

on May 24, 1985. After leaving the Army, Kimsey took his self-described “airborne-ranger-infantryman” mentality into the D.C. business world, opening restaurants, dabbling in real estate, and creating a bank-holding company. Then, in the early 1980s, he got involved in ControlVideo Corporation, a small firm that downloaded video games over the telephone—a venture he now calls a “first-class fiasco.”

Always a step ahead of the curve, Kimsey, along with his partners, opted to move CVC’s assets to another company rather than kill it. CVC became Quantum Computer Services, and from there—with the help of some venture capital—AOL was born. In a magazine interview last year, Mr. Kimsey recalled those anxious days, and it struck me on reading the piece how any stakeholder would love to have him at the helm:

“We were like a little boat speeding through the bayou. We didn’t want anyone to see how big we were getting before we broke out into the open. Our challenge was to keep our eyes on where the river was flowing. . . . Because we kept a low profile, we went unnoticed by the big boys until we were a major force in the market.”

Beyond such David-and-Goliath strategizing, furthermore, is a born leader who holds steady to the American ideal of self-reliance. Witness another excerpt from the magazine interview:

“When you are in battle, it’s your job to accomplish your mission and bring your man back alive. There’s no excuse if you don’t. If you’re a business CEO and you didn’t figure out where the universe was moving, or what it takes to make your company successful, there’s no excuse. When you have the mindset that there is no excuse, you will be successful.”

Successful indeed, Mr. Speaker, AOL and Jim Kimsey are now American institutions because they represent the very best of America in the Information Age: innovation, energy, risk-taking. I am proud to have had the chance to spend a good deal of time with this man, for I have learned much from him. He is the kind of person who reminds us, when we are in his presence, of Melville’s words: “It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation.”

And now—now that he has accomplished all that an American businessman could dream of accomplishing—now he has turned his attention to serving America, much as he did during his years at West Point and his three tours of duty. “Having money,” Kimsey has said, “doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re successful. It just means that you were lucky.”

That selfless perspective was apparent back in Vietnam, when he founded an orphanage he continues to support today. And it is apparent now as he takes on new philanthropic endeavors—from the dozens of non-profit boards he sits on to the message of education in the Internet Age that he spreads to teachers, students, parents and communities across America. Jim Kimsey believes as I do, that if we address the plight of disadvantaged children early, many of our society’s problems will all but disappear. One of the challenges he’s taken on is to figure out how technology can ameliorate the problems of education. During a trip to Vietnam just a couple years ago, he even dedicated a school in Dong Ha to which he continues to donate money.

Blink your eyes and there he is, deep in the mountains of Colombia, talking to leaders of that country’s Revolutionary Armed Forces,

trying to improve communication between their camp and that of Colombian President Pastrana. Blink your eyes once more and there again is Kimsey, serving as host at a fundraiser for one of the many charities to which he lends his name, energy and know-how.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to extend my sincere congratulations to my friend Jim Kimsey on the 15th anniversary of one of America’s great companies. I want to thank him for all that he has given to the greater Washington area, and all of the United States. Due largely to his foresight and determination, America is leading the way in the Information Age. Even more importantly, I want to thank him for serving as a model of corporate philanthropy.

FREE MARKET EDUCATION

HON. BOB SCHAFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, good schools are an essential element of any thriving community. In Colorado, we are doubly blessed with several good schools and many great communities.

As a father of five, I take the issue of education personally. My wife and I have chosen to educate all of our school-aged children in the Poudre School District. It’s a topic to which the majority of my work in the United States Congress has been devoted, and I’m most encouraged by the common-sense reforms taking place back home in Colorado.

Governor Bill Owens has elevated the goal of improving public schools to statewide priority status. His is a challenging initiative of high expectations and structured accountability. The exercise is aimed at achieving more effective stewardship of the considerable resources Coloradans pour into public education, but even more so to afford greater opportunity to all students through real academic success.

Many innovative approaches to education in northern Colorado have become blueprints for academic success across the state. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, Colorado is fast becoming a national template for education overhauls in other states, and Gov. Owens’ quality initiative is commanding the attention of governors coast to coast. Colorado’s higher academic standards, community involvement, and innovative free-market solutions, have also become the basis for my most successful pro-child victories in the Congress.

Colorado is confirming for the rest of America that empowering states and school districts is the key to guaranteeing every student succeeds and that no child is left behind. Americans tend to agree, but the forces in Washington advocating greater consolidation of education authority here and federalizing our schools are nonetheless powerful.

