

The red chart that I have over here, the blue part shows the short-term blip where we will have more money coming in than is required to pay out existing benefits. The red portion of this chart that goes as much as taking \$400 billion a year out of the general fund because there will not be enough in the Social Security taxes coming in shows the length of time of the seriousness of this unfunded liability. I think it deserves just a brief review of the program that started in 1935.

In 1935, we started the Social Security program. It was started as a "pay as you go" program with existing workers paying in their taxes to pay for the benefits of existing retirees. At that time when we started, there were 47 workers paying in their taxes, at that time it was 2 percent on \$3500, paying in their taxes to support each retiree. 47 of them. By 1950 that got down to about 16. Today there are only 3 workers working paying their Social Security taxes, 12.4 percent with the employee and the employer's share, supporting each retiree, a tremendous burden on those individuals that are working and paying in this huge tax.

Let me just show Members, for example, something that should be very startling to everybody under 50 years old. This chart shows how long you are going to have to live after retirement in order to get back just the money that you and your employer put into the Social Security taxes. Not a good investment. If you happened to retire here in 1960, you could get back everything you and the employer had put in in 2 years. In 1995 it took 16 years if you retired in 1995. But if you are going to retire in 2005, 23 years, or 2015, you are going to have to live 26 years after retirement just to get back what you and your employer put into Social Security.

It is time we took our heads out of the sand and started dealing with this huge problem. This shows the projected growth of the senior population in relation to the workers. The senior population goes up 73 percent between now and 2025. The working population only goes up 14 percent. Here is the chart that shows in 1950 we had 17 workers working to pay their taxes for each retiree, 3 today, 2 by 2029. I think this should be the startling chart that should make us be a wakeup call for all Members of Congress, because if we put this off, that means that the solutions are going to be more drastic later on, either in increasing taxes or reducing benefits.

What we have done in the past is simply increased taxes every time there was a shortage of funds. Since 1971, we have increased the Social Security tax 36 times. We cannot do that.

I have got a proposal that I will be introducing next week that solves the Social Security problem without any tax increase, without taking away any benefits for anybody 57 years old or older, and it starts dealing with this huge problem by allowing some private

investment. What we do is slow down the increase in benefits for higher income recipients and the amount of money coming into the trust fund, we use some of that for private investment. So the worker has the ownership of some of that investment that they can invest in the stock market, the equity stocks, equity bonds, equity mutual funds to allow them to gain some of the magic of compounding interest, and they will actually retire with much more benefits than if they stayed on the existing Social Security system.

Another call to arms I think is the fact that the workers today, 78 percent of those workers today pay more in Social Security tax than they do in the income tax. It is unfair, it is going to be generational warfare if we do not do something about it. I say, let us start immediately as we look towards this short-term blip of balancing the budget and start dealing with this huge problem of Social Security to make sure that the existing retirees in future generations have the kind of benefits that we promised them.

□ 1830

#### EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALSH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] is recognized for 60 minutes as the Majority Leader.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker for that recognition. I want to also thank the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] for his five minutes. That is a very important subject, and I think the gentleman from Michigan is demonstrating that, irrespective of the relatively painful political history that this subject has had, that the time may be in fact at hand in America when indeed it will be required of us in responsible public policy discourse to address these very pressing problems that the gentleman has addressed in his five-minute talk.

I want to again commend the gentleman from Michigan, for not only his insight into America's policy problems, but, frankly, his courage to take on a subject that, for all too many years, has been one that has not been appropriately and necessarily addressed in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take a moment and give my regards and appreciation to the very many dedicated Members of the House staff. It is so often the case that long after the day's work is done and most Members have gone about their business, that the dedicated staff of this body remain for these matters we call "special orders."

Certainly, we recognize the importance of special orders, but, while we do that, we ought to take a little time and recognize the staff's willingness to bear up under that additional workload with good humor and good grace.

As you know, it is not a matter of practice for me to do special orders. That tendency that I have to refrain from doing so is oftentimes in deference to the staff because they, too, have families. They, too, are anxious to get home at night. I would only do that if I felt compelled to do so with respect to a subject that is pressing in the hearts and minds of the American people.

I would further like to predicate my comments, Mr. Speaker, by bringing good news to the body. Our congressional family is made today one person stronger, one person richer. DAVID and Ruthie MCINTOSH today gave birth to their very, very first baby, Elizabeth. I am sure they will come to realize over the years, as I did, it is indeed your good fortune when your first baby is a beautiful baby girl, as mine was. So I am sure all the body would want to join me in expressing our heartfelt congratulations to DAVID and Ruthie, and our anticipation of seeing Elizabeth as a member of our congressional family.

The subject that I would like to address during this period of time, Mr. Speaker, is the subject of education in America. We have had some initiatives brought to the floor. We have seen some debate on the matter. We will talk about this subject this evening, and we will try to have a serious discussion of this subject.

I would like to recognize those of my colleagues that are here before I proceed very much further myself, but I do feel, Mr. Speaker, constrained to say one thing: As we have had these debates, I have been alarmed by the nature of the debate, particularly from the minority. It should be understood and it should be accepted in this body that when it comes to the matter of the education of our children, we are all concerned and we are all dedicated, and that the kinds of hysterical criticisms that have been levied against the initiatives brought to this floor by Members of this body are no compliment to the body, and certainly do very little to help the American people understand how seriously this body takes that most important task of educating our Nation's children.

It would be my fond hope that in the future all Members of this body would be able to approach the debates with the kind of gentlemanly demeanor and assertiveness, a point of view that we have seen as, for example, in the persons of the gentleman from New York [Mr. FLAKE] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LIPINSKI], both from the other side of the aisle, both people whose dedication to the children of this country is not questioned and should not be questioned.

