

Act is, after we get to a balanced budget, we cap the growth of Washington spending at a rate at least 1 percent lower than the rate of revenue growth.

I brought a picture to show what happens. The red line shows spending going up, and too fast probably for the three of us, but spending going up, but at a slower rate than the revenue line.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. If the gentleman would yield, I think his assumptions are that we would still increase Federal spending at faster than the inflation rate.

Mr. NEUMANN. This is correct.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. So we are not talking about draconian cuts in any Federal spending.

Mr. NEUMANN. Absolutely not. And I think my colleague and I would probably not do that. We would not want it to increase faster than the rate of inflation for sure. But even if it goes up faster, it has got to go up slower than the rate of revenue growth.

By doing so, we create this middle area here. That is the surplus. We take one-third of the surplus and supply additional tax cuts. And Alan Greenspan today said, as we are going through this process, the interest rates will come down, and that will promote a stronger economy. And he suggested if we are going to do tax cuts, that we make them across the board, reduce the marginal rate kind of thing. And I think he is right there.

The other two-thirds of this surplus, we start making mortgage payments on the Federal debt. When we pay off the Federal debt, the money that has been taken out of the Social Security Trust Fund would be returned, because that Social Security Trust Fund money is all part of the Federal debt.

So under this plan, three things happen. First, the senior citizens who are worried about their Social Security can rest assured that Social Security would be restored. As we are paying off the debt, the money taken out of Social Security would be put back. Second, the people in the work force today would be entitled to additional tax cuts each and every year as far as the eye can see. And third, and I would say, to me, most important of all, we can look forward to paying off the mortgage, as my colleague suggested earlier, and passing this great Nation of ours on to our children debt free instead of giving them a legacy of a \$5.3 trillion debt.

That is what this bill is about. I think it is the right thing. I know my colleagues are both cosponsors on it. We are working very hard to get it to the floor of the House. I am optimistic that between the senior citizens who want their Social Security restored and care an awful lot about the future of this country, the people in the work force who would prefer to pay less taxes and not more taxes, and, most important, all of us who care about the future and what kind of a country we give our kids, that we would bring this to the floor and pass the bill.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. If the gentleman would continue to yield, I have ex-

plained this program at town hall meetings in speeches around my State district. And almost everywhere, in fact everywhere, we get almost unanimous support for this plan. It is common sense. I think it is what the American people want.

As I said earlier, it really is the American dream: Pay off the mortgage, leave your kids the farm. That is what we want to do for the next generation of Americans.

Mr. KINGSTON. One thing I would like to see discussion on, instead of just straight more tax relief, perhaps move towards tax simplification, with the intent of accelerating the debt pay-down, because if we can do it this way in the year 2026, if we just change taxes to make it simple, I believe many, many people in America, given the choice of reducing their tax rate 5 percent versus going to a flat tax or a consumption tax, they would probably say, give me this tax simplification, because the extra money I am having to pay my accountant and lawyer to file my taxes is a tax anyhow. So just give me tax simplification.

I am very proud that the Republican party has taken the initiative on that. I am proud that the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] and the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] are going to be going around the country having debates on consumption versus flat taxes.

I have not fully decided which route we should go in terms of the folks back home, but I welcome the dialogue in the debate.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. If the gentleman would continue to yield, I want to make it real clear, they are not mutually exclusive. We can balance the budget, we can actually pay off the debt, and we can simplify the Tax Code all at once. All it requires is the kind of discipline we have demonstrated for the last 3 years.

I think the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is putting up a chart now. We have to continually reduce the rate of growth in Federal spending. We have literally cut it almost in half in terms of the real rate of growth, inflation-adjusted dollars, almost any way we want to measure it.

And as the numbers I indicated before, in fiscal year 1997, Congress took in over \$110 billion more than we expected but we spent \$20 billion less. It is that kind of discipline that will allow us to balance the budget, pay off the national debt, and simplify the Tax Code so that the average American can understand it.

Mr. NEUMANN. Reclaiming my time, concluding tonight, isn't it exciting to be here having this conversation? How different it is currently than it was in 1993 when they were debating which taxes we had to raise and how high we had to raise them because, after all, we could not reel in Washington spending.

That was 1993, broken promises of a balanced budget and higher taxes. But in our first 3 years here, we have lit-

erally slowed the growth of Washington spending. We did not reach into the pockets of the American people and take out more taxes to balance the budget. We slowed the growth rate of Washington spending.

By slowing the growth rate of Washington spending, we are now in a position where we are not only going to balance the budget 3 or 4 years ahead of our promised schedule, but we are also lowering taxes on families and workers all across America. Senior citizens, middle-age folks, union members, all Americans are going to benefit from the tax cut packages. Isn't it exciting to be here having this conversation? What a changed America.

Again, I think we should point out the discussions that are starting at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue again. When they are talking about tax increases, it is almost like they forgot 1993. We are not going to let that happen. We have got a different vision for the future.

What is next? Next is, we abolish the IRS Code 3 or 4 years from now so we have time to replace it with something that is simpler, fairer, easier for our people to understand. We are going to put the Nation on a mortgage repayment plan so that we pay off the Federal debt by the year 2026, or sooner, so we can give this Nation to our children debt-free. As we are paying off the debt, we restore the Social Security Trust Fund. And, of course, we are going to continue to lower taxes on the working folks in America.

People say we cannot do all those things. Three years ago they said we could not do all these things either. If we just realized that people in America can do a better job spending their own money than the people out here in Washington can do spending it for them, that is what this is all about. Slow the growth of Washington spending programs. Keep the absolutely necessary programs, but slow the growth of Washington spending so people can keep more of their own money. We can do the right thing, start making payments on the debt, restore the Social Security Trust Fund, and come up with a new, simpler Tax Code.

It is exciting to think about what possibilities lay in front of us, how far we have come, and how far we still can go to make this a better Nation for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. KINGSTON. Dwight Eisenhower said that, "Once the American people have made up their mind to do something, there is little that can be done to stop them." I agree with that. I think the American people have made up their mind. Congress has to keep their own feet to the fire.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, we in the Congress are charged with the task of finding the best course for our Nation, and the debate on this floor is the compass with which we chart that course.

None of the issues debated in this Chamber has an easy answer, and very often agreement does not guarantee an immediate solution. President Clinton, during his State of the Union address in January, called upon us to act on behalf of children, saying that politics should stop at the schoolhouse door.

