

Another excuse we will hear is that we cannot take the money out of Social Security. Madam Speaker, by the most conservative estimates we will have over \$800 billion in surpluses over the 10 years, even apart from the money that comes from Social Security.

My father is 87 years old. He gets Social Security. He fought in the Navy in the second world war. The generation that saved private Ryan, my father's generation, is not going to begrudge the men and women of America's military what they need now to provide for our security, especially when it does not even affect Social Security.

The excuse I like the most is that we do not have an emergency. That is why we do not need this supplemental now. Well, whether we have an emergency kind of depends on one's point of view. Standing here in this chamber, it is nice and warm and safe, no, we do not have an emergency.

□ 2000

But if they are in an AWACS unit and they are working 80 hours a week and they have for years because they need two people in that unit to do their job and there is only them to do it, maybe they would think there is an emergency.

If they are on their second tour of duty on an aircraft carrier and they have been at sea for 9 months and they have not seen their kids and their wife wants to divorce them, maybe they would think there is an emergency.

If they are an infantryman in the Korean Peninsula and they know that if the attack comes they are not going to have the modern anti-tank weapons they need so they are going to have to stand out there in the middle of the open, look that tank in the eye and fire, rather than fire and get back to cover, maybe they would think there is an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, my first year in the Committee on Armed Services we had a hearing. A retired military person testified; and he said, "The military life is a difficult one. We sacrifice a lot. We are willing to put our lives on the line. It is not easy, but we are proud to do it." Then he looked up at us in the Committee on Armed Services and he said something that applies to the whole Congress. He said, "But we count on you. We count on you to protect us."

Mr. Speaker, we have let them down year after year after year after year. Tomorrow we have a chance to stop letting them down. Let us end the excuses. Let us do what we all admit now we need to do. Let us make a modest down payment on what we need to do to allow these men and women to protect us and to protect our families and protect our future. Vote for the supplemental bill tomorrow.

History is watching. The dictators of the world are watching. And these men and women who count on us are watching.

"BELIEVERS IN READING" HONORING KAREN TAYLOR AND NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. HULSHOF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Teacher Appreciation week and our attention is focused on education. As the elected Representative of Missouri's Ninth Congressional District, I have the distinct honor of representing sixteen colleges and universities, and a plethora of public and private schools which help prepare students to enter these educational institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to honor all of the hard working individuals who work in these educational institutions in central and northeastern Missouri. Each and every one deserves accolades for their role in providing excellence in education.

Today, however, I would like to point the national spotlight to highlight one of many devoted teachers who have dedicated their lives to provide quality education in Missouri's Ninth Congressional District.

Last month, Mr. Stan Taylor of Columbia, Missouri, stopped by my district office to request a congratulations letter be sent to his wife, Karen, on her retirement from the Columbia Public School system. Karen began teaching in 1961 in a rural, one room school house called East Center School in Kirksville, Missouri. She had the tremendous responsibility for teaching all grades, first through twelve, at East Center School.

In 1967, Karen began teaching within the Columbia Public School District, and for the last twenty years she has taught second grade elementary school at Rock Bridge Elementary School in Columbia, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, as I learned of Karen's dedication to improve education in Missouri's Ninth District, I felt it befitting that I recognize her special efforts, and in doing so, I honor all of those like her who have dedicated their professional lives to help enhance the education of their students.

Not surprisingly, I do not stand alone in placing this honor. On May 22nd, the Missouri Teachers Association and more than 300 people—family, friends, colleagues and former students—will help celebrate Karen's educational efforts at Rock Bridge Elementary School during a reception to commemorate her retirement after twenty years of teaching in the Columbia Public School system.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close with Mr. Taylor's words about his wife. He wrote that the most important lesson Karen stressed to her students was the power of knowledge through reading. Every day she would read to her students. It was her goal throughout her thirty year teaching career to encourage every student to become believers in the importance of reading. Thank-you Karen, for your devotion to your students and for providing excellent education for many generations of children. I stand here today to honor you and all those who share your commitment towards excellence in education. May we all celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week with those who have given us the priceless gift of education.

