the truth but I got it five times. But I deserved it and it straightened me out and I am not in therapy, I am not a victim, I did not sue Coach Stalvi, I did not sue the school system. Maybe my heinie got a little black and blue for a few days but not a boy in the locker room thought that I was innocent. It was understood, growing up, that if you broke the rules and got caught, you were going to be punished. That is not clear anymore in our school system. But it is not the fault of the teachers. It is the fault of the Washington command and control bureaucracy, the centralized planning agency who wants to run the lives of all of America. Because not everybody needed a paddle growing up. But I was one who did. Every time I got a paddling I deserved, it and every time I got a paddling I got a little bit closer to being straight and being a good citizen, and so forth. I can promise that growing up, if it were not for those installments in discipline, there would be a lot of us who continued down a very, very wayward and harmful path.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I think the gentleman makes a good point. I got a few of those paddlings myself when I was in school.

Mr. KINGSTON. I was hoping the gentleman would confess.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I hope my mom is not watching because I will get a paddling when I get home as a result. But it is an important point. Not only did it benefit you, but more importantly it benefited a lot of your friends, seeing that the punishment was fair and that it was meted out quickly and promptly and justly, so we had better discipline in the schools.

It is interesting when you poll what teachers are concerned about in terms of what is happening in the schools today with what was happening in the schools when I was in school as a baby boomer. Back then it was about talking in the halls and chewing gum and occasionally somebody trying in high school, at least trying to steal a cigarette out in the back of the school. Today the problems are much, much more severe. Today the problems are drugs, the problems are real violence, guns in the schools, things like that. My own sense, and I do not think this

is the only answer and there are a lot of other social problems and obviously schools reflect a lot of our socioeconomic problems we have in this country today, but on the other hand I do believe in the schools where they still allow adequate and prompt and just discipline that they keep those problems, the bigger problems, from beginning to multiply.

Mr. Speaker, we have been joined by the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON].

Mr. KINGSTON. I want to say this by way of introduction of the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON], he is one of what, is it four physicians in Congress or three?

Mr. WELDON of Florida. There are now actually six.

Mr. KINGSTON. Six. It is amazing though that somebody in the height of a medical career, a successful medical career would take the time out to somewhat sidetrack or derail his career to be a Member of Congress. We are just so proud to have somebody like the gentleman with us.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I am honored and flattered to hear the gentleman say that. Let me first say it is an honor to be here in the Congress. I cannot really say it is a pleasure to be here in the Congress but it is an honor, an extreme honor. One of the reasons I left my medical practice and ran for Congress and came here was the issue that you are talking about tonight, and that is one of the reasons why I wanted to come down here and join both of you. I am a product of the public education system in our country. I went through public school. I went to a State college. I went to a State medical school, so I am very much a product of public education, and public education in America for many years has been a tremendous success. Indeed, my mother was a public school teacher. I feel indebted to the public school system, and I feel that it has truly been a tremendous success story up until the recent past. We all know the status of education in America today. There are some schools that are doing a great job, an outstanding job, and there are some schools that are doing an OK job, but there are some schools that are failing really miserably. At the root of that, I believe, is a lot of factors, one of them is that we have a Federal bureaucracy in Washington that I believe is very, very inefficient, sucking up money, money that should be in the classroom and putting unnecessary burdensome rules and regulations on our schools. One of the reasons why I am very proud to be able to be here and be part of the Republican educational reform is that one of the key themes is to get money, power and responsibility back to parents, back to teachers, and back to the schools and out of the bureaucracy in Washington, DC.

Let me just add one other thing because I was listening to the comments earlier about the innovations in Minnesota. One of the reasons I ran for

Congress is I felt the only way to deal with so many of the problems within our public educational system today is through school choice. It is the one major sector of our economy, and I am not sure if the gentleman from Georgia was reciting these figures or if it was the gentleman from Minnesota earlier about how there are 3 million people employed as teachers in the United States, there are 20,000 schools. This is just a huge industry, and we basically have put it in the hands of Government. It is the only major sector that is in the hands of Government of our economy. We do not have the food delivery system in the hands of the Government, we do not have medical care in the hands of the Government, though some people wanted to make medical care the purview of the Federal Government, but yet we have given education over to the Federal Government.

Let me just add, though, that there are people in this country who have educational choice but they are the wealthy. The wealthy have always had educational choice. People with the means could always pick the best school in their community. I think what we are about with educational reform and school choice is giving everybody the same ability that the wealthy people have, to be able to choose the best academic environment for their children.