Well, I certainly agree. I would add to the President's sentiment by declaring that that effort to improve the climate of learning and development for our children must start long before our children ever reach the schoolhouse door. Partisan politics should play no role in the development of our children. Politics should stop at the foot of the crib.

Newspapers across the Nation have highlighted new scientific findings in the field of early childhood development. For years, conventional wisdom taught us that if a child was intelligent, she must have been born intelligent. But, as an April 28 editorial in the New York Times so appropriately stated, "After birth, experience counts even more than genetics."

Talking to our children from birth, holding and playing with newborns, and even looking them in the eye during play can have a profound impact on the development of their intellect, making them better students and making them more confident and productive members of society. These early years are critically important to our children's full and healthy development.

That is why we must invest more time, more study, and more resources in our efforts to promote a healthy start to life for our kids. Getting this message out to the public today will play a key role in our Nation's ability to compete in the global economy of the future.

Imagine, a child's ability to relate to others is a permanent part of a child's personality by the age of 2, and the brain connections needed for math and logic are formed by the age of 4. Who would have thought that so much about our kids' future and social, academic performance would be determined by such an early age? But yet, it is.

When I visit with people in my district of Massachusetts, parents and child-care providers did not miss these news stories. The people in my district care deeply about this issue. Let me give my colleagues just one example.

Over the past several months, a working group of parents, child-care providers, education specialists, and medical personnel have developed a parent and provider survey under the auspices of the Central Massachusetts United Way "Success-by-Six" program. The survey is an effort to gather information about conditions affecting

young children and their families in the Greater Worcester area. The survey seeks to discover what is working well, what the strengths in the community are, and how things can be better.

The overwhelming response to the survey thus far has resulted in a need for second printing, and the response from both parents and providers who have mailed in responses to the survey has been a phenomenal 50 percent.

Parents from central Massachusetts are no different from parents all across the Nation. And do parents across America think we are doing enough? Well, according to a Newsweek poll, over half of our Nation's parents do not believe that the Government and business policies adequately support families with very young children.

Mr. Speaker, the studies that I have mentioned regarding early childhood development indicate that environmental factors affect children's intelligence and healthy development much more than we have ever believed. These environmental factors are largely under our control. I repeat, these environmental factors are largely under our control.

I strongly believe that we cannot look at these findings and simply do nothing. The issue here is children, children all across the Nation, who need more than we have given them to date. The debate here in this House should be how best we can help our children or families in our Nation.

Let us look at the facts. In the United States, over five million of our youngest children are cared for by other adults while their parents work. According to a 1995 national study conducted by the University of Colorado Economics Department, many of the child-care centers to which we entrust our children are unlicensed, staffed by poorly-paid adults, and over 90 percent of these facilities lack adequate services to respond to the developmental needs of each child in their care. About half of these facilities actually provide care that is deemed unhealthy for our Nation's children.

In some of America's poorest neighborhoods, some 70 percent of children have difficulty with simple communication. This deficiency can be directly attributed to poor nutrition, a lack of health education, and inadequate personal care.

Nobel Laureate economist Robert Solow estimated that the cost of child poverty to the United States is as high as \$177 billion per year. I would argue that the cost of the most basic principles of our society is far higher if we ignore the basic needs of our youngest children.

The suffering is felt in economic as well as human terms. I have met with business owners who tell me that finding people equipped with the necessary skills to compete in today's economy is increasingly difficult. Without giving our kids the help they need at an early age, it will get no easier.

Mr. Speaker, the child poverty rate here in the United States is among the highest in the developed world.

□ 1945

According to the General Accounting Office, studies estimate that of the approximately 100,000 American children who are homeless, nearly half are under the age of 6 years old. These children will not be on an even footing developmentally and they are likely to lag behind their peers for the rest of their lives.

No resident of Westport, MA, which is in my district, would sail the waters of Buzzard's Bay with an anchor dragging behind their boat. Neither can we allow our children to hang off the stern of this Nation. We have work to do, we have much more work to do. Parents want us to address these issues now and the call to action could not be more clear.

I am proud to have joined with my distinguished colleagues in this House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] and the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] in introducing a bill to address the issues of early childhood development. Our legislation provides greater funding like Head Start and Early Start and various family support services. Our bill also offers State competitive grants to identify and reward those early childhood programs that are working today, that are working.

We are reaching across the aisle to address the needs of children, and I hope that this call will be answered by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Let us enter into the debate on this issue and make early childhood development a national priority today.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add that we should also applaud the interest and the leadership that the President of the United States and the First Lady have demonstrated on this issue. On October 23 there will be a White House Conference on Child Care similar to the one held earlier this spring on early childhood development. I would urge the President to continue his leadership, to continue his interest on this issue, and I would further urge that these issues be the centerpiece of his State of the Union Address and of his agenda next year.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to my colleague from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] who has been a strong advocate for early childhood development issues and all other education issues.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the gentleman for leading this special order tonight, because as he mentioned, the topic is early childhood development, but this is really part of the overall Democratic education agenda. As Democrats, we as a party from the very beginning of this Congress, and even before this Congress, have said that it is important that we prioritize education.

I know our colleagues before were talking about the budget, and the gentleman and I and my colleague here

from Maine and others were all very insistent that during that balanced budget debate, that education, primarily higher education, be prioritized. We managed to basically tell the Republicans on the other side that if they did not put in programs so that there would be more money available for higher education, we would not agree to the budget, the proposal that they put forward.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would just say, I wish our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would appreciate that one of the ways to save money, one of the ways to keep the budget in balance and to have a healthy economy is by investing in our children, by investing in education, beginning at age zero.

We had to fight tooth and nail, as the gentleman knows, to get them to agree to modest concessions on education and the budget. What good there is in this budget on education is due to the efforts of the Democrats, and I would like to point that out to my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, there is no question about that. Not to keep being partisan, because I do not want to just say bad things about our Republican colleagues, but the bottom line is that the Republican leadership in the last few years has repeatedly tried to cut back or even eliminate some of the education programs that impact the kindergarten-through-12 grade level.

For example, Goals 2000, which provides a small amount of money to local school districts to try innovative programs in the public schools, they have repeatedly said that they did not want to fund any more. But tonight, as part of this education agenda, we are stressing early childhood development.

I know that the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. ALLEN] has been a leader. The bill that he mentioned, the Early Learning and Opportunity Act, is a tremendous piece of legislation, and if we do manage to get it passed in this Republican Congress, I think it will go far towards helping basically low-income families, primarily, but a lot of people, get an early start in teaching their children to read, speak and interact with others. It basically dovetails with the existing Head Start program, but starts the kids at an earlier age.

