

Rotunda to talk about their agenda, and I was interested in this. I like to watch Democrats. After all, they are very interesting people when we really study them. And of course so much of their agenda they have co-opted from the Republicans. Our best agenda, for example, balancing the budget, paying down the debt, excellence in education, "S" for saving Social Security, "T" for lowering taxes.

The Republican's best agenda; that is what the Democrats are using.

But then they could not stop there. They had to put in something for the whacky fringe left element of their policy, spending 38 percent of the Social Security dollars. That is right. They are bragging, hey, we are going to save only 62 percent of Social Security, using 32 percent for non-Social Security items.

The whacky fringe left also is pushing busting the budget caps. Of course, the President, he did give his word, but so much for that.

Then federalizing public education. I am sorry that the school districts in their areas did not do the responsible things and build school buildings, but I do not want the Federal Government coming into my district and telling us how to build, how to educate our children.

Mr. Speaker, we do not need Washington bureaucrats; we need local control of education.

□ 1030

POPULATION PRESSURES IN SCHOOLS MEAN STATE AND FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

(Mr. WEINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I would invite my colleague to visit some of the schools in my district in Brooklyn and Queens. I think what they will find are some great teachers and some eager students. They will probably find them not only in classrooms, but they will find them in gymnasiums, they will find them in storage closets, they will find them in lunch rooms, stuck in nooks and crannies in virtually every building.

Why is that? It is because in places like Community School District 24 and 27 in Queens, Districts 21 and 22 in Kings County, we have populations in those schools in the neighborhood of 120 to 140 percent of capacity.

This is an extraordinary blessing. These students represent the best hopes for our country and best hopes for our community. But with that blessing comes a certain responsibility that we must face, not only in localities but here in Washington. That is to support school modernization. If we can build roads that go by these schools, we should be able to build roofs and extensions on these schools and make sure they are wired for the Internet.

School modernization represents our national defense for the generations to come. We should support it heartily on both sides of the aisle.

A NATURAL DIVIDE BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS

(Mr. FOSSELLA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, this is a natural divide here today. We hear it on the other side of the aisle. I think both parties are sincere about protecting and strengthening social security and Medicare. Both want to improve education. How can we not be for improving education? I think on our side of the aisle, at least, we want to strengthen national defense.

The divide, really, is between more spending and bigger government on this side, and tax relief and more opportunity and more freedom for the American people on this side. We believe strongly that we can protect and strengthen social security if given the chance, despite the rhetoric on the other side, and at the same time agree that the American people are overtaxed and they deserve more of their hard-earned money back, and the freedom and opportunity to spend it on their families and their communities.

If we keep it here in Washington, we give the other side the chance, and all they are going to do is spend it unnecessarily on wasteful spending.

RISING DEMANDS ON SCHOOLS, NOT IRRESPONSIBILITY, CAUSE HIGHER SCHOOL UPKEEP COSTS

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I would say to my friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), people in Tennessee have not been irresponsible in spending education funds. I would recommend to him that he ought to look at the problems in Atlanta and other places in Georgia in keeping up with some of the rising demands in our schools.

The reality is that some 14 million of our students, of the 52.7 which are enrolled in public schools around the Nation today, go to school each and every day with some major infrastructure problem. We can argue Republican and Democrat, we can argue State and Federal, but the reality is, 14 million kids day in and day out have to worry about a roof falling in.

Maybe it is me, but I think we have a role in ensuring our kids can go to school in safe and clean and learner-friendly environments. Maybe it is me, in thinking that the Federal Government, if we can build prisons, that we ought to be able to build schools.

It is my hope that we can get beyond this partisan and inflammatory rhet-

oric that seems to, quite frankly, come on both sides, and do what is right for our children. We support tax relief, we support strengthening defense. But let us be honest, they did not support school modernization last year. With a new day here in the Congress, we have moved beyond all the partisan bickering and division that separated us last year.

Let us do what is right. I say to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), I will support marriage tax relief if he will support building new schools in Illinois and Tennessee.

ENDING THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, of course, point out to my friend across the aisle that this House passed legislation to provide for school construction in the 90-10 tax cut plan last year, and Republicans voted for it.

I have an important question before the House today. That is, do the American people feel that it is right, that it is fair, that married working couples pay higher taxes under our tax code just because they are married? Do the Americans feel that it is right that 21 million average working married couples pay, on average, \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married, higher taxes than identical working couples working outside of marriages?