HOME SCHOOLING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week. There have been a number of speeches on this floor. I have, in fact, come to this microphone before to extol the virtues of the teachers of America, the public school, the private school teachers who work so hard and contribute so much to the well-being of the children of this Nation.

Today, however, Mr. Speaker, I want to rise in recognition of a particular part of that educational establishment that is not often recognized. And it was brought to my attention again, although I have long been aware of its existence, but it was brought to my attention again by a card I received in the mail not too long ago.

Here it is, a little handwritten, hand-drawn and colored-in star here. It says, "thank you, thank you, thank you." It goes all the way around, "thank you very much." It is from a young man named Jerrod Padinama. It says:

Dear Mr. Tancredi, thank you for giving us the privilege of home schooling. My home school co-op is studying the Constitution, and it is fun. I am 9 years old. I am in the third grade. I am praying for you.

Jerrod Padinama.

Well, Jerrod, thank you for your prayers. I sincerely appreciate them.

But I tell my colleagues, this is really a very touching little card I received, and I have been holding on to it because I wanted to reference it in a way. The neat part is that this young man would take the time to send me this little card and draw it in. But in a way it is a sad commentary because he has to tell me "thank you" for letting me be home schooled.

And he does know intuitively, I suppose, and certainly his parents are well aware of the fact that often there are attempts in this body and certainly in legislatures all over the country and States all over the Nation to actually restrict the ability of parents to actually teach their children at home. And they have to say "thank you" to us for letting them have a right that, frankly, is as natural as breathing, a right of a parent to teach their child at home.

This is as if this is a strange anomaly, this is something weird that we do in this country that they have to be allowed to do by the legislature. And that is the only kind of negative part of this thing I see. Because, otherwise, it is a very beautiful thing.

I just wanted to point out that home schooling certainly preceded any other kind of schooling we had in the United States of America; and it did very, very well, and it continues to do very, very well. And it is an expanding phenomena. Many, many people are participating in this. It is growing astronomically, almost beyond, really, ways to describe it.

I find in my own State of Colorado that there are thousands and thousands of parents who are taking on the responsibility of teaching their children at home.

Mr. Speaker, recently I received a copy of an article that was written by a gentleman by the name of Steven Archer, and he details a study that was just done by Larry Rudner, who is the leading statistician at the University of Maryland. He studied home schoolers, and what it comes down to is this.

He said,

Regarding the results of this research, Rudner said, the bottom line of the study is that the 20,000 home-school students I studied were doing extremely well in terms of their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

In fact, the median test scores for home-schooled children who participated in this study were in the 75th and 85th percentile range. This is exceptional compared to the national average which, by definition, is the 50th percentile based on the performance of children in the public schools, which, Rudner explained, deviates little from that value. Home schoolers also did significantly better than their private school counterparts based on Catholic school norms where the median scaled scores were in the 65th to 75th percentile range.

According to Rudner, major findings in the study include the following:

Almost one-quarter of home-school students are enrolled one or more grades above their age-level peers in public and private schools.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, but I would just say that it verifies what we already know about home schooling and that is that it works, it works in an academic sense, it works in a social sense. And I want to take the opportunity here today to thank Jerrod for his card, to thank Jerrod's parents for giving him the opportunity to be home schooled, and to thank all those thousands and thousands, perhaps millions, of parents around the country who are doing the same for their children.

KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. JOHN SHADEGG) who has, I think, a good health care proposal and is one of our leaders in Congress on health care issues.

PATIENTS' HEALTH CARE CHOICE ACT

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I presume he is going to discuss with us a little bit later some issues about national defense, and I will await hearing his topic and hearing his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, today, on behalf of myself and 13 other colleagues, I have introduced the Patients' Health Care Choice Act, H.R. 1687. We are embroiled in a great debate about health care reform in this Nation, and it is appro-

priate that we should be embroiled in that debate, and there is a great deal of discussion about how we ensure that Americans get quality health care. But, as a part of that discussion, we have left out a big piece of the debate.