Head Start, from what I understand right now, is strictly above 3 years old. There is the Early Start program that the gentleman mentioned which deals with kids under 3, but that is a very small program. I think the statistics show that Early Start impacts or enrolls less than 2 percent of the eligible kids, whereas Head Start reaches about half of the eligible kids. So both programs need to be expanded, but the gentleman is zeroing in on the zero-to-3.

I just wanted to say from my own experience, right now I have a 4-year-old, a 2½-year-old, and a baby that was just born 10 days ago, my daughter, Celeste.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Congratulations.

Mr. PALLONE. I thank the gentleman.

I listened to what the gentleman said, and I have watched this amazing development with the 3 children, in Celeste's case, only 10 days now, and what the gentleman said is true. I feel bad because I am not always there and my wife has to do the interaction most of the time, because we are down here in Washington and they are back in New Jersey. But it is amazing how they begin to learn from the very beginning, and the environmental factors are so important.

I watch my wife, who just insists on reading to them and having books around all the time, and stressing the importance of learning the alphabet and watching programs on TV that provide instruction in pre-reading skills, and it is just so crucial. We can just see that they are absorbing everything every day, and if they are not constantly involved in some way in an effort to learn, they will not learn as quickly.

So that really has brought home to me the value of what we are trying to do by expanding Head Start to reach out to children from zero to 3. I think it is so crucial. It is just one of the most important things we can do in terms of investing in education, and in the long term providing children as they are growing up with a really good start, so to speak, so that they learn and they can become valuable members of society.

I have a lot more to say about the gentleman's bill, but there are other Members here, and maybe I can defer to them and come back to some of the other things that I wanted to point out.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield at this point to the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN], my distinguished colleague who has also been a champion on these issues and on all education issues.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to thank the gentleman for the bill that the gentleman and the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] have put forward. I am proud to be a cosponsor of that bill.

I would like to talk a little bit about the science. What the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] was just saying about his child and what he is seeing in a baby that is only now a few days old, we know a lot more about the brain of infants than we ever did before.

About 15 years ago, neuro scientists assumed that brain structure was genetically determined at birth. They did not recognize how important a child's early years are and how the experiences of those early years have an effect on the brain itself, and how important environmental conditions are, such as nourishment, care, surroundings and stimulation.

The impact of the environment is particularly compelling and it affects

how the brain is wired. To explain that, during the first 3 years of life the number of synapses in the brain increase rapidly, all of these connections between different parts of the brain. But then the number of those synapses holds steady through the first decade of life, and those that are not used decline and atrophy and basically disappear. So the formation of neuro pathways in the brain is directly related to the quality of care that young children receive.

I went to the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development a few months ago, and one of the speakers said quality child care is brain food. The fact is that too many of our young people today are not being fed enough brain food, and in fact, for too many working parents in this country, the cost of quality child care is really not affordable. It is too high for many of them, and we need to do more than we have.

I want to connect that research with some of the stories that I am hearing back in Maine. When I go and talk to superintendents or teachers right now, they are telling me that when kids come to them in kindergarten, there are now an increasing number who seem unable to sit still. They will spit at their classmates, they will fight with their classmates. They are really not ready for school because they are not able to interact productively with other kids in that kind of session.

What they are saying is, we need to do something about these kids, because most kids have good parents, most kids get a decent start in life, but there are some, some really who do not.

It points out the need as a matter of Federal policy, as a matter of State policy, as a matter of policy for every school board that we look to what happens before kids come to school. In Bath, ME, there is a program called Success By Age Six, and part of that program involves home visits, prenatal, postnatal, the kind of encouragement for parents, the kind of help for parents so that they can be productive in stimulating their children, helping them develop the skills that they will need to get along with adults, to get along with other kids, to start to have the ability and interest in learning to read or start to have the ability and interest in learning mathematical concepts.

When we think about our children, when we think about the kind of stimulation they need in those early years, we need a set of Federal, State and local policies that makes sense, that reflects what we know in terms of science and what we know in terms of our own common sense, what we are hearing around the country. I think that is the direction we need to go in.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the gentleman that he is right on target when he says the science exists, the science is there. We know how important those early years are.

The White House conference that occurred earlier this year highlighted how important those early years are, those years, zero to 3, and yet this Congress right now is not doing nearly enough to help complement that science.

We are trying very desperately to get Republican support for the bill that the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] and I have introduced. We are trying to build a bipartisan consensus here that more Federal resources need to go into helping States, for example, support innovative programs that help early childhood development, that help promote child health care. Those things are vitally important, and yet it is a constant struggle to try to get that bipartisan support.

Again, I wish my colleagues were still here. They talk very passionately about numbers. They talk very passionately in a very sterile way about numbers, but I would suggest to them, as I said earlier, that investing in our children, investing in these programs that help our children develop into healthy adults and into productive adults is a wise and important investment that will save this country tons of money in the future.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, an earlier speaker on the other side said that he had a dream, and that his dream was that the President called him and he was given an authority to exercise the line-item veto.

Well, I have a dream as well. I think we on this side of the aisle, we as Democrats have a dream as well, and it is to leave no child behind, and that what we need to do as a country is recognize that the Cold War is over. We have balanced the Federal budget. We look out ahead for the next 10 years and we see a Federal budget that is close to balance, either a modest surplus or a modest deficit for 10 years.

It is time for people in this country to say that the great mission, the great challenge that we have as a country in the next 10 years is to leave no child behind, to make sure that children in this country have adequate health care, a solid education; that they are prepared before they ever get to kindergarten with the appropriate child care and the kind of stimulation they need, and that we are going to make this country strong for our children. If we do that, I think our prospects for the next century are very, very bright indeed, but we need the national will.

Rob Reiner, who has been a leader in promoting child care, quality, affordable child care, has said what is missing today is that we do not have the national will to treat this problem with the seriousness that it deserves. I believe on this side of the aisle we are determined to do that, and I look forward to working with all of my colleagues on that.

□ 2000

Mr. MCGOVERN. I just wish my colleagues on the other side of the aisle

had the passion with regard to children that they do about B-2 bombers. The fact of the matter is that we should be able to, in a bipartisan way, be able to come together and to support these kinds of programs that help our children develop into healthy adults.

I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE].