Of course Americans do not feel that is right, that is fair. It is just not right and fair that married working couples pay more. In fact, we should make elimination of the marriage tax penalty a priority in this Congress. The \$1,400, the average marriage tax penalty, that is one year's tuition in the Joliet Junior College in the district that I represent, or 3 months of day care at a local child care center. It is real money for real people back home.

Let us lower taxes, and let us make elimination of the marriage tax penalty a family priority this year.

QUALITY SCHOOLS SHOULD BE A BIPARTISAN GOAL

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk a little bit about the district that I represent. I represent southern Nevada, which is the fastest growing district in the United States. I have 5,000 new residents pouring into southern Nevada every month.

We have the fastest growing school-age population in the United States. We need to have school construction in order to keep up with the unprecedented growth. We have 1,200 students for every school in southern Nevada.

That is twice the national average. We have 210,000 people in our school district. These students are being educated in trailers, they are being educated in portables.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is not an appropriate place for our students in America to be educated. They are crying out for better educational opportunities.

I believe education is a nonpartisan issue and should be approached in that manner. Our goal should be to prepare our students for the next millennium, for the great challenges that lie ahead in our global economy. I ask the people on the other side of the aisle to join with us in order to do what is right for our American students.

THE EXPANSION OF ED-FLEX PERMITS DELEGATION OF GREATER AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION TO STATES AND LOCALITIES

(Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, as the former chairman of the Northern Kentucky University Board of Regents, I believe that all too often education decisions are made at the Federal level by bureaucrats who have little knowledge of the needs of the school at the local level, leaving teachers, principals, and local school boards with their hands tied.

That is why I support the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999. The expansion of Ed-Flex allows the Secretary of Education to delegate to States the authority to waive Federal regulation requirements that interfere with the schools' ability to educate our children.

The proposed legislation makes many programs eligible for waivers. The bill will help do away with many burdensome Federal regulations, giving more decision-making power to the local level. Our schools must have the flexibility to tailor specific solutions to specific problems. Local school boards understand local needs best.

IT IS TIME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD, COMPOUND INTEREST

(Mr. COOKSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, Baron Rothschild once said, I do not know what the Seven Wonders of the World are, but I do know the eighth, compound interest. Mr. Speaker, Baron Rothschild called compound interest the eighth wonder of the world for a good reason. Modest amounts of money, when invested and then reinvested, grow over time in a spectacular fashion. It takes patience but it works, as all seniors who started out with modest means but saved now know.

The biggest reason why social security needs to be reformed is not because it is going bankrupt, although it is impossible to deny that it is. No, the biggest reason why social security needs to be reformed is because the current system denies ordinary workers the benefits of compound interest. Money taken out of a worker's paycheck does not go into a fund that will earn compound interest. It is spent. The money does not grow, and benefits can only come from taking money out of someone else's paycheck.

It is time to take advantage of the eighth wonder of the world.

TIME FOR A BIPARTISAN SCHOOL MODERNIZATION ACT

(Mr. LARSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, school buildings in this Nation represent a \$2 trillion investment, an investment that was primarily made by a generation of people who survived the depression and fought and won the Second World War. Upon returning, they saw the need to expand schools, saw the need to provide for their children, saw the responsibility that was placed upon them as they addressed the issue of a crumbling infrastructure system and the need to have schools that were not overcrowded and could provide the best possible education.

Many of the Members of Congress are beneficiaries of that generation. It is the responsibility of us today to embrace the issue of school modernization and pass in a bipartisan effort the School Modernization Act. By providing these monies, we can ensure not only smaller classes, but address the infrastructure concerns and the technological concerns that we need to take this Nation and our children into the 21st century.

Let me conclude by saying this, that this is a match that cannot be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 707, DISASTER MITIGATION AND COST REDUCTION ACT OF 1999

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 91 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 91

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 707) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize a program for predisaster mitigation, to streamline the administration of disaster relief, to control the Federal costs of disaster

assistance, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 4(a) of rule XIII are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered by title rather than by section. Each title shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend, the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), the ranking member, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward another noncontroversial open rule under the leadership of the gentleman from California (Chairman DAVID DREIER).

The rule waives clause 4(a) of rule XIII requiring a 3-day layover of the committee report against consideration of the bill. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and makes in order our committee amendment in the nature of a substitute as an original bill for the purposes of amendment.

The Chair is authorized to accord priority in recognition to members who