I will come back with some more discussion points of my own, but, as I have said, we have so many Members that want to participate in this discussion this evening, not the least of whom, and if the gentlemen that are here will please abide me, if the gentleman from Florida will please accept,

the gentleman from California [Mr. ROGAN] has in fact with him in the building this evening his own wife and children. They are waiting just a few doors away, and I think we would all agree that it is perfectly in the spirit of what we are trying to accomplish here that we recognize the gentleman from California for his remarks, so he can rejoin his wife and family for their evening meal in fact.

The gentleman from California [Mr. ROGAN].

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the distinguished majority leader, not only for according me the privilege of joining him this evening, but I want to thank him and my colleagues for letting me essentially cut in line.

It is true that my wife and my twin daughters are here this evening, hopefully, watching their husband and father on television, from the next room, with dinner waiting.

This truly is a family-friendly Congress, and when we cannot get home to have dinner with our families, our families can come here to join us.

I especially want to thank the majority leader for something far more important and far more lasting than the courtesy he has extended to me this evening. I want to thank the majority leader for being on the front lines every day of his congressional career, making sure that poor children throughout this country are afforded every opportunity for a quality education.

The majority leader, Mr. ARMEY, has just successfully steered through Congress a voucher program that will give 2,000 of the poorest children in Washington, DC, the opportunity to get out of the worst schools in our country and have the chance to receive the best possible education.

There is no political gain in this for the majority leader, who hails from Texas. None of these children are his constituents. None of these children will cast a vote for him. But they will cast something far more important, the eternal gratitude of a child who receives a good education and the gratitude of their parents who know what that means for a child when they are given the chance to succeed.

I would like to share with the body a personal story, one that I know well, and one that deals with the subject of how important an education is to a young child.

Back in the 1950's in San Francisco, there was a young lady named Alice. She was somewhat rebellious. She moved out of her parents home and took a job as a cocktail waitress. Before long, she became pregnant by a bartender who refused to marry her. She would not have an illegal abortion. She decided to have her child, a child that she could not afford to raise, but a child she was intent on giving the best opportunities possible with her limited means.

Alice and her parents made sure that that young boy was given an oppor-

tunity to have a good education, and when some of the public schools in downtown San Francisco were not producing results, they did everything they could and used every penny they had to ensure that that child was sent to a private school where rigorous academic standards were taught and where skills like reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and spelling, were taught.

They were only able to afford that for 1 year. Alice had a lot of other difficulties. She had several other children and she married a man who was an alcoholic. Eventually they divorced, and with her four children lived on welfare and food stamps. They moved from community to community, and yet she ensured that no matter what her personal circumstances, she did everything possible to provide her children with a good education.

I think that she was something of a success, because, despite the fact that they had come from a family of alcoholism, illegitimacy, and dependency on government, she still made sure her children got the best education possible. Two of her sons became engineers, one of her sons went on to a little community college and then a public university, and then a public law school. He became a prosecutor, a judge, a legislator, the majority leader of the California Legislature, and, Mr. Speaker, last November, he was elected as a Member of Congress.

I know that story, Mr. Speaker, because Alice is my mother, and is now 62 years old. She has never visited Washington, DC, until this week, and I have the privilege of having my mother sitting in the gallery tonight watching her son, as a Member of Congress, now able to address an issue so important because he understands what it means to his family. And Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that opportunity is available to every child in this country.

The worst thing I witnessed in my life, was as a prosecutor in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office. Every single day of my professional life, as both a prosecutor and a judge, I had a front-row seat to see what happens when education fails: Gangs, drugs, crime. That is the future to which we condemn young children when we fail to provide them with educational institutions that are going to focus on rigorous academic standards.

Regrettably, Mr. Speaker, over the last generation, many of our public schools have abandoned those sacred things. And instead have moved off into this ethereal world where psychologists are allowed to bring every conceivable experiment into the public schools and substitute rigorous standards for these experiments.

Now we have children in the public schools who are not given grades because the teachers are afraid they might hurt their self-esteem.

We have public schools today where students are not taught phonics. Instead they are taught to memorize the whole word, which educators tell us

gives them a vocabulary of about 300 or 400 words.

We have schools today, like in the school district where my family is temporarily residing. We wanted to put our daughters in kindergarten right across the river in Arlington. You know what we were told? We were told that children in the public schools will be taught one-half a day in English, and the other half of the day solely in Spanish.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want my 5-year-olds spending half their day in a public school being taught in Spanish. I want them to learn the language of international commerce. And when they are in high school, after they have been given the tools to compete and excel and succeed in this country, then if they want to learn a foreign language, let them choose to do so.

Now, there is a remedy for middle and upper income people in this country who are dissatisfied with their public school system. If they have a school system that puts tenure above competency, if they have a school system that wants to experiment on children rather than ensure the children are given the tools to succeed, they have a remedy. They can take them out of a public school, for which they are already paying their taxes to support, and they can spend extra money to put their children in private schools.

Now, that is fine, for parents who can afford it. But what about the parents in this country who can least afford it? What about the parents in this country who are on welfare, who are on food stamps? What about single mothers, like my mother, struggling just to make sure their children are given an opportunity?

I will tell you what happens to them. They are condemned to a life of mediocrity and a life of not being able to succeed.

This is an abomination, and this must not continue. Members of this Congress have a moral obligation to stand up to those special interests of the status quo who fight time and time again, and who are very glib at taking to the floor of this Chamber and talking about their concern for children but who will vote time and time again against the interests of those children.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to change, fight status quo and provide all Americans with the tools to succeed.

□ 1845

I would say to them that their day in the sun is over, because when it comes to the future of the children of this country, we will fight tonight, we will fight tomorrow, we will fight every single day that we are here, and when we are not here and our successors take our place that fight will continue, because we owe this country and the children of this country no less.