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to keep using my own experience, but I cannot help it. When I listen to my colleague, the gentleman from Maine, talk about the interaction, he pointed out how it is important for kids at that age not only to interact with their parents, but even to interact with other kids.

One of the things that I notice with my son, who is 2½ now, is how much he has learned from just interaction with his older sister, who is 4. And she did not have that advantage because she was by herself. She was not able to have somebody who was teaching her. But it is just constant.

She will pick up a book and she will say, can we read? And neither one of them can read, but they sit there and try to make up the stories as they look at the pictures, and just the advantages that some kids have. Obviously we can buy them the videotape and they will learn something from the videotape. We have books we can provide them.

If a kid is at home and does not have the books and the opportunity, maybe if they go and spend some time in child care, where there is someone who provides them with the educational materials and has other children there who will interact with them, it makes such a difference. I can just see it myself. I just want to stress that, because it is really crucial.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. ROSA DELAURO], who has been a leader on this whole issue to promote early childhood development legislation here in the House.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues. I am delighted to join with them. I am really excited about this piece of legislation, and about introducing it along with my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MCGOVERN], and with my two colleagues here, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], who are aboard this very exciting effort.

Mr. Speaker, it is trite, but these are exciting times with what the science has uncovered. Think back to your own childhood. I can remember my father used to read to me all the time. It got so sometimes you are tired, and you figure you skip some of the pages because you are tired, and you want your son or daughter to go to sleep. But he would tell me later on that I would just trip him up. He would start to leave something out, and I would say, oh, you missed that piece, or something like that. But that is the kind of thing,

When the gentleman said he hated to bring it back to his own experience, that is what the experience needs to be about. When we take a look, I think the science is so exciting, not for the science itself but for what it translates into, and what we are able to do. We are given a wonderful opportunity here to do something with this.

Before age 3, the brain has the ability to learn and organize new information 10,000 times more effectively than the brain of a 50-year-old. This is these little, teeny people. They have all of this capacity, and the kinds of experiences that affect the brain.

I think it is important for parents to know this, for grandparents, for child care providers, for public officials, that when children under a year old experience severe stress, that is whether they are hurt or whether they have a fear or something, or whether they are hungry, that the brain changes, the brain changes. You have what they say, and I am not a scientist. I do not know if some of my colleagues are scientists. But the way the neurons are patterned and so forth, some are used more and some are used less, so the physical surroundings that a child has can often explain the later link, if you will, to some of the problems that we have today like school failure, juvenile delinquency, antisocial behavior.

I think it is important for us to realize that, again, in terms of our own obligation as elected officials, one-third of America's victims of child abuse are babies under 1-year-old. That is not only the problem for today, that is the problem in the future.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a fascinating study that I heard about a couple of weeks ago in Sacramento County, California. The study period looked at all of those 9- to 12-year-olds who had been arrested for a crime.

During the study period there were 132 9- to 12-year-olds who were arrested for a crime. It turned out that exactly one-half, 66 of those children, were already known to the California Department of Human Services as being alleged victims of abuse or neglect, and half of them were not known to the department. That is very interesting, because in Sacramento County at that time there were 1,100 children between the ages of 9 and 12 who were known to the Department of Human Services as being victims of abuse or neglect. There were 73,900 other children who were not so known.

So if we think about the likelihood that someone who has been a victim of abuse or neglect will commit a crime, it is not double or triple or ten times or 20 times or 50 times. On the basis of that study, you are 67 times more likely to commit a crime between the ages of 9 and 12 than a child who is not a victim of abuse or neglect.

Every conservative, every person who believes we have to conserve our public money, ought to support investment in children, because dollars put into taking care and improving the lot of kids

who are victims of abuse or neglect will pay off a thousandfold down the road.

Ms. DELAURO. The opposite pole is if babies do have trusting and reliable relationships, and that is with parents, grandparents, and caregivers, because we know today that men and women are in the workplace. Families cannot afford to stay home all of the time with their children. So we want to make sure that when they have day care, that needs to be sound and solid, where parents can trust the quality of that day care, the quality of the individuals who are providing that care.

The one thing that really, excuse me, just blows my mind is that while babies have an enormous capacity to learn, as I understand it, if it is not used, it is not that you can draw on the reserve and use it at another time. It goes away. It is gone. It loses the ability.

They have studies in animals, for instance, that if their eyes are covered right after birth, the brain then loses the ability to deal with visual information. So just to sum that up, with the brain, you either use it or you lose it. That is why, given the information, what we do not want to do with this information is put it on a shelf.

Mr. PALLONE. If I could just interrupt for a moment, one of the things that I often notice with little kids, and I do not know how young we can go, but obviously very small kids, is if the parents are bilingual, or if they know one, two, three or more languages, that the kids very easily go back and forth between the languages. Yet if you go a few years later, you cannot learn the language. It is much harder.

Is that basically the explanation for that?

Ms. DELAURO. It is, because you are not using, and again, I am not a scientist, but you are not using the part of the brain that differentiates those sounds. So children can learn languages, they learn languages easier at a much earlier age. Again, if we think about ourselves, or if we had that experience or learned a language in high school or earlier, if you had that experience at home, you can draw on both pieces.

My colleague, the gentleman from Maine, said if we miss this opportunity to provide children who are from the zero to 3, some places have programs that are from zero to 6, and you get that interaction with parents and caregivers, and you read to children, and you may think it is not coming through, but it is in many ways. I think if we do not take advantage of this opportunity we are not doing our jobs. We are not doing the job we were sent here to do.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I fully agree with my colleague, the gentlewoman from Connecticut. I just want to pick up on one thing that the gentleman from Maine said about the cost effectiveness of early childhood care. I want to read two statistics.

Long-term studies of the Perry Preschool Program for poor children found that after 27 years, each \$1 invested saved over \$7 billion by increasing the likelihood that the children would be literate, employed, and enrolled in post-secondary education, and decreasing the likelihood that they would be school dropouts dependent on welfare or arrested for criminal delinquency.

Another study of the short-term impact of the Colorado pre-kindergarten program found it resulted in a cost savings of over \$3 million over 3 years in reduced special education costs alone. So there is a very conservative, fiscally conservative argument to be made in favor of investing more in these preschool programs, in these early childhood care programs, because we save money. It is the fiscally responsible thing to do.

I do not think we can stress that enough, because there are some who would say, well, we are just talking about more taxpayers' money being invested into education, more into kids, and for what? Well, the reason why we are doing it is because these programs work. They also save us money in the long term.

