

as professionals, not as Education Department functionaries. I urge my colleagues to support my legislation to prohibit the use of federal funds for national teacher testing and to give America's teachers a \$1,000 tax credit.

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF SAINT MARIES HONORS LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate with the Saint Maries Optimist Club as they recognize the lives and labors of our local law enforcement community.

Mr. Speaker, It has been said: "Encouragers need to be encouraged!" I can think of no greater group today to applaud than our men and women who wear blue everyday to protect our communities and promote peace on a daily basis.

In July 1965, former Optimist International President, Carl Howen, recognizing the need to bridge the gap between police officers and the community, initiated the "Respect For Law" program and tonight, the Saint Maries Optimist Club continues to honor those who serve us in law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, it has been reported that every 40 seconds a child is reported missing. According to a study by the U.S. Justice Department, 359,000 are kidnapped every year. These statistics are staggering and although numbers can be misleading we must no longer tolerate adults abducting or abandoning our adolescents! This is just one of the countless stressors that our law enforcement officers and officials have to deal with on a daily basis. The "Respect For Law" educates parents and communities of the pitfalls that plague our society (i.e. drugs, theft, arson, violence, battery, rape and murder).

On a positive note, crime in St. Mary's County has decreased 15% since 1998, and much of the credit can be attributed to Lt. Doug Slacum of the Maryland State Police (Leonardtown barracks) and St. Mary's County Sheriff, Richard Voorhaar. I would like to recognize Mr. Tom Slaughter, "Respect for Law" chairman and Rich Fry, President of St. Maries Optimist Club and their colleagues whom annually applaud the service and sacrifice of St. Mary's finest! My friend, Ms. Mary Whetstone of Mechanicsville has played a pivotal role as the Lt. Governor for zone 5 and I am pleased by the efforts of our law enforcement team of the Sheriff's Department, State Police and our prosecutors. For the record, the six law enforcement agencies represented this evening are the Maryland State Police, Department of Natural Resources, Sheriff's Department, Department of Corrections, NAS Police Department and St. Mary's College Department of Public Safety.

At this moment, I would like to mention and pay tribute to Deputy Keith Fretwell of the St. Mary's Sheriff's Department who recently passed away in his prime of a brain tumor. I attended Deputy Fretwell's funeral and his commitment to St. Mary's County will be the benchmark for all recruits to follow in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and the remainder of my colleagues to reflect with admiration and

appreciation of those who serve and have served in the respective districts of which we are so fortunate to represent in Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL QUALITY COUNTS ACT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to make the academic performance of all students the top priority of federal education programs.

This legislation would achieve that goal by taking four clear steps: strengthening accountability for student achievement; raising standards for teachers; rewarding successful schools and teachers; and providing better information to parents.

For far too long, the educational system in this country has operated under a policy of "acceptable losses." Too many children have simply been written off. They leave school—in many cases with a diploma—only to find out that they have not received the high-quality education that they need and to which every child in this country ought to be entitled. We must increase the opportunities for success.

We can do better. In fact, there are successful schools all over the country, in every type of community, that are living proof that all children have the ability to achieve beyond our wildest expectations, no matter what their economic or social background.

For example, according to data released recently by the Kentucky Association of School Councils, some of the schools achieving the highest scores on state exams in 1998 were high-poverty schools. In fact: five of the twenty elementary schools with the highest reading scores in the state were high-poverty schools; six of the twenty elementary schools with the highest mathematics scores in the state were high poverty; and thirteen of the twenty elementary schools with the highest writing scores in the state were high poverty schools. In all of these cases, high poverty schools outperformed much more affluent schools in order to reach the top twenty.

The success in Kentucky is not isolated. There are schools in every part of the country doing the same thing everyday. Our job, in this Congress, is to help all parents and educators in every community apply these lessons and achieve, for their children, the same success that these Kentucky schools and other successful schools are achieving.

The American public is leading the way on this issue. Our citizens are currently engaged in an inspiring, unprecedented effort to improve our public schools.

Parents and taxpayers understand that all children need a world-class education if they are going to succeed in the global economy, be productive members of our society, and participate actively as responsible citizens.

They have come to the conclusion that we, as a nation, have not asked enough of our children; that we have not set academic standards high enough; that we have not recognized the amazing things that our children can, in fact, achieve.

In California we are seeing great enthusiasm for education reform at the local level.

Parents are demanding better schools, and they are willing to invest the time and money needed to get them.