I want to raise one very, very important point and this is, I believe, a falsehood that we hear spoken repeatedly on the floor of this House by the opponents of school choice and that is that choice in education will ruin public education. In other words, the public schools will not be able to compete; if you really have a marketplace and give parents a tuition voucher or tax credit, that the public schools will collapse. Let me just say, first of all, that I do not think that is true at all. I think there is enough innovation and enough talented teachers in our public system that they will be able to compete, they will improve and they will be made better by school choice. For somebody to make that argument, they are tacitly, implicitly admitting that the system is so bad, in their own mind, that they will not be able to compete. For them to get up and say it will ruin public education, they are in essence admitting that it is inferior and that in a marketplace they will not be able to survive. I happen to believe that is wrong. Some of our public schools will fail, some of our public schools will close, but I think some of them will be made better.

I want to just tell the gentleman as a Congressman from Minnesota, he has a lot to be proud of in his Governor, in his State legislature. They have emerged this year as one of the leading States and perhaps in many ways it is very fitting that it should come out of Minnesota, a place that has been known for its progressive innovations for years and to see this happening in

Minnesota. I agree with what the gentleman was saying earlier about how this is really a State and a local initiative to really reform education. This is a huge country; 270 million people, 50 States. We cannot fix education in America here from Washington, DC. It has got to happen in every school, in every county, in every city, in every State capital all across the country. A thousand flowers should bloom and innovation should occur.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I think what is very, very important and what he is talking about is that allowing the local innovation, the grassroots on up rather than the command and control pushing down the rules, what will happen if Minnesota is as good as all reports are right now? Everybody is excited about what is going on in Minnesota. I can tell my colleagues what is going to happen. Florida and Georgia are going to go up there and figure out what can we do, what is working and how can we change our system. The HOPE scholarship which has been a successful program of Governor Zell Miller, Democrat in Georgia, as the gentlemen know was somewhat copied in the recent budget bill. There is a lot to be said by having 50 different laboratories and then thousands of other labs in county and city school systems.

Mr. GÜTKNECHT. The gentleman is really talking about the miracle of the marketplace, in allowing innovation and in effect some competition to exist. What he is saying is if Minnesota's plan works as well as some think it will, other States will copy it. But if it does not, somebody else can innovate something else.

Mr. KINGSTON. And we get to sit by and not waste the money.

Mr. GÜTKNECHT. It is lead, follow or get out of the way. For too long the Federal Government has been in the way.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I want to make one point getting back to what the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] was talking about about 5 minutes ago. Though we need innovation, a thousand flowers should bloom, we do need school choice, we do need a competitive marketplace, the thing that the gentleman was talking about is incredibly important and that is discipline. That is something that is absent in too many of our schools. There are two components to education in my opinion. One is the book learning, knowing your multiplication tables, knowing who Christopher Columbus was, but there is another part in education, and we all know this. It is a part of our education that begins from the moment of our birth, most of it comes from our parents, and that is building character, building integrity, building honesty into that young person. Indeed if you ask an employer what is more important, that they have all this book knowledge and word knowledge or whether they are responsible, reliable, not on drugs, stable family life, they will always tell you

they would rather have those character things, because they can always teach them, even though it is not their job and it should be the schools' job, but they can always teach them that stuff. But you cannot fix somebody who does not have those things ingrained in them by the time they are 18. What the gentleman was talking about, getting the good old-fashioned paddle, that is a part of it, discipline and character and training. That is an area where I have to say our public system in most areas is failing miserably. It is directly related, I believe, to taking prayer out of our schools and taking out the wisdom of the Bible.

Can we go back to where we were 30 years ago? No. I do not think we can. I do not think we can put school prayer back in. This country has become so diverse. However, I believe we need to give parents the choice to be able to put their children in a religious environment or not in a religious environment, to select the environment that they want for their kids. I happen to believe many will choose a religious environment and I think they should have the freedom to do that. These arguments that that is a violation of the separation of church and State I think is absurd. I think parents, working-class families should have the freedom to choose the academic environment for their kids that wealthy families have. Working families should be able to choose where they send their kids to school. Having that disciplined environment that the gentleman from Georgia was talking about I believe is more important in many ways than the book learning that we give our kids.

Mr. KINGSTON. So much of the discipline picture, though, has got to get back to the home and the parents. We had Charles Ellis Montessori School in Savannah, GA, an excellent school putting out a great product in the students that it educates. The principal, though, told me they have 94 percent parent involvement. If you get the parents involved, it makes a big difference.