We have an obligation as Members of this House to ensure that every single child of this country has an opportunity to compete, and where that opportunity is being denied, we have a

moral obligation to fight until their rights are secured, and until that can happen.

So Mr. Leader, once again, I want to thank the gentleman for his courage and his bravery, for his lifetime of commitment to this particular issue. It is an honor to me to be able to stand with him here in Congress tonight and add my voice to the growing list of those who recognize the importance of freedom of choice in education.

I would just say to the gentleman that no matter how discouraged he gets and no matter how tough the fight looks, there are going to be millions of people a generation from now who are going to be able to say, I owe the leaders of my country a debt of thanks, because they gave me the opportunity to succeed in the greatest country that was ever created. This will be the victory of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], and in advance I want to salute him for that.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, and I want to make the observation that on more than one occasion I have been at events where private citizens were giving of their own personal incomes to give, privately, scholarships for disadvantaged children to attend schools of their choice with their parents. The gentleman from California has been in attendance and been very supportive of that. So whether it be a matter of public policy or private action, the gentleman from California has, in fact, put himself on the line.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] had actually left another engagement in order to be with us tonight, in anticipation of including his remarks. When he saw the large number of people that were here, he deferred to their presence.

I include for the RECORD the remarks of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY].

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that my colleague, the distinguished majority leader, has decided to take out this special order regarding our efforts to improve the education system of this Nation.

A famous philosopher once said that only the educated are free. Our system today is doing a very poor job of promoting that freedom.

I believe that our education system fails because it lacks accountability and subverts responsibility.

Rather than focusing on the quality of the education, the system all too often focuses on preserving the status quo.

The status quo is simply not good enough.

We need to bring greater choices to parents. We need to put them in the driver's seat when it comes to improving our education system.

Sadly, the President and the Democrat leadership have fought us on education every step of the way.

What are they afraid of? Why do they refuse to change the status quo?

They are so beholden to labor unions they have forgotten the real reason we have an education system in the first place: to prepare our children for their futures.

We will continue to embark on an education agenda that stresses local control, greater choices for parents, greater accountability for teachers, and higher quality for students.

And we will resist efforts by the administration to bring greater control to Washington, that emphasizes bureaucrats over parents, and that wastes money in schemes that ultimately do not help the children.

We've put together a bold education improvement agenda designed to help kids, parents, teachers, and local officials strengthen and reform our Nation's education system:

We will send Federal education dollars to the classrooms, not to Washington bureaucrats;

We want to return control over education to parents and local communities;

We want to strengthen our commitment to basic academics;

We want to give the working-class and poor parents new education choices—public and private—to educate their children in safe and nurturing environments.

When it comes to school choice, I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, what are you afraid of?

I was especially disappointed by the debate that we had over the D.C. scholarship program.

This was a modest program that would have given 2,000 students in Washington, DC, a better chance to go to a better school.

The costs were minimal but the principle was pure. Give parents a choice and they will make the right decision for their children.

This drives the liberal establishment crazy. They want the power. They want to make the decisions. They want to avoid accountability and competition and responsibility.

So they fought this modest program with every ounce of their strength. The President has threatened to veto the bill, while the Democrats voted in lock step against it.

Why defend the status quo?

Too many D.C. schools have failed. They have failed to provide their students the kind of education that will help them succeed. They have failed to provide their students an atmosphere where they can learn. They have failed to prepare them for the future.

The system has failed. Let's change the system.

But too many of my colleagues don't want change. They want to protect the status quo. They want the money to continue to flow to a bureaucracy that wastes money.

For example, since 1979, the D.C. school system has lost 33,000 students. But in that same time period, the size of the bureaucracy has doubled.

What have the residents of the District of Columbia gained with this bigger bureaucracy? Lower test scores, more dangerous hallways, and more closed schools.

The time has come for school choice. The time has come to give parents the opportunity to have a greater role in choosing the right school for their children.

The time has come to inject accountability into a system that has avoided accountability for too many years.

Today, we voted on legislation that would give parents in middle-class families greater opportunities to prepare their kids for the next century by giving them education savings accounts.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, another gentleman that I know has a very big

heart for these matters, and is very busy and dedicated to them, is the gentleman from Florida, Mr. DAVID WELDON. I have known the gentleman and his wife and their work on behalf of the children of this country now for going on 3 years. Their heart is in it, they are dedicated to it, and they so much believe in these youngsters, and I wanted to share a few minutes with the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON].

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for yielding, and thank him for his kind words. I would also like to commend him in his initiative for many, many years on behalf of the importance of improving education in the United States, and in particular, in the area of school choice and its value in improving education.

I am extremely pleased to see so many members of the Republican Conference here, particularly the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], and many of the subcommittee chairmen: the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS], the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA], and so many others who have joined us tonight on behalf of school choice and the importance of school choice.

Mr. Speaker, I will make my comments brief, because I know that many of the gentlemen here are indeed authorities on this issue.

I have been very interested in school choice for a lot of reasons. Probably one of the biggest reasons is my mother was an educator. She was a schoolteacher. She always instilled in me the importance and value of education. We clearly have a problem in our Nation today in that many of our schools are failing. Many of our public schools are not getting the job done. Educational performance has declined in the United States over the past 30 years.

The approach of the past has always been to throw more money at the problem. It has been very, very clearly demonstrated that that is not the solution. One of the more innovative solutions is to give parents more control over where they send their kids.

I was very pleased to be part of the initiative today to pass the A-Plus legislation, which would allow parents to set aside some of their money in a tax-free account, to use that money towards not only college education, which is currently allowed under the law, but as well, for K through 12.

