

competitive landscape, but they contend that might not be such a bad thing.

"Ultimately, the government is not always going to win and the private sector isn't either," said Michael D. Serlin, a former National Performance Review official who now works as a consultant on federal contracting issues. "If the result is genuine competition, however, it's the taxpayer who's the winner."

Mr. THOMAS. The FAA recently announced it was awarding a contract of about \$150 million for data processing and information technology to the Department of Agriculture. The problem is that there are plenty of private-sector groups that are more efficient or more capable of doing that job.

When you think of technology, do you think of the Department of Agriculture? I do not think so. When you talk about doing payrolls and managing the FAA's technology, do you think of the Department of Agriculture? I do not think so. That is because information technology is not part of the Department of Agriculture's core mission.

The folks down at OMB and the Clinton administration will tell you it is a great thing; it is encouraging entrepreneurial Government. But I think we ought to be encouraging private business and entrepreneurial enterprise, not Government. By recruiting contracts from other agencies to offset budget cuts, we are maintaining big Government at the expense of businesses in the private sector, especially small businesses. We are also cheating the taxpayer. Studies have shown that outsourcing can save the Government up to 30 percent. Congressman DUNCAN and I wrote to the President the day this article appeared to protest his plans on reinventing Government.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of that letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, May 22, 1997.

Hon. WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to express our strong concerns regarding a recent decision by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to award a large information technology (IT) contract to the Department of Agriculture. We are concerned that American taxpayers may be shortchanged by this proposed contract. We seriously question whether your plans for "reinventing" government should include federal agencies unfairly competing with the private sector to provide commercial goods and services to other government agencies.

The current process for evaluating whether or not the federal government should perform commercial functions is woefully inadequate. Federal agencies have an unfair advantage in these competitions because the government's true costs are generally understated due to the absence of an activity-based accounting system. The federal government doesn't pay taxes and it accounts for overhead expenses differently than private sector firms. Most alarming, it is our understanding that the A-76 process was pos-

sibly circumvented entirely, so that no rigorous competitive analysis was performed at all.

In addition, the FAA appears to have decided to ignore the past performance of the Department of Agriculture in the IT area. Just last week, the Department was criticized by the General Accounting Office (GAO) for "inadequate management of information technology investments that resulted in millions of taxpayer dollars being wasted." In addition, in response to previous congressional inquiries, the Department of Agriculture recently put on hold all computer purchases exceeding \$250,000 until it revamps its information technology management structure.

As you know, we recently introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, S. 314 and H.R. 716, that would eliminate unfair government competition with the private sector. Our legislation corrects the problems with the A-76 process and stops "entrepreneurial" government by creating a "best value comparison" in which many factors, such as qualifications, past performance and a fair cost accounting system, are used to determine which entity will provide the best value to the American taxpayer.

We encourage you to reevaluate the decision to award this contract to the Department of Agriculture based on the criteria laid out in S. 314 and H.R. 716. We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

CRAIG THOMAS,

U.S. Senator.

JOHN DUNCAN,

U.S. Representative.

Mr. THOMAS. Unfortunately, this reinventing Government is not achieving its purpose. It is recreating big Government. The current A-76 process, which is the system that is supposed to be used to decide if a function can be done more cost effectively and more efficiently in the private sector, may not even have been used by the FAA before awarding the contract to the Department of Agriculture. And when A-76 is used, it does not provide a level playing field for comparing Government and the private sector. Finally, the GAO has strongly criticized the Department of Agriculture's management of its current information technology. We shouldn't be giving them more work when they can't handle their current assignments.

So my legislation would address these issues. The legislation would stop entrepreneurial Government dead in its tracks, create a best value comparison between Government and private enterprise based on fair accounting systems, based on qualifications, based on past performance.