I will tell my colleagues another personal story and convince them that I have horrible discipline around the house. I have got to tell you about Jim, my 6-year-old. I love Jim. I am excited. We are going home tomorrow, and I am going to go play with Jim. Jim is very, very independent, a little blond-headed boy, solid as a rock, not an ounce of fat on him, all muscle. Ninety-nine percent go. All the time. He does not have a slow gear. He started kindergarten last year. He did not like it. He liked summertime, he liked independence. He did not like sitting in the classroom. The teacher tried to include him in on the program, Ms. Stafford, but Jim resisted. It got worse and worse. Ms. Stafford took him to see the principal. Jim did not like the principal at all and kicked the principal. The teacher was horrified. The principal was horrified. She called me up and I was horrified because, as you know,

particularly during the 1960's when the three of us went through the school system, principals were like God. They had the final word on everything, and no kicking. But Jim did not know the rules. So the principal called me up. We had a parent conference and all this. She did something that I really think is great.

□ 2015

She said, "I want to know where you are 24 hours a day. I want one number and one name, and if I call that name and that number, you, no matter where you are, are going to come to this school and pick Jim up and take him home. Do you understand me?"

I said, "Yes, ma'am, I understand you."

There was just no gray area to it. She laid out the rules; the program was clear. And, needless to say, Libby and I got to work on Jim, double overtime, and he ended up having a great, spectacular year. That was last year. He ended up, I think, a model student. I do not know if the teacher will agree with me, but it was perfect.

The beauty of it was the principal had the flexibility to grab me, somewhat rhetorically, by the tie and say, "Look, sucker, your kid is a problem. I want him off my campus, because he is disrupting the learning of the other kids. You are going to come get him."

Again, no lawsuit, no Federal involvement, no big problem. We understand that she was looking out for the greater cause, and we cured the problem. You cannot do that in most school systems today because the parents will say, "Well, it is not my problem. You all probably abused him."

It is just so stupid in society, some of the things we are getting into now. But I think it is because of this Washington bureaucracy, centralized planning for education, instead of giving the teachers and the principles the flexibility they need.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Clearly, the gentleman makes a very important point, which is that you cannot blame it all on the schools, and you cannot blame it all on the teachers.

Indeed, I have to say, maybe I am partial to teachers, my mother having been a schoolteacher, most of them are great, most of them are very sincere, most of them are very hard working, there are some elements to the problems that we have in our schools that transcend the school, and it does require more parental involvement.

Your example is an excellent example of how parents get involved. I know with my little girl, Katie, when she was in the first grade she was struggling with reading. My wife started to work with her with reading and tried to help her. At the end of the first grade, she was reading at about the third grade level, but she started out struggling. That is an example of very intense parental involvement.

A lot of parents, single moms, do not have the time for that. There are problems that go beyond our schools, and

parental involvement is one of the keys.

I will tell you, I think one of the best ways to get parental involvement is to get school choice, where parents are looking at the schools in their school district, looking to see which ones are good, and then getting their kids enrolled. They have an investment in that.

It is no longer a government-run operation, and every kid goes off and gets on the bus, and whatever comes out of the process at the end is whatever comes out. The parents have some ownership.

When they are shopping for the best school, I can tell you most parents are really going to make a strong effort to find the best academic environment for their child, and you are going to see parental involvement.

If we can get an environment in this country today where every State is doing what Minnesota does, I think parental involvement will increase, not only in the private schools and the sectarian schools, religious schools, but in the public schools as well, because if a parent has a tax voucher or tax credit in their hand and they choose to go to the public school, I would assume they are going to make more of an effort to make sure that their son or daughter is getting the education that they need.

But I agree with the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] 100 percent, that there is more to it than just our schools. This is a community issue, it is a family issue, it is a church issue, it is a school issue, and it is a government issue. But I think it is a local government issue, it is not a Federal issue.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. If the gentleman would yield, I would like to get back to the point about discipline. You made the point that most employers say if they have to choose between a candidate for employment who has all of the right knowledge and one who has the right character and values, they will tend to lean toward the person. They are not mutually exclusive. I think we should make that point.

This fall, or last spring, I toured two schools, one in Minneapolis, one in St. Paul, and both of them had done something rather remarkable. One was a charter school, which we were one of the first States to begin allowing charter schools to start. The other was a regular public school.

It was interesting, though, the reason that these two schools had been chosen by some people who wanted me to see what was happening in education, they had both committed themselves to a curriculum that was very, very strong on values: Value education.

You mentioned we have more or less taken religion out of the public schools, and some would argue that is good, while some would argue that is bad. But I do not think you necessarily have to separate education from the importance of teaching kids on a regular basis the importance of some of those traditional values.

