

The low-life, unprincipled politicians have turned government in America largely into a racket, and it appears that many Americans have become so corrupt themselves that they don't care as long as they get a piece of the booty.

Well, from the point of view of a paid observer, watching a society collapse is probably more interesting than watching one that is running smoothly, but nevertheless I don't recommend it.

I don't know of any greater civic sin a people can commit than taking this great country, created and preserved at such a great price in blood, sweat and tears, and tossing it away just because Americans have become too damned lazy, timid, greedy and irresponsible to preserve it for posterity.

Despite what you hear, the state of this union isn't very good.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN HELPING STUDENTS MEET HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard from all of our colleagues, from the President of the United States and from governors across this land, education is the top issue on the public agenda and accountability is the order of the day. Parents and taxpayers want quality schools that show results in helping students meet high academic standards. The President says that he wants us to have world class standards so that students in the United States can compete in a world economy with the students and citizens of any Nation in the world, and I think that that is important.

The Federal Government over the past three decades has spent some \$118 billion in funding the Title I education programs, with rather mixed and variable results, and now we are looking to invest many billions more over the next five years. In fact, we will invest something in the neighborhood of \$40 billion over the next five years in Title I, a program that is designed to help in the main educationally and economically disadvantaged children. But what is it we are getting for that investment, and how can we ensure that we will in fact get a better return on that investment of \$40 billion than we received on the first \$118 billion that we invested?

We have been told by the Republican leadership of the House and, I believe, also in the Senate that the expansion of the so-called Ed-Flex bill will be one of the first items of their agenda in meeting some of the educational needs of this country. Currently there are 12 States that receive broad authority to waive many of the Federal laws and regulations with respect to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

My question is, I want to know, for the granting of that waiver for the additional flexibility to let school districts use this money in their best judgment for their best purposes, what

is it they are telling us they are prepared to do on behalf of America's students and on behalf of the families that are so terribly concerned about the education of their children?

They tell us that States are being held accountable under Ed-Flex for their actions and that they have put in place a procedure of accountability, and yet when we look at the GAO report that has recently been issued on Ed-Flex, we find out that that is not necessarily the case. We find out, according to GAO, that many Ed-Flex States, these 12 States that have been granted this authority, have not established any goals or defined only vague objectives.

One State's plan, in exchange for flexibility in Federal dollars, says that they have a commitment to the identification and implementation of programs that will create an environment in which students actualize their academic potential. For that we are handing them millions of dollars, so that they can create an environment and the implementation of programs so that students will actualize their academic potential. No suggestion of how we would measure that or whether we know that is true.

Yet we find a State like Texas which has said not only will they set out specific numerical criteria that are closely tied to both schools and districts and the specific students affected by the waiver; the Governor of Texas has said what he will do and what the State legislature of Texas has agreed to do and the Department of Education, in exchange for the flexibility under Ed-Flex from rules and regulations of the Federal Government, that he expects that the districts that receive the waivers under this act, that they will make annual gains on the State tests so that 90 percent, 90 percent of his students will pass the State assessment in reading and math.

In addition, the Governor of Texas goes even further than that. He says that the districts must make gains so that at the end of that same five-year period 90 percent of the African American students will pass the State exam, 90 percent of the Hispanic students, 90 percent of the white students and 90 percent of the economically disadvantaged students. For that we have granted them a waiver and access to millions of dollars of Federal moneys for education.

I am asking Members of Congress and the administration, which plan would you rather invest in? Would you rather invest in a plan that gives you numerical goals and standards and achievement for our students in this country, or would you rather invest in a plan that gives you rhetoric about some ephemeral goal that may or may not be achieved and no timetables and no standards as to how they will achieve that?

If we are going to be the venture capitalists in improving education in this country with the limited Federal dol-

lars that we have, that in this one program will provide over \$40 billion, I think like any venture capitalist we ought to ask what is the return we are getting on that money, because there are a lot of uses for that \$40 billion and every Member of Congress has a different priority.

But we ought to be asking, what are we going to get back? The Governor of Texas has told us what we will get back is a 90 percent passage rate at the end of five years on a high-quality State test that will test their ability to perform in both reading and mathematics. In the other 12 States it is something in between. A lot of it is rhetoric, a lot of it is no goals and no accountability.

The President stood here in the State of the Union and said that he wanted accountability, the parents wanted accountability, and clearly Members of Congress do. When the Ed-Flex bill comes to the floor, we should demand that it have provisions for accountability. We ought to at least demand something as rigorous as the Governor of Texas and the State legislature were prepared to put on the line in the name of education reform.

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

(Mr. SCHAFFER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. FOLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPUBLICAN AGENDA FOR THIS YEAR

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a little bit about the Republican agenda for this year, and that agenda is called Best Schools and Military and Agriculture, and "BEST" in this case stands for balancing the budget, "E" is for education, "S" is for saving Social Security, "T" is for lowering taxes and, of course, having the best military and agriculture.

We want to balance the budget, but first we believe that Social Security,

that part of the surplus needs to be firewalled and protected, not masked in with the rest of the general operating expenses. We believe Social Security should be a freestanding account. That lowers the amount of the surplus, and then that amount of the surplus should be divided out between lowering down the debt and tax reductions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, think about this: If you have a credit card and each month you run up a big deficit, and one month you do not, does that mean you are excused from all the months of debt that you accumulated? Of course not. You have got to go back and pay the debt. And I do not believe the President is being responsible when he does not mention paying down the debt as part of his agenda. We have got to pay down the \$5.4 trillion debt.