The opponents of this have insisted that this is going to destroy public education in the United States. Let me just say that I think that is absolutely wrong. For them to even say that suggests to me that they recognize that public education in many areas of our country is in trouble. They must be so paranoid that people will stampede away from those bad public schools that they are doing everything in their power to protect them. We do not want to protect a failing system.

My own personal opinion is that those failing schools, in an environment where there is school choice, will do better. They will not do worse, they will do better, because they will be able to compete. I have a higher opinion of those teachers in those public schools, that they will be able to compete in a real marketplace.

The real issue here, in my opinion, is are we going to give school choice to everybody. Because right now rich people have school choice. Before I came to this House, I was a doctor. I practiced medicine back home. I made a good salary. I had a lot of doctor friends. All my doctor friends could send their kids to the schools of their choice.

The people who are locked into those failed public schools, and by the way, there are a lot of good public schools in this country, most of them are great, it is the middle-class families, it is the working-class families, it is poor families, they have no choice.

But we have a lot of initiatives here that give choice to the working class, choice to the poor people. We are trying to get them through this House. We need to get the minority on board on these initiatives. We need to get the President on board on these initiatives. I am very, very happy to be here tonight and speaking out in support of school choice.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Florida has just made a very important point. It is precisely because we believe that the competition that comes with choice and the involvement of parents holding schools accountable is so critical that we believe that the public schools institutionally will be the first, best beneficiaries, and then, therefore, subsequently the children in the public schools, from a systematic process of choice, parental involvement, and discretion and accountability.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON] for raising that point.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. If the gentleman will continue to yield, the gentleman just hit on a really critical issue. The issue is the kids; it is not the schools, not the bricks and the mortar, but it is the kids, what is best for the kids.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, we also have the gentleman from the great State of Pennsylvania, [Mr. JOE PITTS], who has invested a great deal of his time and energy in this effort. I really appreciate the opportunity to introduce the gentleman from Pennsylvania to talk about an initiative of his to assure that more of our hard-earned tax dollars actually, indeed, get into the classroom for the immediate service of the children.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. PITTS].

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for his leadership, along with the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Education and the

Workforce, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. BILL GOODLING] on this issue, one of the most important components of our American society, and that is educating our children.

I am very pleased that the House Republicans have dedicated themselves to better educating our children. It has become painfully obvious in this country that the answers to our education problems were not, are not, and cannot be found in just arbitrary adjustments of Federal funding levels. Yet, some of our more liberal colleagues here in the House seem to think if we dump more money into crumbling schools, all the problems will go away.

We have been down that road before. The House has finally decided to address some new and innovative questions and solutions to the American education experience. I would just like to speak briefly about one initiative that we have focused our attention on. It supports our public education system.

It is actually quite simple. It involves getting education dollars directly in the hands of those who make our system work, those who have a direct impact on the classroom experience, those who actually know our children's names. It is called the Dollars to the Classroom initiative.

Mr. Speaker, we know that effective teaching takes place when we, one, begin helping children master basic academics; two, when parents are engaged and involved in their children's education; three, when a safe and orderly learning environment is created in the classroom; and then, four, when dollars actually reach the classroom.

Each of us agrees that our Nation's children deserve an opportunity to excel. We all know that this opportunity is inhibited when their teachers and administrators are hampered by paperwork, by time constraints, by financial hindrances just to apply for a Federal education grant.

The Dollars to the Classroom resolution, which we will vote on next week in this Chamber, calls upon the Federal Department of Education, the State education departments, on local education agencies, to spend a greater percentage of our Federal education tax dollars for our children in the classrooms. This is common sense. For far too long Americans' hard-earned tax dollars have gone to Federal bureaucrats, they have churned through the Washington labyrinth, instead of rightfully being placed in the hands of someone who knows the name of each child.

When we look at the funding of our local schools, Federal education dollars are actually a small percentage, rather small, only about 6 or 7 percent. That is a total of \$15.4 billion, which goes for elementary and secondary programs from the Federal Department of Education. When we look at those dollars, the classroom may be lucky to see 65 percent of that money. That means that billions of dollars are actually lost in the labyrinth, the abyss of depart-

ment studies, publications, grant administration, and bureaucracy.

To apply for a Department of Education grant, it takes 216 steps, an average of 21 weeks, just to apply. Additionally, the Department of Education produces tens of thousands of publications every year, only to be purchased for a small fee. I recently found out that anyone who wants to purchase one, an average citizen or a Member of Congress or a teacher, looking for a resource, must pay the Department of Education \$4.08 for a copy.

How would we rather have our Federal education dollars spent, on studies like these? Let me list a few. There are 1,767 studies on career planning, 140 studies on checklists, 13 studies on welding, close to 100 studies on education researchers, researching their research techniques, 260 studies on surveys, 26 studies on camping, 3 studies on cement, the concrete experience, 82 studies on calculators, I think we are beginning to get the picture, all produced with taxpayer dollars.

Next week we will vote, and my vote will be in support of tax dollars going for things like providing more teachers, teacher aides, purchasing updated software, state-of-the-art microscopes, using new maps and globes of our world, and even seeing that every American classroom is connected to the Internet and brought into the new information age.

The classroom is where the action is. The classroom is where knowledge grows and learning takes place, not in some Washington office where miles upon miles of paperwork and publications are produced.

The Dollars to the Classroom initiative expresses a call on the Department of Education to see that more departmental education, elementary and secondary funds, get into the classrooms directly. If this actually happens, much more money, in some cases as much as \$1,800, would be available for each classroom in the United States.

Even President Clinton has said, and I quote: "We cannot ask the American people to spend more on education until we do a better job with the money we have got now." As he and Vice President AL GORE have said, the reinventing of public education begins not in offices in Washington, but in communities across the country.