Mr. PALLONE. The other thing that I think is so crucial is that a lot of people are not even aware of the fact that right now we are not providing the funding even for Head Start. My understanding is that only about even less than half of the kids that are eligible for Head Start, which basically goes from 4 to 5, are now in a program.

So even if we were just able to expand the amount of money available for Head Start and allow those eligible kids to be participating in that, that would go far. Early Start, less than 2 percent who are eligible are being cared for.

So the gentleman, and my colleague also, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, they are talking about, really, trying to make a major investment here that we need to make, but it is not being made. I do not want our constituents out there to think that right now Head Start is fully funded, because it is not. There are long waiting lines. I know in my district a lot of these Head Start programs, they have long waiting lines for the kids to get in, and they have not been able to accommodate even half of the kids that want to participate and are eligible.

Mr. MCGOVERN. What we are doing here is a call to action, urging our colleagues here, urging the White House, to continue its leadership on this issue. Much more needs to be done, much more needs to be invested. It is the right thing to do.

As my colleague, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] pointed out, we know the science. We are not making this all up. There are studies too numerous to mention that document the importance of these programs and the importance of focusing attention on those early years.

Ms. DELAURO. Sometimes people say, why should the Federal Govern-

ment—some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say, why should the Federal Government get involved in this? The Federal Government, in terms of preschool education, has been involved, for the very serious commitment in terms of Head Start. Head Start works. We know we have to make sure that it has continued quality, and that is the effort.

Therefore, this is a natural progression, even the wealth of information that we have, to look at how we then can expand this effort and be able to get to our children as quickly as possible, to have them get a good start on life and an ability to be able to ultimately compete.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to our colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. MCINTYRE]. I welcome him.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

As we look ahead to the continuing of what we do with young children coming up through the schools, there are programs like Head Start that are making a big difference in counties such as I come from, in Robeson County, N.C. Also there are other programs that I wanted to briefly address that will help us in this continuum from the young, early childhood right through growing up, children in elementary, middle, junior high, and high school, and even our community colleges and universities.

As a former chairman of a weekday school and day care program in my own church back home in Lumberton, NC, I share this great endeavor to help our children get a good start and a head start and great start in life.

As we look at our children getting a head start in living and learning, we can also look at exemplary programs we have here in our Nation. One of them was referred to by President Clinton in his State of the Union Address back in early February, when he referred to Gov. Jim Hunt of North Carolina, a program called Smart Start that our State legislature has endorsed and that is growing by leaps and bounds in counties throughout our State. I commend this exemplary program on giving young children that smart start to get going in life, such as we have in North Carolina.

There is also another program that we have been directly involved in at the Federal level that we can support. I hope that in the conference committee that will be coming forth with its report very soon, that we will support the Communities in Schools Program. As the old adage goes, if something is not broke, let us not try to fix it.

The Communities in Schools Program is one that has worked. In my home county of Robeson County, we are the only county that has a fully federally funded program that works with at-risk youth and also young children to help keep them on the right path. So as those young children have

the opportunity to go into school from their early years to their early school years, they can be involved in computer programs, they can be involved in learning programs, they can be involved in constructive programs to help prepare them, not only as better students, but ultimately as better citizens.

□ 2015

The Communities in Schools program in Robeson County is one that has worked with educators, local community leaders, law enforcement officers, and students working together. And it has helped in the health, social, education, and cultural aspects to give support for youth who may not have the advantages at home that we all would hope that our children would have but, in reality, so many, unfortunately, do not have.

The Communities in Schools program in our area has benefited more than 10 schools, starting with young children coming into the elementary schools right on through the elementary, middle schools, junior highs, and even at my alma mater, Lumberton Senior High School, where we had part of the Internet Learning Program, which I spoke on to several students back in February of this year.

When we look at the successes of a program like the Communities in Schools, we realize this is one area where the Federal Government can help on the local level. We all know we do not want Federal intervention and the Federal Government telling us how to run our schools. I do not believe anybody really wants that. We know what is best for our local communities. But the local communities need help from a Federal level. Whether it is from a program like Head Start or Smart Start like in North Carolina or where it is a situation where we can come in with a Federally funded program in a low-wealth county such as Robeson County and work to help children who are trying to maintain that Smart Start or that Head Start, we can carry it forward with a program like Communities in Schools.

When something is already helping families, already helping youth, already helping teenagers push them in the desire and direction that we all would have for them to be constructive, positive citizens for tomorrow, then it is a program that we should continue to support. And I am urging my colleagues in the conference report to support this program.

Another thing I wanted to mention is that we are having an education forum in my district on November 3. It is a day before a bond referendum is being voted on in part of our district, and we had another bond referendum voted on in my district today to support schools. But we realize there are three essential elements to help support our kids move through these years as they prepare and go through school. And that is supporting a commitment, sup-

porting construction where necessary, and supporting the age of technology in computers.

First of all, when we talk about commitment, it is ourselves having that commitment. One thing we are going to do in our district is have an education forum to bring together those who have worked with young children right on through high school, parents, teachers, school volunteers, as well as those who are professionally equipped to work with young people to talk about what can we do to sustain this opportunity for young people.

As one myself who has volunteered the last 17 years in the classroom of both public and private schools throughout my area, I have sought to teach these kids the attributes of good citizenship which I call the "Three R's of Citizenship": Understanding their "Rights," something we all love to hear about and want to maintain as children and youth and definitely as adults, but also matching those rights with "Responsibility," that for every right that we claim, there is a duty or responsibility that we also must sustain. And then third, as we teach our young people to balance these rights and responsibilities, they will then come to the perspective of understanding what we all want, and that is "Respect."

So as we work with young people in our area in teaching them their rights and their responsibilities to ultimately lead to respect, we realize that that is the goal of so many of these programs, that we are working with kids to give them that start so that they ultimately can fulfill their role as a good citizen.

When we talk about, in addition to commitment, we talk about construction, making sure that our outdated school buildings in a lot of rural areas and inner city areas especially cannot sustain a positive learning environment if there is not a positive facility in which to learn.

There are several bills pending now we have in the Congress which I am co-sponsoring that I hope we will join together with our other colleagues to push through: The Partnership to Rebuild America's Schools Act and also the sponsorship of the State Infrastructure Bank, which would allow States to decide where their greatest concern is with local school boards and then support and get the revolving loan funds that a poorer county may not have to make sure that school construction occurs where needed.