In education we believe in local control, we believe in sending the dollars back to the teacher in the classroom, not sending more dollars to the Washington bureaucracy so you can have more Washington bureaucrats telling local school boards how to teach Johnny how to read.

On saving the Social Security: Number 1, firewall it. Make sure that that Social Security surplus is designated for its intended purposes and not used for roads and bridges.

And on tax reductions we believe that the middle class is working too hard to earn their money and that we are wasting too much of it. I believe that it is important for us to have a good government present, I believe we have to fund a lot of essential programs, but what the taxpayers who are working 50 and 60 hours a week resent, and rightfully so, is the duplication and waste in government, and we have got to cut down some of the absurdities in our government.

And on the military, we have to have the strongest Army in the world. America has to be the defender of freedom and democracy around the globe. Unfortunately we did say, okay, let us be the policemen of the world; it is just the way it is.

We need to have a military that has modern equipment, we need to have a military that is ready, and we need to have quality of life for our soldiers. We lose lots and lots of soldiers every year because they can get better jobs at higher pay and they do not have to worry about being deployed all over the globe the way this administration seems to deploy people.

This administration's approach to foreign policy is let us deploy American troops and leave them there permanently. If we are going to commit American troops to an area, let us go for an objective, let us have a time frame, let us have a plan for lasting peace and stability once we leave, but let us leave.

And then finally on agriculture, America needs to have support of an abundant and lasting food supply. We have one of the greatest agricultural economies in the world. America has

only spent 11 cents of the dollar that they earn on food and on groceries, and yet we forget the American farmer. We need to have crop insurance reform, we need to look at some of the unfair trade practices of our foreign importers, and we need to do everything we can to unshackle the farmer from some of the unnecessary regulations that they are operating under.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield the floor to my friend and colleague from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) who wants to talk about the surplus.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and just a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, I pointed out that Newsweek magazine said a little over a week ago that if we enacted everything that the President has promised in the last few days, we would have a \$2.3 trillion shortfall in the next 15 years and totally really wreck our good economy. But I mentioned a column that I want to include in the RECORD by nationally syndicated columnist Charley Reese, and I want to read a portion of that column at this time.

He said after the State of the Union in his column:

So, starting with two lies, the President then proceeds to spend a nonexistent surplus stretching 15 years into the future. Even if this year's surplus were real, there is no way to predict that the surpluses will continue for 15 years into the future. That is pure fantasy.

The President's promising this and promising that, all financed by a nonexistent future surplus, is a perfect example of demagoguery. Furthermore, everything he proposed, except spending more on defense, is unconstitutional.

Yes, I know that nobody pays any attention to the Constitution except lawyers trying to get around it, and so forth.

But he continues in this column, Mr. Reese does. He says:

It's dismaying that more people can't see through this thinly disguised con game Washington politicians are playing. All this amounts to is blatant vote-buying, as corrupt as if they were standing outside the voting booths, stuffing \$20 bills into people's pockets. It amounts to robbing Jane to buy the vote of Betsy.

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I tell you, as I said a minute ago, if we do what the children and what the families of this country need, we will hold back on this and not go into all of this ridiculous and wasteful spending, so that our good economic times can continue. But it will be so easy to end these good times if we fall off and go along with all of these high sounding and wonderful promises that have been made over the last few days.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think it is very important for us to remember, Mr. Speaker, that that surplus largely comes from Social Security, and what we want to do is protect Social Security, pay down the debt and then look at tax reduction for the middle class, because there is so much waste and duplication of government.

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR THE 106TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Rule XI clause 2(a)(2) of the Rules of the House of Representatives of the 106th Congress, I am requesting that the new Rules of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, which were adopted on January 20, 1999, be printed in their entirety in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for today.

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES, ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS, AS ADOPTED ON JANUARY 20, 1999

RULE I—GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. (a) The rules of the House are the rules of the Committee and subcommittees so far as applicable, except that a motion to recess from day to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, each shall be privileged in the Committee and subcommittees and shall be decided without debate. A proposed investigative or oversight report shall be considered as read if it has been available to the Members of the Committee for at least 24 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays except when the House is in session on such day).

(b) Each subcommittee of the Committee is a part of the Committee, and is subject to the authority and direction of the Committee and to its rules so far as applicable.

2. The Committee shall submit to the House, not later than January 2 of each odd-numbered year, a report on the activities of the Committee under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the House during the Congress ending at noon on January 3 of such year.

3. The Committee's rules shall be published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the Congress convenes in each odd-numbered year.

RULE II—POWERS AND DUTIES

1. The powers and duties of the Committee are all those such as are enumerated or contained in the Rules of the House and the rulings and precedents of the House or the Committee.

2. For the purpose of carrying out any of its functions and duties under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the House, the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, is authorized—

(a) to sit and act at such times and places within the United States, whether the House is in session, has recessed, or has adjourned, and to hold hearings; except as provided in Rule XI, clause 2 of the Rules of the House;

(b) To conduct such investigations and studies as it may consider necessary or appropriate, and (subject to the adoption of expense resolutions as required by clause 6 of Rule X of the Rules of the House) to incur expenses (including travel expenses) in connection therewith. The ranking minority Member of the full Committee or the relevant subcommittee shall be notified in advance at such times as any Committee funds are expended for investigations and studies involving international travel; and

(c) To require, by subpoena or otherwise (subject to clause 3(a)), the attendance and testimony of such witnesses and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memoranda, papers, and documents, in whatever form, as it deems necessary. The Chairperson of the Committee, or any Member designated by the Chairperson, may administer oaths to any witness.

Subpoenas

3. (a) A subpoena may be authorized and issued by the Committee or a subcommittee