We must ask the fundamental questions about how dollars which are to go to the public school system are best spent. We must get more efficiency out of the use of our tax dollars. Education dollars in the classroom can make a tremendous difference and can enhance a child's learning experience. This is not lofty Washington policy talk, this is about kids, our kids, and a practical way to see that they benefit from America's education tax dollars. The choice is clear, either our hard-earned tax dollars go to the hands of Washington bureaucrats, or directly to our children's teachers and classrooms.

□ 1900

For the sake of our Nation's kids, I call upon every Member of this House to vote to place children first. Next week vote for the Dollars to the Classroom resolution. I hope the Members will support it.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, listening to that litany that the gentleman from Pennsylvania has just read of the nature and the types and the kinds of studies we pay for with our tax dollars now finally brought me an awareness of what an old professor of mine meant when he said that we in the university are special. We are not only thinking, but we even think about our thinking. And perhaps he was inspired to that depth of thought by reading brochures from the Department of Education. I cannot be sure.

But if I may, Mr. Speaker, in the words of Johnny Cash, indeed the immortal words of Johnny Cash, "I've got a good one for you now." I am so pleased about our next speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING].

Mr. Speaker, for 10 years I labored in this body in the minority on the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities where our leader in our effort on the committee was the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I have come to know him and to know his work well. And let me say, Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation nor any reservation in saying that in my estimation there is no person in this city who by professional experience and depth of concern is more qualified to understand and to legislate on behalf of the laudable goal and objective of this Nation to educate its children than the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], the chairman of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities who is, for me personally and I recommend for you as well, my leader on education.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, well, I want to thank the Majority Leader for taking this special order this evening because I know how deeply he feels about every American child having an opportunity to receive a high-quality education.

Mr. Speaker, I want to first pick up a little bit on what the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON] said when he said there are good public schools. I do not want people out there to believe that as a Republican Party we believe all public schools are poor, that public school teachers do a poor job.

I believe 70 percent of our public schools do very well. I believe 70 percent of our public school teachers do very well. However, they only represent about 50 percent of our children in the United States, even though they are 70 percent of the teachers and 70 percent of the schools.

Mr. Speaker, as Republicans that is not good enough. We do not want only 70 percent of our schools doing well. We do not want only 50 percent of our children receiving a quality education.

What the Majority Leader is insisting happen is that 100 percent of our schools and 100 percent of our children receive a quality education.

Now, we believe that the same old Federal approach that we have had, and as the Majority Leader was saying, we had to sit in that committee and see promulgated over and over again, has failed and we do not believe that just by doing more of the same or simply by adding more programs things will change. When we sat there what we heard over and over again is: We need more money. And when I would say, "And what are you going to do with more money?" The answer was always, "We can cover more children." My response always was, "If you are going to cover them with mediocrity, you are not doing them a favor at all."

So, Mr. Speaker, we think that there are new programs, we think that there are new approaches to bring about a quality education for every child. More money to cover more children, more programs—and I am sure the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA] will talk about the number we already have later—has not been the answer to our problem. We believe parental involvement, we believe local control, we believe basic academics are all ingredients that will improve our education for all children.

Mr. Speaker, we just recently wrote as Republicans the President's "America Reads" program, and we produced a reading excellence program. We approached it totally differently than the President did, because we believed if there was a problem with reading, then perhaps the first place we should start is make sure that our teachers have the quality training needed and necessary to teach all children to read.

We believed that preschool reading readiness programs are extremely important. The first grade child does not fail; the adults fail. And the first grade child should also not be socially promoted. So we believe if a kindergarten teacher says they are not ready to do first grade work, then there should be something in between.

We also believe that tutorial assistance to first, second, and third graders is very, very important. We cannot wait longer because once they get beyond that stage, it is very difficult to change their pattern and change their habits.

And we believe very strongly that we do not need \$25,000 to \$30,000 AmeriCorps, so-called "volunteers," running all over the school. First, it is an affront to the teacher, and secondly, if the teacher has not been trained properly to do it, how do we believe that all of these volunteers who come running in can make sure that every child can read?

So we say use those college work-study students. Help reduce the debt they have by the time they get to the end of college because of student loans. Increase the amount of money available for college work-study. Get the

colleges ready to prepare them so that they can come and assist the teachers, not emptying trash cans in a dormitory to receive that money, but actually getting out and helping others. We believe they can be mentors for those early childhood teachers and we believe they can be role models.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I join with the Majority Leader to face the challenge that we have to meet, and that challenge is that every child in this country is entitled to a quality education. But not only entitled, if they do not receive it, we do not continue as the most important Nation, and I am not ashamed to say that, in this world. Our lifestyle will go down. Everything will change because in the 21st century, the competition will be so tremendous, so great on the global scale, that we cannot go on the way we are presently going and say somehow or other we can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

So, again, I thank the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] very much for taking this special order. But above all, I thank the gentleman for his tremendous concern and his very deep feeling in relationship to the education of all children in this country.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. Listening to the gentleman's comments, the fact of the matter is the Nation is concerned about the degree to which children are being failed by these school systems. It reminds me of an old line from a psychologist that the definition of "crazy" is doing more of the same thing and expecting a different result.

We know that which we have been trying is not working for the children. We must have the innovation and the courage to try something different. Give them a chance. Dare to see what we can do. And, incidentally, I am sure the gentleman would agree with me, we might even dare to do some things the old-fashioned way, the way they worked for the gentleman and me when we were children. Again, I thank the gentleman and I appreciate him.

Mr. Speaker, another very dedicated member of our conference to this whole proposition is the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS]. The gentleman is one of the subcommittee chairmen on the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities and his commitment and knowledge to the whole process of education is unparalleled in this city, with of course the obvious exception of the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], the chairman of the committee. But the gentleman from California is dedicated and we look forward to his participation this evening.