There are certainly activities within the Government that are inherently Government functions and should be done by the Government, but there are many others that are commercial in nature. They are as commercial as anything in the private sector could be. So this legislation will lead to more efficient Government, will inject fair competition into Government monopolies and continue to reserve a Government role for inherently governmental functions. It also will encourage more and more contracting with the private sec-

tor for more efficiency and giving American taxpayers more bang for their buck.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this good Government, common sense of reform.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

WEST VIRGINIA POULTRY FARMERS COMMITTED TO STEWARDSHIP

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the Sunday, June 1, 1997, edition of the Washington Post featured a front-page article on pollution in the Potomac River from poultry production. The story was prompted by a ranking by American Rivers, which is a national environmental organization, of the Potomac River on the group's annual list of the 10 Most Endangered Rivers in North America, and inspired by American Rivers' interpretation of a 1996 U.S. Department of Agriculture study that detected nutrient and bacterial contamination in the waters of the South Branch of the Potomac.

American Rivers' annual promotion of its top 10 list is an effort to advance public awareness about the fragility of the Nation's water resources, a laudable goal, and newsworthy, as well.

Regrettably, however, the media missed the real story of worth, namely, the exemplary efforts by a nonpartisan coalition of public officials and West Virginia family farmers to balance economic interests with environmental goals. And, more importantly, the media missed the spirit of cooperation needed to accomplish these goals through the voluntary implementation of farm management practices identified in USDA's 1996 study as improving the efficient use of farmland and reducing threats to the Potomac River.

I might add that, contrary to the negative impression left by the Washington Post writer, the heart of this industry is situated in the charming town of Moorefield. This is an area which was settled in the early 1700's and contains a federally designated historic district. Moorefield's antebellum homesteads and streets are enriched by the presence of hard-working family farmers, who not only earn a real day's wage, but also represent the backbone of our Nation's economy and spirit of community.

The poultry industry has dramatically expanded in the Potomac Headwaters, from production at approximately 46.6 million birds in 1992 to 90 million birds in 1996. Recognizing the potential growth of the industry, as early as 1990, a cooperative program between Federal and State agencies was launched to design and implement the best soil and water conservation management practices. Rapid growth of any industry usually is not achieved

without problems. However, these problems have been identified and efforts are underway to ameliorate these consequences of expansion.

To date, 80 percent of the eligible farmers in the Potomac Headwaters, which I understand is a higher than average percentage for similar USDA programs, have electively enrolled in the Potomac Headwaters Land Treatment Watershed Project, the recommended action plan to protect the Potomac from possible agricultural pollution. I am proud that I have been able to secure funds to support the Federal share of this project.

By enrolling in this project, West Virginia farmers have voluntarily agreed to develop nutrient management plans and install animal waste structures and dead bird composters, and to improve livestock confinement areas and vegetative buffer zones. Implementing these measures will cost the average farmer in the program \$12,000 over 5 years. The average farmer in the Potomac Headwaters has a net annual income of \$15,000 from poultry production.

I believe that most Americans would commend the farmer who voluntarily spends 16 percent of his income over 5 years to protect the waters of the Potomac River. Nevertheless, that is exactly what is happening in West Virginia.

Thanks to the West Virginia farmer, the Potomac Headwaters Land Treatment Watershed Project will achieve benefits for a broad base of interests, extending from my beautiful state to the Chesapeake Bay. It would seem that this is the kind of effort that newspapers and organizations like American Rivers should be recognizing and encouraging.

Mr. President, how many minutes do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. I again thank the Chair.

A FAILURE TO PRODUCE BETTER STUDENTS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, over the past decade, I have been continually puzzled by our Nation's failure to produce better students despite public concern and despite the billions of Federal dollars which annually are appropriated for various programs intended to aid and improve education. Not long ago, I asked a high ranking administration official during an Appropriations Committee hearing why, in his opinion, we were not doing a better job of educating our Nation's youth in light of the billions of dollars we have been spending over these past several years. The answer I got was not very illuminating.

Mr. President, our children still rank behind those of many other nations of

the world with which we will have to compete for the jobs of the future. Particularly in mathematics, where our kids will have to be especially skilled, the United States ranks 28th in average mathematics performance according to a study of 8th graders published in 1996. Japan ranked third.