And then, finally, the other area besides commitment and construction is that area of knowing that we can move forward with computers and technology, when we realize that there is an opportunity to allow businesses to donate to the schools computer equipment and get a tax deduction, like they currently get for charitable institutions but they do not get it when they give it to a school. And I believe that in order to give incentives to busi-

nesses in the private sector to support our schools, that we can give them that opportunity to work with that.

So often when we talk about looking ahead, and we are all concerned about jobs, we are all concerned about the economic environment that families have, we realize that as new industry moves into an area, they will talk a lot about rail and utilities and water and the other kind of things to bring in positive employment. But then they always lean over and say, "Tell me about your schools," because not only will the management bring their children into that school district, but they will be drawing their labor pool for the future from those very schools.

And when we decry the lack of role models today in society for our young people, they are not all going to be the movie stars or athletic stars. The other 99 percent of our children are crying for role models. And where are they? They are standing right here in this Congress. They are back home in our communities and our businesses. They are in all aspects of our community leaders.

Mr. Speaker, if we will take the time ourselves to call up the teacher and say, I will come talk to your class about law or government or health or private enterprise, or if I cannot get up and talk well on my feet to a classroom, I will come read to little Johnny, or, better yet, I will come listen to little Janie read to me, that kind of private, personal involvement that all of us as citizens can take will make a big difference in supporting our children for the future.

Robin Cooke once wrote that, "Education is more than a luxury, it is a responsibility that society owes to itself." And I hope and pray that, with God's help, we will have the wisdom to make the tough decisions not only to understand that responsibility but to have the courage to fulfill that responsibility beginning right here in the highest halls of government, to our going back to the halls of our schools at home to work with children. Our children, our Nation, our future require that we do no less.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very eloquent and passionate statement. And he said something that I think is worth repeating, and that is that what we are advocating here today is not having the Federal Government dictate to the States and localities what they should be doing in their respective school districts, but what we are advocating here today is that we step up to the plate and provide the resources necessary so they can do their jobs.

I, like the gentleman, have traveled my district and talked to schools at every grade level. I have been impressed and inspired by the intelligence of these young kids, by the quality of the teachers. But what has concerned me in some of the visits that I have made is the lack of equipment, the crumbling schools.

Mr. Speaker, there are schools in my district in Massachusetts that were built when Ulysses Grant was President of the United States. That is a great tribute to the architect and the builder. But when Ulysses Grant was President of the United States, they did not think about the Internet, about the need to rewire classrooms and all the things that we have to deal with in this day and age.

So what we here are all advocating is that the Federal Government do what it can to help our local school districts. We know how expensive it is to rebuild a school. It can cripple a community. I have been impressed by the fact that a number of small towns and cities in my district have made the sacrifices to try to finance new school buildings. But they need help, and we should be here to help them.

Mr. Speaker, we spend a lot of money on things that I think are foolish. I think that our defense budget, for example, is way over budget. The fact of the matter is, it is so big that I think even Dr. Strangelove would be impressed by the incredibly high number. Why are we not investing more in our kids?

I think the quality of education that we provide our young people is just as essential to our national defense as some of these newfangled weapons that we keep hearing about. Again, I commend the gentleman for his statement and I agree with everything he said.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I came to this Congress from the Portland City Council, 1 year as mayor and 6 years on the Portland City Council. And while I was there, I heard from, I think, almost every person in my district about the significance of high property taxes.

I have only been here for 9 months, but I will bet that in the course of the debates in this Chamber over the last few years about education, that no one has stood up and said, "I am for abolishing the Department of Education," or, "I am for cutting funding for Head Start or other education programs," and in the same breath said, "And I will advocate at the local level for an increase in property taxes to support additional education programs." I bet that has never happened, because the same people who would say we want the Federal Government out of education would say also that we are not going to support increases in local property taxes to fund education.

The fact is that when it comes to 0 to 3, 0 to 6, the Federal Government is the funding agency. This Government, we already fund Head Start, and, as the gentleman from New Jersey said, we do not provide Head Start for all the kids who need it or for all the kids who qualify according to our regulations. What we have to do is to make sure that we take seriously the problems around this period, 0 to 3, 0 to 6.

But it is going to be a partnership between the Federal Government and the State governments and local govern-

ments and school boards and the private sector. We cannot do it alone here, but we have to set the goals and urge the people in this country to take this issue seriously.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield for a second, we all represent different areas and different parts of the country, whether they are urban or suburban or rural areas.

I keep going back to the fact that we have been privy to some of the most recent, the most up-to-date, the most scientific data about how we can make the biggest impact on our children. Startling data. We cannot have it more clearly, as my colleague from Massachusetts pointed out earlier. This is it. We have this period of time when we can make the biggest impact for this child's future.

And all that research is wonderful, again, wherever we live, but if it does not spur us to action, the kind of action that we are talking about, and the gentleman from New Jersey and the gentleman from North Carolina have spoken about, if we do not act on that, then, one, I think we are derelict in our responsibility, and I think that we really are shortchanging our kids.

Just two or three statistics that I think are important to note which then trigger off a number of things that say, what are the responses? What ought to be the responses? One-third of victims of child abuse are children under 1 year of age. Parents of all ages and income levels say they need more information on care for their children and how to stimulate their healthy development.

The United States is the only industrialized country in the world which does not have paid maternity leave. We have got millions of mothers and fathers who have to leave their kids and return to their jobs in those critical years. We are talking about the 0 to 3, the 0 to 6 years, and those early months of a child's life.

No one is suggesting that folks do not have to work today. Families have two people in the work force because they need to. But talking about tools, government cannot do everything. Government should not do everything. Government should provide some tools to people.

More than half of the mothers of babies under 1 year of age work outside of the home. But studies show that nearly half of the child care available for these infants is of such substandard quality that it threatens those babies' health and safety. We are not talking about bells and whistles; we are talking about basics for good development.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not take advantage of the scientific information, of that national will that has been talked about, to take some of the resources that have been the tradition of the Federal Government in early childhood education now with what we know, and as we extend it to help the families from 12 years of education to 14 years

of education with the tax bill that was passed, and we provided some help there to make 14 years of education universal, what we now have to really apply ourselves to and commit ourselves to is looking at those ages from 0 to 6 so that that period of time is accounted for and all of the positive stimulus that a child can have to develop needs to happen, which is why I am so excited, not the legislation itself, but it is the science and what the legislation can do together for early learning and opportunity.