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Majority Leader for yielding to me, and I thank my colleagues for being here to participate in a discussion of what I think is the most important subject that we could consider on this House floor; namely, the education of

our children. I cannot not think of anything more important to the future of our country than ensuring that all of our children, and they are "our" children, receive a high quality education.

I was struck by, and I have said this before on the House floor and it is too bad that some of our Democratic colleagues who were so vociferous earlier today are not here on the floor for this special order so we could have a genuine debate. But I was struck earlier today when we were debating this idea on allowing families to invest after-tax dollars, after they had paid all of their taxes, Federal, State and local, property taxes, both real and personal property taxes, allowing them to invest their own, hard-earned after-tax dollars in education savings accounts and then using the interest built up in those accounts to pay for a variety of things for their children in grades K through 12.

And we heard the class warfare coming from the other side, what I call "the politics of envy," and it was pretty clear to anybody who listened to this debate today, particularly anybody across the land who tuned in to our televised floor proceedings on C-SPAN, bless their heart, which party is the more progressive party when it comes to talking about real reform of our schools and educational improvement to benefit every American child.

Mr. Speaker, it also was pretty clear what party was put in the position earlier today of defending the status quo, and defending it, as I hopefully pointed out in my comments, through I thought some rather specious and I thought almost silly arguments; basically, as far as I could determine, acting as a front or carrying water for the education establishment, which, believe me, recoils at any notion of competition or choice in our schools because competition and choice might threaten their monopoly of financial control over our schools.

Talking about choice and competition in education, as the majority leader pointed out, I do chair the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth and Families. I see my predecessor, the gentleman from California [Mr. CUNNINGHAM], over here who chaired the committee in the last Congress. We are known as the education subcommittee for Federal education policy initiatives and funding programs for grades K through 12. We have held a series of hearings in this Congress on the idea of giving parents more choices in the education of their children.

Mr. Speaker, one of the witnesses at an earlier hearing, this was a hearing last month, was the Majority Leader, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], who has organized this special order on the House floor tonight. The Majority Leader has been a long time advocate of public and private school choice as a means of holding existing schools more accountable and expanding educational opportunities for our children, especially those who are trapped due to socioeconomic cir-

cumstances in unsafe or underperforming schools.

Mr. Speaker, I really found the Majority Leader's testimony most compelling. In fact, it was really quite moving because the gentleman spoke from the heart. In fact, I think he said that. He tossed aside his prepared remarks and spoke from the heart.

The gentleman argued before our committee that when schools and local elected decision-makers, because that is where ultimate accountability rests, it rests with those elected school board members, school trustees. I was one once. In fact, I was one for 5 years, including two terms as the school board president. I had the distinction of serving as school board president and Little League president during the same year, so I think I got a real baptism in what politics are all about during that year.

But the Majority Leader argued that it was those folks who encounter their constituents every day at the corner drugstore or in their other travels around the community, it is those folks who are ultimately accountable to the people who elected them, their voters, and who are accountable to parents, the ultimate consumers of education, and that when we do make those local elected decision-makers truly accountable to parents, who then have the freedom to choose where their children are educated, then those schools will become good schools.

Mr. Speaker, if those schools do not improve, if they do not meet the needs, do not meet the demands of education consumers, parents and children, they will and should close. And yet all we hear from the other side when we debate Federal education policy on this floor is "more money." More money is the answer, even more money for the District of Columbia public schools, which spend somewhere in the neighborhood, although they cannot quite account for all the money, between \$9,000 and \$10,000 per pupil per year. More money.

So here we have the rich irony of supposedly an education system in a free enterprise system, in a market-based economy, where all we do to try to correct the problem is throw money at it. In my view, and as the Majority Leader has argued, the cost of failure should not be as it is now, more money, more staff and more of everything. The price of failure should be a closed school.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues how often have they heard of a school closing? Even the schools here in the District of Columbia, which could not get the roofs repaired, and the schools opened on time.

One other point I want to mention, and that is when the Majority Leader appeared before us he also, I thought very effectively, rebutted the argument that somehow allowing parents more freedom, more choice, more say in where their kids go to school and what type of education is most appro-

priate for their children, that somehow that choice, that competition will destroy the public school system. Well, he rebutted that argument and pointed out that scholarships or vouchers will actually help save the public school system.

□ 1915

The public school system, if you remember nothing else about what I say tonight, for anybody listening, mark these words, the public school system will reform itself only when parents are free to choose the schools that they think are best able to educate their children. That was the argument that the majority leader made before us when he testified before our subcommittee. I could go on, but I want to give others the opportunity to speak.

I did notice two recent newspaper articles. They really caught my eye. I sent them out through a Dear Colleague. These were two recent newspaper articles, both national publications, that reported that increased competition in response to the demands of parents and their concerns about the quality of the education that their child is receiving is gradual and that this is slowly but surely happening, gradually forcing the public school system to react.

I sent these articles around to all of my colleagues' offices because I thought they were so important and merited attention, because I think they really do signal a major new trend in education and are sort of a harbinger of things to come.

First, USA Today, on September 28, late last month, reported that 12 major education groups, basically the education establishment, because it consists of the National Teachers Unions, the National Congress of the PTA, the national associations of both elementary and secondary school principals, they have all joined together to form a new alliance, ostensibly to improve public education. However, it appears that the real purpose, the real agenda behind the formation of this establishment group is their desire to thwart the growing effort, not just on our part, but on the part of parents and families in hundreds of thousands of communities around this country to infuse more competition, more parental choice into our education system.