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“Before we continue spending more tax money trying to find a solution to [America’s education] problem, maybe we need to understand the problem better,” said Joey Lopez of Ft. Collins, Colorado recently when he testified before Congress. A seventeen-year-old Ft. Collins High School senior, Lopez understands what Americans intuitively know: It’s going to take much more than cold hard cash to improve our nation’s schools. It’s takes the innovation, hard work, and committed leadership of parents, teachers, students, and elected officials everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, most Coloradans agree with Lopez. He typifies our independent, western spirit which is among the chief reasons our state ranks well for its ongoing efforts to improve education. Like other top-performing states, including Texas, Michigan, Florida, and North Carolina, Colorado excels not just because of the money it spends, but because of its dedication to innovative and proven education policies producing solid results for children.

Where schools are concerned, Coloradans have never been content to entertain trendy national initiatives. Our history has rather persuaded us America’s education challenges will not be answered in Washington, D.C. by federal agents who do not know the names of Colorado’s principals and teachers, much less the names of the children. Enduring solutions are more likely to be found in diverse communities throughout each of America’s fifty states, just as the U.S. Constitution suggests.

That neither words “education” nor “public schools” are mentioned anywhere in the Constitution is a fact that surprises many, Mr. Speaker. Responsibility for educating American youngsters was deliberately and wisely reserved to the states and to the people—and it still is.

America’s Founders understood well the value of a locally controlled framework of schools, and the perils of a federally co-opted one. They knew it was better to have decisions made independently by the several states, each free to innovate and duplicate successful methods rather than subsist under one mandate for all.

Following decades of increasing federal meddling in our local schools, Americans have learned all to well how perceptive our Founders were. Since 1980, for example, the federal government has funneled over \$400 billion through the U.S. Department of Education bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the percentage of money actually making it back to classrooms is far less.

Coupled with the modest amount of federal funds local schools receive each year is a mountain of red tape, regulation, and costly unfunded mandates foisted upon each public school administrator. Washington provides about seven percent of an average school’s budget, yet the amount of contingent paperwork and compliance burdens requires an estimated 48.6 million hours of paperwork each year.

A growing number of my colleagues in Congress are of the opinion that empowering states and local communities is the surest way to help states reestablish for themselves the finest schools in the world—schools held accountable to the parents who rightly demand real results for their children.

Last October, Mr. Speaker, the House passed important legislation providing states

and local school districts more control and flexibility. Commonly known as "Straight A's," the Academic Achievement for All Act gives states the freedom to raise student academic achievement through more flexibility in spending federal education funds. This bill is a giant step in the right direction. Rather than relying on Washington-based programs, Straight A's gives states and local school districts the freedom to focus resources on locally proven efforts and solutions.

This is the kind of reform Colorado and every state needs and wants. In a letter to Congress, Gov. Owens stated,

Colorado has schools that are blazing a trail of change. More schools and states need greater flexibility in their use of federal dollars. As the father of three children who attend three different public schools, I am proud to put my full support behind Straight A's. This legislation will allow the diverse areas, schools and people of Colorado to decide what they need most for their schools.

Placing more authority in the hands of local school boards will also ensure more dollars end up in classrooms. Meanwhile, officials at the U.S. Department of Education have been so busy devising and enforcing their various rules, and restrictions that they have failed to account for the billions in precious tax dollars entrusted to them to help promote education.

As part of an ongoing effort to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in federal government, my colleagues and I on the Education Committee have uncovered evidence of widespread financial mismanagement at the Department of Education. Eight months behind schedule, the department last November released a financial report in which its auditors determined the agency's 1998 books were not auditable. In other words, the department could not account for how it managed its \$120 billion budget that year.

At an investigative hearing on Capitol Hill in March, we also found, among other things, evidence the department violated the Credit Reform Act by hoarding \$2.7 billion in education funds improperly in an internal account. In addition, we're currently monitoring an ongoing Justice Department investigation of a computer and electronic equipment theft ring operating within the department.

Mr. Speaker, such widespread and chronic mismanagement is clearly not in the best interest of our children. That is why in March the House unanimously passed legislation I authored directing the General Accounting Office—the federal government's financial investigative arm—to conduct a comprehensive fraud audit of the Department of Education.

Students, parents, teachers, and schools all suffer when scarce resources are lost in the bureaucracy instead of invested properly in education. It is past time for Congress to end such waste and abuse and force the Department of Education to place the interests of America's schoolchildren first.