It was interesting what happened at both of those schools. These were inner city schools. These were relatively poor neighborhoods. They had, up until they had begun to switch their curriculum, had pretty poor test scores.

But two things happened. When they began to really reinforce some of those time-tested principles and values, what happened was, first of all, the discipline improved. Without doing anything else, discipline improved.

Then, not only did discipline improve, but the academic side improved. When you have discipline, when you have kids who understand that it is important to be honest, to tell the truth, to work hard, to be cooperative, to behave yourself, to be quiet when the teacher speaks, to be respectful of adults, all of those values which we were really taught when we were in school back in the fifties, really, the changes in those schools and the academic performance of these kids went up geometrically.

So it can happen. More importantly, it is happening. It is happening not only in private schools, but it can happen in public schools. So the whole idea that it can only happen in private schools or only happen in charter schools really is not true.

But it does take the commitment of the parents. It takes the commitment of a principal. I am sorry, I should remember the name of the principal, I wish I had it for this discussion tonight, but a very courageous principal who said: "We are going to change the school. It is going to be cleaner, it is going to be safer, the kids are going to be disciplined, and we are going to teach values." It is just amazing to see the differences in that school and in those kids.

The beauty of all of that is, in the long run, the real winners are going to be those kids. At the end of the day and the end of their time in school, they are going to get so much more out of it than what the school was like a few years ago when it was rowdy, it was dirty, the kids did not behave and they did not pay attention to the teachers, and their academic performance was way at the bottom. Now their performance is moving way up toward the top.

It is not mutually exclusive and it does not require just private or charter schools. But I think one of the things that did encourage this particular school to at least be aware of it was the fact that charter schools were becoming available, and that we had increased and are now dramatically increasing the deductibility as well as tax credits for educational expenses in Minnesota, so there is a competitive force now, and people understand if parents do not feel that the local public school is really doing the job, then there is an option out there.

There is a competitive factor. Again, there is the miracle of the marketplace, and some innovation by the school administrators has made a tremendous

difference in those schools and in the lives of the kids who go to school there.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. If the gentleman would yield, I would agree 100 percent that you can teach morality, virtue, and character in an environment that does not include a religious theme.

Some examples I think include hard work, the value of hard work, caring for others, treating others as you would want to be treated yourself. You do not have to get the Bible out to instill these values in kids. There are lots of ways that you can just teach those basic human values.

Now, I happen to personally believe they are all rooted in the Bible, at least in western civilization they are rooted in the Bible. But there are ways that you can teach values and virtue where you do not have to violate the so-called constitutional separation of church and State.

I know you are going to tell me that is not in the Constitution, and I am aware of that, that the words "separation of church and State" are not in the Constitution.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. If the gentleman would yield, he makes a good point. I tell some of my friends it is not right because it is in the Bible, it is in the Bible because it is right and it works. The time-tested principles and values that we talk about, work, thrift, personal responsibility, respect for your elders, those are not right just because they are in the Bible; they happen to be in the Bible because they are right and they work.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Amen.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. You do not have to teach the Bible to teach the principles that have made not only this society successful, but every successful society in some form or another has subscribed to the basic principles and values we are talking about. But it is important those values be taught to our kids.

I hope we can come back to why values do matter in the long run and this original discussion that we started out that got me to come over here.

Mr. KINGSTON. If the gentleman would yield, here is an August 29 article in the Washington Times about a public opinion poll that says the economy is booming, the stock market is up, business is good, employment is at a great high, and yet Americans are pessimistic.

One reason they are pessimistic is because of moral values. For example, one woman in this poll talked about the country not being on the right track and said that the vulgarity on TV is shocking when people, and this is a quote—well, I do not want to quote it, but just general things that are said on TV and on radio, which are inappropriate, particularly if you have got an 8- or 9- or 12-year-old in the room, or a 30-year-old, for that matter. It is just bad things.

Then government, a lot of people said they distrust government. You know,

it just says Americans remain largely suspicious of the Federal Government and their political leaders, though the anger of the early nineties has dissipated. I think we in Congress should deal with problems more on a bipartisan basis, rather than finger point and so forth.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. If the gentleman would yield, I knew this story and I forgot it and it came up this week. There was quite a debate when Jefferson wrote the term "the pursuit of happiness."

Do you know originally many of the Founding Fathers wanted that sentence to be "the pursuit of virtue?"