We have talked a lot on this floor about patient protection legislation. I want to make it very clear. I do think that we need HMO reform. I do believe that we need to do something to ensure that Americans get the health care that they purchase and that they pay for and that they deserve.

But I want to make it equally clear that the entire problem cannot be solved by a mega-regulatory piece of legislation which puts a Band-Aid on the current problems in health care, which addresses the short-term problems we have and ignores the long-term problems with our health care system. And be sure, there are long-term problems.

The Patients' Health Care Choice Act is a bill that takes a long-range look at the health care industry and says that we can do it better. Fundamentally, it operates on the premise that giving Americans greater choice in their health care options, that giving them greater access to health care and improving the incentives for them to purchase and consume health care services in a responsible fashion will do far more to improve our health care system in America than a whole new set of complex government regulations that try to mandate the marketplace and tell businesses how to run their businesses.

Let me talk about those three issues that I have just addressed, greater choice and health care options. Today, most Americans get their health insurance through their employer; and that has been a good system. It has enabled millions of Americans to get health care. But, regrettably, it does not give those Americans the kind of choice that we have everywhere else in the market.

If any one of us wants to go buy an automobile, we have dozens we can take our pick from. If we want to buy a pair of shoes or a new suit or a new home, we have virtually unlimited choices; and this is a great aspect of the American economy.

But one of the drawbacks of the health care system that we have in America today is that many Americans, indeed more than half of the Americans who are insured, are given two choices or less. And indeed many of those, and the statistics are disputed, many in fact get only one choice: Their employer says, "You may have this plan."

This bill, the Patients' Health Care Choice Act, says we ought to be giving Americans a much broader choice. Let them pick the kind of health care plan they want. Let them pick the plan that suits their needs and their family's needs. Let them shop with their feet and make market decisions about their health care.

Now, how can we do that? Well, I will explain how this bill does that.

But there is a second aspect of our health care system that is equally broken, and that is access to health care. Let me explain that.

Beginning during World War II, many employers wanted to be able to give their employees additional incentives to work for them and they wanted to do that by giving them raises. The government, however, had instituted wage and price controls. As a result of those wage and price controls, employers were prohibited from giving their employees additional raises.

So, the mind of man being ingenious, they came up with the idea of saying to their employees, "We will give you health care benefits." And as a result of a ruling of the IRS and a ruling of the Tax Code, what we established during World War II was a policy which has driven employer-based health insurance. And that policy says that if their employer provides them health coverage, that health care coverage is a deductible expense to the employer. That is, he can deduct it from his tax return before he pays taxes on that tax earnings of that business but, most importantly, it is excluded from income to the employer. That is to say, it is unlike wages, which would be taxed when received by the employee. Instead, health care benefits are excluded from income.

Now, what has that meant? What it has meant is that many, many businesses offer very, very strong health care plans that have many aspects to them and give Americans health care. That is very, very good. But there has been an unintended consequence of that, one I already mentioned, and that is now we have got employers purchasing health care, not individual employees, and that is taking away choice, as I already mentioned.

But another consequence of the current structure is that all of those Americans not fortunate enough to be working for an employer that offers them health insurance coverage are left out of the system.

Let me try to explain that. If they are a lucky American and they work for an employer who provides them health care insurance, they are getting that health care from their employer and they are getting a tax subsidy because their employer's cost is subsidized. It is a deductible expense to the employer, and it is not income to them.

But what about those uninsured Americans? Today, in America, there are 43 million uninsured Americans. How do we treat them under our Tax Code? The answer is we kind of give them the back of the hand.

Now what we say to them is they are not going to get a subsidy from the government for their health insurance. They are not going to get a tax write-off. What we are going to do is say to them, we are going to punish them. If