Listen to what USA Today reported. Criticism of public schools for poor academic achievement, low standards, and violence has given rise to proposals to provide taxpayer-funded vouchers, tuition grants or opportunity scholarships, for parents. Yes, that means giving parents the full range of choice among all competing institutions, public, private and parochial.

These large, well-funded, vested interests, these are interests that have a self-interest, a financial interest, oppose parental choice because it threatens their monopoly of financial control. But these interests just do not get

it because, as the majority leader himself said when he testified before our committee, and I quote him now, schools exist to serve our children, not bureaucracies. And the interests of the children should supersede all other interests. Just as simple as, put the children first.

The second article ran on October 1, the beginning of this month, three days after the publication of the USA Today article. It ran in the Washington Post, not exactly known, at least in this town inside the Washington beltway, as a conservative publication. The article was entitled, Popularity Grows for Alternatives to Public Schools, Some School Districts React to the Threat of Competition.

The article began by saying, in a movement flustering schools across the Nation, more parents than ever are choosing alternatives to public education for their children, including public charter schools, religious schools and home schooling.

So much, so much that what once seemed only a fad to many educators is today instead starting to resemble a revolution. And it concludes in that article by quoting Robert Chase, President of the National Education Association Teachers Union, saying, I am not sure if any of us really know where these trends are leading us, but it had better make us take a hard new look at what we are doing in public education. That from the words of the President of the largest teachers union in the country.

Speaker GINGRICH has said, schools should be a magnet, not a trap.

As I said earlier, the education system will reform itself only when parents are free to choose the schools and the education that they think are best for their children. That is why we are bringing out to the House floor a series of choice initiatives, beginning two weeks ago with opportunity scholarships for 2,000 District of Columbia families, continuing today with the A plus education savings accounts, and concluding next week with the bipartisan bill to expand public school choice through the creation of more independent charter schools. These are public charter schools that are deregulated, decentralized, where the decisionmaking occurs on site and which are truly treated in an autonomous manner for fiscal and legal purposes and then also our HELP scholarships bill, which will build on the proven success of opportunity scholarships or tuition grants for low-income parents in Milwaukee and Cleveland and try to expand that program nationwide.

I am pleased to join the majority leader and my colleagues tonight on the House floor for this very special special order. As I said at the outset, I do not think that there is anything more important to the future of our country than the education of our children. I thank the majority leader and commend him for his leadership.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, we have with us tonight the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. BOB SCHAFFER].

I would like to make a few comments. I have had the opportunity to visit with Mr. BOB SCHAFFER on very, very many occasions about education. The chairman of the committee, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] has let my secret out. It is no secret. This is a matter, with me, of the heart.

These children are so special, so precious, so deserving of the same opportunity every place in America as everyone else that you must do your best. The gentleman from Colorado [Mr. BOB SCHAFFER] knows that. The gentleman from Colorado [Mr. BOB SCHAFFER], in the conversations I have had with him, has told me so many times so clearly how critically important is excellence in public education to the larger mission of educating children in this Nation, how precious and dear is the public school system of this country, and how very proud he is of the schools in Colorado.

Now, when we feel passionately about something, when we truly care about something, when, in fact, it is something that really is a flame in our heart, we will oftentimes express that. And sometimes we will express it in such a manner as to put ourselves in harm's way, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, I was the first Member of Congress ever to prove that I am able to shoot myself in the foot while I have it in my mouth.

But I never said something in a clumsy manner that I did not care about. Mr. BOB SCHAFFER has expressed his concern and his commitment to education and unhappily, I know, expressed his feelings in strong language. But what is unfair and what is not acceptable, if we are going to have responsible discourse, is that the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. BOB SCHAFFER, has been jumped on. We have Members running all over this place feigning moral outrage and trying to build a caricature of his concern into something other than what it is.

Knowing about this, when I decided to do this special order, I made it a point to find the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. BOB SCHAFFER, and to ask him if he would be willing to come over here this evening so that America can see the BOB SCHAFFER of concern and commitment to excellence in public education, excellence in education for every child of this Nation, a matter of his heart that I know to be profound and deep.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. BOB SCHAFFER], my friend and my colleague.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader for yielding to me and for those kind words. What you described is really akin to a scene out of the Empire Strikes Back, because that is exactly what we experience and the passion that you mentioned, which I share with

you, on the opportunity that we have here to really improve the quality of public education throughout the country. There are those who believe that our discussions about empowering parents and empowering children and empowering teachers treating them in fact like real professionals, that those values that we fight for here every day are somehow a threat to the large centralized bureaucratic monopoly that many wish to preserve.

There are many who want to centralize education authority right here in Washington, D.C. and steal that authority from our classrooms, from our school board members, from our principals, from our State legislators and bring all that authority here.

We are fighting on a daily basis to decentralize education authority and treat parents like real customers, to understand that it is parents who have the greatest concern for their children.

I want to start with myself. I have got four children, three of them are in public schools today. And those are public schools that I have spent an incredible amount of time volunteering and working in. I have come to the conclusion that school reform takes place when parents are involved. Every initiative that we have discussed here in this Congress has been about that particular philosophy.

Let me point out a couple of statistics that I think really dramatize what it is we are trying to change. A smaller share of school dollars are now being spent on student classroom instruction than at any time in our history. Between 1960 and 1984, local school spending on administration and other non-instructional functions grew at almost twice the rate of per pupil instructional expenditures.

In 1960, classroom teachers made up almost two-thirds of the full-time school staff. Today, they make up barely more than half. Conversely, the non-teaching staff was barely more than a third of the full-time student staff in 1960, but almost half today.

One more statistic, fewer than half of all public education dollars are spent in the classroom. They are spent on bureaucrats, on support personnel, on administrative buildings, but fewer than half are spent on children in the classroom. That is what we have been discussing over the last few weeks here in this Congress on the floor of the House, real education reform, treating parents like customers and teachers like real professionals. I trust the teachers in my district. They have done remarkable things to reform the way we educate children.