There is a difference. I thought that was an interesting debate that we have somewhat forgotten. Obviously, we want to be able to pursue happiness, but many of the Founding Fathers felt it was even more important to pursue virtue. "Virtue" is a term we hear almost none of in this capital city any more.

I go back and I will close, and I know our time has almost expired, but I do want to say this about virtue and values, because I believe he was paraphrasing someone else, but I often quote Jessie Jackson, Sr., who politically I do not agree with on too many issues, but I agree with something he said a few years ago. He said, "If you want to change the world, you have to first change your neighborhood. If you can't change your neighborhood, at least be a good example."

I think particularly those of us on this side of the ballot, on this side of the elections, who serve in public offices and have the privilege to serve in the U.S. Congress, I think sometimes we all want to try and change the world; but what we have really got to do is talk about how can we change our neighborhood, and, finally, and most importantly, how can we be good examples.

I think once in a while we have to remind people that values and virtue are important, and they do make a difference. It is difficult sometimes when you read the stories in the press of what happens here in Washington, and the way you started this conversation tonight, and everybody is talking about campaign finance reform, but, in the end, at the end of the day, it seems to me that whether you are the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, a Member of the U.S. Congress, it seems to me you have a responsibility not just to obey the letter of the law, not just to find legalism, to stay within what you technically and your attorneys may say is the law, but it seems to me you have an example, you have a responsibility, at least, to set a good example.

That is one of the things that has frustrated me over the last number of months, because we have had a lot of our colleagues talking about campaign finance reform. We need campaign finance reform. I step back and I say I

certainly believe that we do need campaign finance reform.

But it seems to me before we reform any laws, we have to make certain that the laws that are currently on the books are being adequately enforced. Frankly, I do not think it is too much to expect of us or members of the administration or anyone else that they not only obey the letter of the law as they are on the books today, but they set a good example.

□ 2030

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman. I hope that perhaps we can finish and talk a little bit about that, because if we are really going to teach our kids, we teach them best by example. We do not teach them by example by hiding behind legalisms, we set an example and live by that example, and that is what they hear the most from us.

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentleman for those points. I think they are excellent.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just want to close by getting back to something the gentleman was talking about a few minutes ago, in quoting that newspaper article.

If we look at the polls, there are a lot of people who still remain pessimistic, despite the economy going strong and unemployment being low, and it is the morality, it is the virtue issue. The gentleman is absolutely right, we cannot lay all the blame on our schools. Hollywood is playing a role, what people are seeing on TV.

But it really comes down to, in the end, we have to change ourselves. We have to change our families. We have to change our communities. Unless it comes from the grassroots up, it is not going to work. It cannot come from Washington, DC, down. We cannot reform education and put education reform, we cannot change our educational system, where virtue and values are being upgraded, we cannot reform the system from Washington, DC.

There are 5,000 education bureaucrats in this city right now, working in buildings around this Capitol, that are not doing anything to help so many of these kids who are struggling. A lot of our kids are doing well, but a lot are struggling. I think it is very exciting, the kind of reforms we are seeing.

I think what we are trying to do in the Republican Party here in this Congress, we are saying no to the status quo, and we want to see some real reform. It has really been a pleasure to be able to join with the gentleman in this discussion.

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentleman, and certainly agree. There are so many things we are debating now in terms of more Washington government in education, national curriculums. I say, let us go back to the local level where the action is, where a lot of the solutions are, and so forth.

On the subject of right and wrong, I was jogging the other day out in front,

leaving the Capitol, going by the Smithsonian, toward the Washington Monument, and two student-type looking fellows were sitting on the ground with a laptop computer. They had a big poster board. It said, "Is there a difference between right and wrong?" And they were sitting around punching figures into their laptop, apparently proving that there was no difference between right and wrong.

I did not have the nerve, but I certainly had the mind, and I was thinking, I just ought to jog right over there and step on that laptop and ruin it, and then turn around and see if they think there is a right or a wrong. Because I have a feeling they would say, hey, that was wrong, buddy.

And it is interesting how quickly you can kind of turn the debate from some of the academic Washingtonian deep thinkers and just bring them back to the reality of the real world and hometown America, because that is where I think the salvation of our great country is.

There are a lot of good people in Washington, great minds, practically brilliant people. I have a lot of respect for many, many folks: Democrats, Republicans, Federal bureaucrats, Federal employees, a lot of good folks in the system. But when we get down to it, the real strength of America is on the streets of America and hometown America, the wisdom of hometown America. I think that is where the goodness is, and there lies our greatness.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlemen for joining me tonight.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ALLEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PAPPAS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes on September 11.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ALLEN) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. SKELTON.

Mr. BERRY.