A closer look at the current approach to mathematics in our schools reveals something called the "new-new math." Apparently the concept behind this new-new approach to mathematics is to get kids to enjoy mathematics and hope that that "enjoyment" will lead to a better understanding of basic math concepts. Nice thought, but nice thoughts do not always get the job done.

Recently Marianne Jennings, a professor at Arizona State University found that her teenage daughter could not solve a mathematical equation. This was all the more puzzling because her daughter was getting an A in algebra. Curious about the disparity, Jennings took a look at her daughter's Algebra textbook, euphemistically titled, "Secondary Math: An Integrated Approach: Focus on Algebra." Here it is—quite a handsome cover on the book. After reviewing it, Jennings dubbed it "Rain Forest Algebra."

I have recently obtained a copy of the same strange textbook—this is it, as I have already indicated—and I have to go a step further and call it whacko algebra.

This textbook written by a conglomerate of authors lists 5 so-called "algebra authors," but it boasts 20 "other series authors" and 4 "multicultural reviewers." We are talking about algebra now. Why we need multicultural review of an algebra textbook is a question which I would like to hear someone answer, and the fact that there are 4 times as many "other series authors" as "algebra authors" in this book made me suspect that this really was not an algebra textbook at all.

A quick look at the page entitled, "Getting Started" with the sub heading, "What Do You Think," quickly confirmed my suspicions about the quirky fuzziness of this new-new approach to mathematics.

Let me quote from that opening page.

In the twenty-first century, computers will do a lot of the work that people used to do. Even in today's workplace, there is little need for someone to add up daily invoices or compute sales tax. Engineers and scientists already use computer programs to do calculations and solve equations.

What kind of a message is sent by that brilliant opening salvo?

It hardly impresses upon the student the importance of mastering the basics of mathematics or encourages them to dig in and prepare for the difficult work it takes to be a first-rate student in math. Rather it seems to say, "Don't worry about all of this math stuff too much. Computers will do all that work for us in a few years anyway." Can you imagine such a goofy

passage in a Japanese math textbook? I ask what happens if the computer breaks down or if we forget and leave the pocket calculator at home? It appears that we may be on the verge of producing a generation of students who cannot do a simple mathematical equation in their heads, or with a pencil, or even balance a checkbook.

The "Getting Started" portion of the text goes on to extol the virtues of teamwork, to explain how to get to know other students and to ask how teamwork plays a role in conserving natural resources. What, I ask—what in heaven's name does this have to do with algebra? I took algebra instead of Latin when I was in high school. I never had this razzle-dazzle confusing stuff.

Page 5 of this same wondrous tome begins with a heading written in Spanish, English, and Portuguese, a map of South America and an indication of which language is spoken where. Pythagoras would have been scratching his head by this time, and I confess, so was I.

This odd amalgam of math, geography and language masquerading as an algebra textbook goes on to intersperse each chapter with helpful comments and photos of children named Taktuk, Esteban, and Minh. Although I don't know what happened to Dick and Jane, I do understand now why there are four multicultural reviewers for this book. However, I still don't quite grasp the necessity for political correctness in an algebra textbook. Nor do I understand the inclusion of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in three languages, a section on the language of Algebra which defines such mathematically significant phrases as, "the lion's share," the "boondocks," and "not worth his salt."

By the time we get around to defining an algebraic expression we are on page 107. But it isn't long before we are off that boring topic to an illuminating testimony by Dave Sanfilippo, a driver with the United Parcel Service. Sanfilippo tells us that he "didn't do well in high school mathematics * * *" but that he is doing well at his job now because he enters " * * * information on a pocket computer * * *"—hardly inspirational stuff for a kid struggling with algebra.

From there we hurry on to lectures on endangered species, a discussion of air pollution, facts about the Dogon people of West Africa, chili recipes and a discussion of varieties of hot peppers—no wonder our pages are having difficulty containing themselves. They are almost in stitches—what role zoos should play in today's society, and the dubious art of making shape images of animals on a bedroom wall, only reaching a discussion of the Pythagorean Theorem on page 502. By this time I was thoroughly dazed and unsure of whether I was looking at a science book, a language book, a sociology book or a geography book. In fact, of