Let me say on this point, if you consider the bureaucratic model that most teachers are forced to comply with today, you have a system which does the following: The absolute best teacher in the district is paid in the exact same way as the absolute worse teacher in the district. By that standard, is it any wonder that our teachers feel frustrated. They have an incredible job.



They go to school to learn how to teach. They are dedicated and bring a personal passion to the job that is before them. Then they are thrown into a classroom situation where they are not treated like professionals, where they are asked to do more than teach children. They are asked to be social workers, guidance counselors, drug rehabilitators and, on occasion, substitute parents.

Many teachers rise to that occasion and they respond remarkably well. But I say this, if we really want to treat teachers like real professionals, I would suggest that we ought to create a system where they are allowed to become incredibly wealthy, that the value of a teacher is measured by their contribution to the organization. If they have a line of parents outside their door wanting their service, they ought to be treated like real professionals, like the doctor who has the same situation, like the lawyer who has clients waiting outside the door, like the insurance agent, the real estate agent, any professional that has people wanting their service ought to be able to be treated in a way that honors and respects the contributions that they make to their community, to their school and ultimately to the lives of children.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that if you listen very carefully to the debates that have taken place over the last couple weeks, if you want to define the essence, the difference between those of us who really care about improving the quality of schools in our country and those who want to preserve the centralized authority here in Washington, it all comes down to this, and I will conclude on this point. There are those in this Chamber on the other side of the aisle with a far different perspective who believe you measure fairness in education by the relationship between school buildings or different education bureaucracies.

We, on the other hand, believe you measure education fairness in America upon the relationship between children, no matter where they are, whether they are educated in the home, in a private school, in a public school or in any other setting. We focus on the fairness of children. That is what every one of our bills and initiatives here in Washington as a conservative Republican majority have entailed.

That is what we will continue to fight for day. After day. After day until at the end we can finally agree that we have restored the hope and the vision of our country as a society of well-educated citizens.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. BOB SCHAFFER]. I knew his position on this matter. I know his heart.

Mr. Speaker, this subject commands such a commitment among the Members of the House that we have found ourselves this evening with an embarrassment of riches on the subject. We had the gentleman from Texas [Mr.

DELAY], who came in earlier, had to go out to another discussion. We had the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA], who had to go off and will be back later to renew his discussions on this subject. We have the gentleman from Kentucky [Mrs. NORTHUP], who sat and waited until it became evident that the time would run out and she would not be able to participate this evening, but who has a commitment to this.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we have my good friend, the gentleman from California [Mr. CUNNINGHAM], who still sits here and waits his turn as the clock runs down.

□ 1930

If I could close, Mr. Speaker, on this comment. DUKE CUNNINGHAM is a man who is devoted to these children. His wife is a professional educator. DUKE has himself been an educator among his many occupations in life. I have worked with him on the committee that deals with education. He has a great deal to offer and in fact has offered and given a great deal already. It is our loss that we did not have time for Mr. CUNNINGHAM to speak in this hour this evening, but I can tell you the blessing is that he will not quit, he will not go away, he will be back and when he returns to the subject, he says each child will be cared for.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM is so enthusiastic about speaking, he has just suggested, Mr. Speaker, that I ask unanimous consent that my special order be extended for 5 minutes so that indeed he can have an opportunity to speak.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALSH). The gentleman's request is not in order. The procedure is that a Member may not address the House for more than 1 hour in a special order.

Mr. ARMEY. I thank the Speaker and I thank Mr. CUNNINGHAM for his devotion and dedication.

#### REQUEST FOR 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order.

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

There was no objection.

#### IN THE MATTER OF CONTESTED ELECTION IN CALIFORNIA'S 46TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, earlier today we had a resolution on the floor that unfortunately did not achieve success but should have. Almost 6 months ago, the Los Angeles Times stated that, quote, it is time to wrap up the House inquiry, unquote, which, quote, has produced no evidence that Congresswoman SANCHEZ' victory, which was in the 46th District of California, was the result of electoral fraud. That is the Los Angeles Times of April 22 of this year.

Echoing this was a Washington Post editorial that noted that in the Dornan-Sanchez case, quote, no credible evidence has yet been offered that votes were affected in sufficient numbers to alter the outcome of the race. Washington Post, July 28 of this year.

Just recently, again the Los Angeles Times pointed out, quote, there has been no evidence yet that SANCHEZ benefited from fraudulent votes, and the next regularly scheduled election is only 14 months away. That was back on September 23, 1997.

Yet despite all of these independent statements by all of these newspapers who are looking at the facts and circumstances as they have unfolded since the election took place last November, the fact of the matter is that Republicans continue to drag out this process. They have done so with hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer moneys having been spent, and yet no clear and convincing evidence, no preponderance of evidence, no evidence beyond a reasonable doubt being presented to substantiate that Congresswoman SANCHEZ' election should not be upheld.

It is clear to many of us why Republicans continue to pursue this matter. This is an all-out effort to intimidate and harass new citizens and those with foreign surnames and stop them from voting. This is plain from the fact that Republicans are not checking the citizenship of voters in any other close election across the country. As the President of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters has noted, the committee investigation is, quote, being carried out in ways that may intimidate future voters. Limiting access to the voting booth has been the plan all along.

Just after the election, the Los Angeles Times reported that, quote, Dornan has said his Republican colleagues are seeking a case to use in challenging voter registration procedures nationwide. In targeting this election, Republicans have selected a seat where Hispanic voting played a vital role in the outcome of the election. Republicans have every reason to hope that Hispanic and other minority voters stay