And I think this kind of a conversation is just the kind of thing that we need to do, and all Members on both sides of the aisle ought to be engaging in this kind of discussion.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman would yield, the other thing I wanted to mention, I know that my colleague from North Carolina touched upon it as well, is that Head Start now and Early Start and the legislation that the gentleman has proposed for expanding Early Start, basically it is not just a situation where we are providing child care; we are also providing parents with parenting skills and families with support skills.

□ 2030

I have seen in the Head Start programs where they try to get the parents involved. It is amazing to me sometimes how little some parents know about basically raising kids or doing certain things.

I remember when I was, going back to my own experience again, I remember when I was in the hospital when my first child was born, my daughter Rose Marie. And at that time they had not changed the insurance yet so you were able to stay a few extra days in the hospital and then, of course, we got into the whole thing with the HMOs and the managed care tried to cut back on that. We had to pass a law to extend the days again.

But they would have programs with the mothers and some fathers, too, where they would teach you how to bathe the child or do different things. I was surprised because a lot of people really did not know how to do some of these things.

One of the nice things about the Head Start program and Early Start is not that we are just talking about bathing skills, but they really do try to get the parents involved and teach them skills so it is not just a question of just providing funding for child care. This is a way of providing support and getting people together so that they become more self-sufficient ultimately. There are even programs involved in some of the Head Start programs where they will get involved in employment and help people find jobs, that type of thing. So it is a whole, there is a lot involved.

I just think it is so wonderful that you are talking about expanding this. I just wish that it were possible one day that every child who was eligible for



Head Start and every child who is eligible for Early Start was able to take advantage of it. We know how successful it is, not only for the child but also for the whole family experience.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I think that is the type of bold thinking that we need more of in this Congress. I again will commend the President and the First Lady for their leadership on this issue. Head Start is a program that works. We should fully fund it.

The gentleman is absolutely right about some of the skills and support that these programs provide. There was a front page story in the Los Angeles Times a few weeks ago discussing the alarmingly high number of young children who do not brush their teeth on a regular basis. I mean very simple things that we all kind of take for granted here, but it is a disturbing statistic, and programs like Head Start help combat that kind of trend. They deserve our support.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I do not know that we have talked enough about one of the conclusions of the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development, which is, and I gather there is a new report coming out that will also emphasize the importance of this particular point, home visits, prenatal and postnatal home visits are critical to helping parents cope.

Let us face it, in this country today we have too many teen parents, too many youngsters who are parents at a time when they still need parents themselves. If they are going to be able to bring up their kids, parenting skills are essential.

In the Bath-Brunswick area in Maine, the Bath-Brunswick child care agency has started a program of home visits. It works. It is very helpful.

In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area in North Carolina the school system has developed a series of brochures that they will give, they will do prenatal visits and postnatal visits, and a series of brochures that will help young parents sort of get some basic information about how to encourage stimulation in their kids.

In Hawaii there is, I am told they have a very comprehensive prenatal, postnatal set of home visits. There is one statistic out of what Hawaii has done that just amazes me. It has to do with usefulness of home visits, not just as a matter of parenting education, not just as a matter of improving our kids' chances in life, but as a way of reducing child abuse.

That number is this. As a result of this program, repeat instances of child abuse have been reduced from 62 to 3 percent. Repeat instances of child abuse have been reduced from 62 to 3 percent. That is a large part of the reason, home visits.

The fact is if we are going to deal with the phenomenon of young people today growing up in the kinds of families with all the stresses and strains that modern families have, we need to

focus like a laser on zero to three and zero to six and make sure that all our kids have a chance to grow up in a healthy, productive home.

Ms. STABENOW. On that point, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I congratulate all of my colleagues for standing up for children and for public education. These are such important issues. We will have in front of us tomorrow issues dealing with public education.

But to share with my colleague from Maine, we in Michigan have been focused on those very same issues. I was very proud back in 1982 to sponsor something called the Children's Trust Fund in Michigan, focusing on parent education and child abuse prevention. We have done a 10-year study of the dollars spent on working with young parents when children come home from the hospital.

It is a Big Brothers, Big Sisters kind of concept. The fancy name is perinatal coaching, but it is based on the idea of giving support to young parents from the moment they step into their own home with that newborn, to help them as they learn new parenting skills and be able to work with them through the first year of the child's life to raise that child, to give it the kinds of skills you talked about.

Michigan State University followed this kind of effort and the efforts of working with parents of young children up through Head Start for 10 years. And they compared the amount of money spent on prevention with the amount of money spent in school later on, on substance abuse problems, mental health, dropouts, and ultimately crime. And they were able to measure that for every \$1 we put into the kinds of things you are talking about this evening, we saved in Michigan \$19. We literally have an ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure.

We now can demonstrate. One of the frustrating things about prevention is that folks always say you cannot measure it. When you lock somebody up, you know you are creating a safe community. When you are doing preventing on the front end and stopping abuse in the first place, so children do not grow up and potentially end up in those prisons, we do not have a way to measure it. In Michigan, in working with important efforts in Lansing, important efforts around the State, we have measured that and can demonstrate that from a taxpayer's standpoint, as well as just plain common sense for children and families, focusing on what we are talking about tonight makes sense.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. MCINTYRE].

Mr. MCINTYRE. I was going to mention this briefly to tie in with the coordination and cooperation not only from the Federal level but State and local. I think it is important to emphasize that the support mechanisms cannot of course come up from here in

Washington. We want to target help where we can try to give the maximum use of any Federal dollars that are spent in situations to help those on the local level best meet those crying needs of our young children in early childhood.

A practical way to do this is something that I know we have done in North Carolina. Ten years ago I had the privilege of being a charter member of the very first North Carolina Commission on Children and Youth. One of the key things you can do is bring together concerned private citizens and those who serve in the public sector, as well as those from social agencies and churches and synagogues, other houses of faith, to come together and tackle the problem on the State level and then of course to bring it down to the local.

Our Commission on Children and Youth was so successful that just within two years the State legislature redesignated it and started a new commission called the Commission on the Family. Then we dealt with these issues that would carry from early childhood right on through the sunrise right on through the sunset of life.

But when we looked at that, we took it yet another step. We encouraged local communities to start commissions on children and youth and the family, to help support these kind of programs so that when we come into an area and make a difference, you have local leaders involved from the public and the private sector.