At almost an unprecedented rate, education bond issues—that must be passed by a two-thirds vote—are passing in California because people have decided that they want to reinvest in the public schools.

We are seeing similar things here at the federal level in support for increased education funding.

This is a pivotal time in education policy. We have an unprecedented opportunity to work with parents, educators, and communities in their drive to fundamentally improve the quality of education for all children. The right way for Congress to help in this effort is to provide the necessary resources and set clear and rigorous standards for accountability.

Now is the right time for Congress to act. This year we will be taking up the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, something we do once only every five or so years.

We come to this reauthorization at a point where the federal government has spent roughly \$120 billion over the last three decades on funding for the largest federal education program—the official title of which is "Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards," but which is more widely known as "Title I"—with uneven results.

To be clear, there have been notable achievements. The achievement gap between low-income students and their more advantaged peers narrowed significantly from 1970 until the mid-1980's. Independent studies suggest the federal effort on Title I and other educational equity initiatives have played a key part in this success.

Closing the achievement gap was a central goal of the title I program when it was enacted in 1965 and its accomplishments in this regard have been under-rated.

But in recent years the nationwide trend in narrowing the achievement gap has stalled—and in a few cases, we have even lost ground.

And yet the federal government has continued to send almost \$8 billion a year in Title I funds to states and schools with few questions asked and no real demand for higher student achievement.

As we look to reauthorize the Title I program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for another five years, and invest somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50 billion or more in the program, we need to make a choice.

We can either learn from states like Kentucky, Texas, and North Carolina, and ask that all states, in return for billions in federal subsidies, set clear goals for student achievement and then hold them accountable for making progress toward those goals. Or we can continue writing checks and sending the message that we are happy with the status quo.

We are entitled to ask the same questions and expect the same commitment and accountability as a financial partner would in providing capital for a loan.

We don't want to micromanage your enterprise. States and localities have the primary responsibility for the day-to-day operation of schools.

But we can, and should, ask that:

(1) States lay out clear and measurable goals for the academic achievement of all students, including their goals for closing gaps in

achievement between student subgroups, such as between economically disadvantaged students and their peers;

(2) Children have access to the resources they need to meet these goals, especially high-quality instruction. The single most important factor in student achievement is a qualified teacher. Teachers need better training and stronger support, particularly in the early years of their careers. Aides have a role to play, but they must support, not replace, the classroom teacher;

(3) Schools and teachers that show results should be financially rewarded for their success in improving student achievement. Particular attention must be paid to high-poverty schools in which students are showing academic gains; and,

(4) Parents should be given better and clearer information about how their child is doing in school. And parents and other taxpayers deserve public report cards on the quality of their neighborhood schools and how they rank with others in their state.

By taking these steps, my bill will recommit federal education programs to their core goal—ensuring that all students have the opportunity to achieve, regardless of racial, ethnic, or economic background.

Here is how the bill would work specifically:

I. REPORT CARDS—INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND THE PUBLIC

Individual Report Cards: The bill requires Title I schools to issue report cards to all parents of Title I kids on the academic progress of their individual children, as well as their school, the school district, and the state overall. The report cards would be tied to the standards and the assessments used to evaluate the Title I program, and as such would complement report card grades on classwork.

Statewide Report Cards: The bill also requires public dissemination of information on the performance of all Title I schools and districts. The reports must emphasize disaggregation of data (e.g., by race, by economic status) to ensure better scrutiny on the progress of all at-risk groups.

II. TEACHER QUALITY

Parent Right-to-Know: The bill requires school to provide information to parents of all Title I kids with regard to the qualifications of their child's teacher(s). It would require active notification in those cases in which teachers are not fully qualified (including emergency-certified).

Qualifications of Title I Instructional Staff: The bill requires all Title I instructors to be qualified teachers (pass subject area tests or have an academic major and at least a B average in the subjects in which they are teaching). It would allow programs two years to ensure all Title I instructors are qualified.

The bill would allow schools to use funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to create financial incentives to lure qualified teachers to teach in high-poverty schools and provide training to “emergency certified” teachers and teacher aides who are good candidates for full certification.

III. STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY

The bill would establish a more stringent definition of what constitutes “adequate yearly progress” for Title I programs. It would take into account the progress of each program in raising the performance of all students and set as a goal the closing of the gap between mi-

norities and non-minorities and between more and less affluent students. It would require the federal Department of Education to re-review state plans under these new criteria and to solicit revisions from states whose systems do not conform.