In my home town of Lumberton, we were one of the first four communities in North Carolina 8 years ago to start a local commission on children, youth and the family. I served as a charter member of that. What we sought to do is exactly what my good friend from Maine was just talking about, and that is, we offered programs not only to help support families and offer them ways to increase their parenting skills but we actually said to the local churches and the local civic organizations, if you would like to offer a class on parenting skills, we will offer it for a set time and you can become involved.

That brought it right home. It was amazing the number of people that signed up and said, "Yes, I want to be a good parent. I want to help my kid in those early years, but show me how because I have never been a parent before."

I think when we can find ways to bring the Federal, State and local level together and encourage these types of local commissions, it will make all the difference.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I would say to my colleague that he is absolutely right. We need to reach out to the local level. There are some amazing things going on in my district in Worcester and Attleboro and Fall River. It is inspiring, some of the programs that are now being implemented. But they need the help. They need the support.



When I go back home, what they tell me is, "We would like to duplicate our efforts and triplicate our efforts but we do not have the resources." We will have a forum on November 1st in my home city of Worcester to try to bring people together to try to find ways to promote some of what works. I hope we can bring that message back here to Washington and get the necessary resources and backing.

I thank all my colleagues for joining in this special order tonight.

#### CAMPAIGN FUND-RAISING INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. SOUDER] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I think before moving into the general topic I am getting into tonight, I want to express my support for many of the education initiatives, although I think sometimes we get it backwards and think Washington is the fount; unless something is done out of Washington, it will not be done.

I know that it was under a Republican President that Head Start was created, and Ed Ziegler of Yale University worked with then President Nixon because he felt there were some gaps. We ought to look to Washington to fill gaps, not to be the end-all, be-all of education.

Sometimes I think while the motives are correct on the other side, that is, that we need to help our children, and all of us who are parents of young children, older children, are very concerned about education and it is not a partisan type of thing, but we do have some substantive disagreements over whether it should come out of Washington and be controlled out of Washington or whether it should start with the parents and back home.

I am joined tonight by my friend, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH]. I know he wanted to make some opening comments, too.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, likewise, I thank those who preceded us this evening in this Chamber for discussing the issue of education. I think the gentleman from Indiana makes a very salient point when he distinguishes part of the difference of how best to deal with schools, how best to deal with this precious notion of educating our children and what is at stake in the future.

I was pleased to hear many of our friends on the other side talk about local initiatives but this, I believe, is the key. That is that initiatives can develop at home rather than be Washington-based, with a Washington community then trying to send those notions down to the schools, if you will. Things can happen at home on the front lines with volunteerism, with innovative teaching, with people taking time in their respective communities

to adopt a school. But my colleague from Indiana is quite right when he mentions that there are ways for government to fill in the blanks.

I would take this time, Mr. Speaker, to inform my colleagues on the other side, as I have through many inter-office letters, of a couple of pieces of legislation that I think are vitally important, both of which are drawn on a rich history of bipartisan cooperation. The first I would commend to everyone in terms of attention is the Education Land Grant Act of 1997, a bill I developed for those rural school districts that live adjacent to federally controlled land.

It is based on what happened in the Sixth District of Arizona in the 104th Congress, where the small town of Alpine, Arizona did not really have any resources to build a new school. Its tax base had been eviscerated because the folks there were not really allowed to ranch or to harvest timber any longer because of some court orders. So they came to me and said, "Do you think we could get a conveyance of 30 acres of Forest Service land, so that we could save what scarce resources we have on books and bricks and mortar and teachers and students and building a new school?" I was pleased that during the 104th Congress we passed a conveyance of land of 30 acres to the Alpine School District.

I got to thinking, based on our history, is there something else we could do. I looked back to the Morrill Act of the 1800s during the Lincoln administration where through land grant opportunities, Federal land was given back to the States for the creation of institutions of higher learning. Out of that grew the notion of the Education Land Grant Act where we can go and convey acres, up to 30 acres at a time to those school districts adjacent to Federal lands, so that they can save their precious resources for school construction and for improving the quality of instruction within those schools.

I would commend that to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. And also a bipartisan bill I coauthored and cosponsored with my friend the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS]. We do not agree on a lot, but one thing that we think is important has to do with mathematics rather than philosophy. It is the notion of raising the ceiling for private bonding authority for local school districts working with banks and financial houses that are private.

□ 2045

Right now Congress has a ceiling of \$10 million there. When we checked, we have seen that banks and other financial houses say we can raise that level to \$25 million with no problem whatsoever and that can help school districts across the country as well.

One other note on the Education Land Grant Act, or as some have come to calling it, with an acronym, HELGA, the Hayworth Education Land

Grant Act, we should stipulate, Mr. Speaker, that the lands we are talking about are not Park Service lands nor wildlife refuges. Those areas would not be available for conveyance to local school districts. But so much other land is federally controlled from coast to coast, and specifically in the American West, that there is a variety of land that could be available that is not Park Service land nor wildlife refuges that could make a real difference for many different school districts.

So I am pleased to join my friend from Indiana, and based on what we heard in the previous hour, in offering other approaches to education, which we believe may be more practical and certainly can have profound effects for all congressional districts, for all school districts from coast to coast.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss in joining my friend from Indiana if we were to neglect the reason we are primarily here tonight, and it is something as basic as education and, indeed, one of the first things we learn, and that is the notion of what is right and what is wrong. And, sadly, recent events in Washington force us, really compel us to come to this floor to discuss inaccuracies, discrepancies and what, sadly, may in fact be widespread breaking of laws.

I yield to my colleague from Indiana, because I know in his role on the committee overseeing this, he has had firsthand experience on this legislative day.

Mr. SOUDER. And it is important to note, because people may get confused sometimes in these special orders when we, some of us in particular, have been trying to point out some of these problems that have developed in basic justice in this country and abuse of the political process, it does not mean we are not doing lots of other things. I also serve on the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities. It was my first choice. For 4 years in the House and for 4½ years as a Senate staffer, my first focus was children and family issues. I was Republican staff director of the Children-Family Committee; worked on many of these issues, and worked on them with Senator COATS in the Senate.

I have a deeply held conviction of the importance of education in the system, and I get tired of hearing we do not care about public schools. My kids have gone through public schools, I went through public schools, my wife went through public schools, and that is an important issue to us. But I am also on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, and we have also seen a perversion of our political process.

I wanted to, first, on the eve of an important day, because tomorrow the House investigation begins on the abuses in the political process, and particularly the campaign process, I would like to sketch a little background. I know the hearings that we held today, where we gave our opening statements,