IV. REWARDS FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

The bill would require states to set aside funds to financially reward schools and teachers whose students make significant academic progress. High-poverty Title I schools, and the teachers within them, that make significant progress would get special consideration.

Over the coming weeks, I also plan to explore additional options to complement this legislation, particularly for providing financial incentives to teachers who choose to serve in high-need schools.

It is time for Congress to stop sitting on the sidelines watching schools and students underachieve. We have an obligation to students, their parents and their teachers to do better.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PAUL E. TSONGAS FELLOWSHIP ACT

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the following in the RECORD.

Today, I have the privilege of reintroducing legislation that honors the legacy of Paul E. Tsongas, one of the outstanding leaders of our time from Massachusetts. I must commend a good friend of mine and former colleague, Joe P. Kennedy II, for sponsoring this legislation in the 105th Congress. In the 106th Congress, I commit myself to ensuring the passage of the Paul E. Tsongas Fellowship Act to serve as a lasting memorial to this great man.

Always a visionary, Paul Tsongas dedicated himself to strengthening our nation's economy through technological innovation and protecting the environment for future generations. As the inheritor of Tsongas' seat in the House of Representatives, I can think of no more fitting tribute to his legacy than to establish in his name doctoral fellowships for the study of the global energy and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

Many in Congress remember Paul Tsongas as an often solitary voice of caution, warning about saddling our children and our children's children with a mountain of debt. But his vision did not begin and end with budget deficits.

In announcing his candidacy for the Presidency in 1992, he outlined a much broader conception of intergenerational responsibility, saying “Just as we reach back to our ancestors for our fundamental values, so we, as guardians of that legacy, must reach ahead to our children and their children.” That sense of sacredness, must begin with a reverence for this earth. This land, this water, this air, this planet—this is our legacy to our young.”

Paul spent much of his career in public service making this vision of resource conservation a reality. He not only restored a rundown neighborhood park in our hometown of

Lowell, Massachusetts, but he also established the first urban park in our city. He also led efforts to preserve the historic lands and water of Walden Woods and helped to create the Cape Cod Commission, which is dedicated to protecting our open space.

Paul's concern for the environment did not end in Massachusetts, however. He was a national leader in securing the enactment of the Alaska Lands Act of 1980, a law that essentially doubled the size of our National Park and Wildlife Refuge Systems.

Tsangas understood the value of investing in human resources, as well. He often articulated the need to foster scientific achievement and innovation, which he saw as critical to keeping our nation's economy strong.

Our nation needs a pool of scientists and engineers with the intellect of Einstein and the public spirit and vision of Paul Tsongas to surmount the environmental and energy challenges posed by the 21st century.

Towards that end, the Paul E. Tsongas Fellowship Act would allow aspiring physicists, chemists, mathematicians, and computer scientists to enhance their skills through graduate education so they may become the pioneers of tomorrow. Furthermore, I am convinced that the fellowships in Tsongas' name will elicit a strong sense of intergenerational responsibility among the recipients.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Tsongas serves as a great inspiration to individuals who will dedicate their lives to advancing technology and environmental protection. A wise investment in our country's future, the Paul E. Tsongas Fellowship Act honors the memory of one of the finest persons ever to serve this institution.

RECOGNIZING THE FIRST WEEK IN MAY AS NATIONAL ARSON AWARENESS WEEK

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Arson Awareness Week and to encourage all Americans to join in the crusade against arson. Each year hundreds of lives are lost and billions of dollars of property are damaged by arsonists. In 1997 alone, arsonists killed an estimated 500 Americans and inflicted direct property damage totaling more than two billion dollars. One of every four fires—some 500,000 that occur in the United States each year—result from arson. Arson is the second leading cause of death by fire in the United States, topped only by smoking. Unfortunately, the pain and horror of most arson occurrences are felt in residential communities. Each year, more than 90 percent of all civilian deaths and suspicious structural fires typically occur in homes. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, an especially sobering fact of arson-related incidents is that firefighters lost their lives fighting these intentionally-set fires.

There are steps each of us can take to prevent arson. First, owners of vacant buildings should secure them to prevent vandals from setting fires for excitement. Second, parents of young children who exhibit a propensity to play with fire can call their local fire departments for a referral to a trained juvenile fire starter intervention program that will assist the