Mr. Speaker, Colorado is doing just that. One of our state's most innovative and successful efforts has been the creation and promotion of charter schools. Currently benefiting thousands of Colorado students (with thousands more on waiting lists), charter schools are public schools created through a contract, or charter, with local school agencies. They are open to all children. Colorado's 68 charter schools are afforded a high level of autonomy and flexibility over curriculum and operation in exchange for maintaining high standards for

student achievement and unique goals laid out in the charter. As founding parent of the Liberty Common School, a charter school in Fort Collins, I have personally experienced the positive results of a good charter school community.

Dr. Katherine Knox, headmaster of Liberty Common School, recently testified before the House Education Committee and underscored the importance of local autonomy. According to Knox,

Though we all want quality in funding, and accountability for results, we don't want strings attached that allow subtle and increasing federal direction and control of local schools. The momentum for charter schools comes locally, and the attitude and culture is positively different in a good charter school because of the local control.

Ensuring a successful and well-funded education system in each of America's fifty states is important in the nation's effort to leave no child behind. But this laudable goal will never be attained until we first remove the shackles of an intrusive and unaccountable federal bureaucracy indifferent to the needs of our children. Local control is our best hope for education excellence, Mr. Speaker.

As a member of the United States Congress, I relish the chance to do everything within my elected capacity to ensure every child in America has access to the best education possible. My primary guide will continue to be the common-sense opinions of Coloradans, our home-spun western orientation for quality, and our abundant love for our families. These are the important components of a successful free-market education system established and championed by the great state of Colorado.

HONORING THE INGLEWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with extreme pride that I come to the floor of the House of Representatives today. I want to share the fantastic accomplishments of some of my constituents—the students, parents, teachers, administrators and school board representatives of the Inglewood Unified School District in Inglewood, California.

A recent Los Angeles Times article, "Inglewood Writes the Book on Success: It's Elementary Schools Draw Experts Studying How Poor, Minority Kids Get Test Scores as High as Beverly Hills: Keys Include Phonics, Constant Testing, Intensive Teacher Training" by Duke Helfand highlights the phenomenal educational achievements by Inglewood's students. The article extensively chronicles the success of this urban school district.

The article explains that Inglewood's Elementary school students, 98% of whom are African-American and Latino, have scores on the Stanford 9 educational test in the top half of the list of all California school districts. These students are not considered the "norm," the majority qualify for school lunch programs, have learned English as a second language and are being taught by a 45%

uncredentialed elementary school teacher force. These students are defying all of the rules governing poverty, parental achievement and educational attainment.

An educational environment exists where the administrator defied the state educational guidelines and stuck to the basics—phonics drills, writing exercises and children's literature. The schools did not follow the move toward bilingual education and continued teaching in English only, according to the article. The administrators involved the parents in their child's education, keeping in mind the parent is a child's first educator.

Inglewood elementary schools have shattered the myths about poverty and education. I am excited to be here today to share that fact with my colleagues. Public schools work. The level they have reached is the level we expect from all our children regardless of where it is they happen to live. In Inglewood, educational excellence is the norm.

In today's news, we usually only hear about problem situations with our young people. We often do not hear enough about the hard work of the majority of our own constituents. We do not hear the success stories of the young people, their parents, teachers and administrators. I am pleased to be able to share this exciting success story with you. I thank Mr. Helfand, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer, for writing this informative article. I have attached a copy of the complete article for inclusion at this time.

Congratulations, Inglewood Unified School District! You have made us all proud. Continue to keep up the excellent academic achievements you have begun. We are a better community for your accomplishments.

[From the Los Angeles Times, April 30, 2000]
INGLEWOOD WRITES THE BOOK ON SUCCESS; ITS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS DRAW EXPERTS STUDYING HOW POOR, MINORITY KIDS GET TEST SCORES AS HIGH AS BEVERLY HILLS: KEYS INCLUDE PHONICS, CONSTANT TESTING, INTENSIVE TEACHER TRAINING

(By Duke Helfand)

It is an axiom of education that the best public schools are found in affluent suburbs. Parents shopping for a top-tier campus, however, might want to take note of a more urban exception—Inglewood.

The city's elementary schools, many located under the landing path of Los Angeles International Airport, are filled with poor students who qualify for free lunches and who learn English as their second language. Yet they have leaped to the top ranks of California's new Academic Performance Index, defying the rule that equates poverty and minority status with low achievement in the classroom.

Inglewood's elementary students—virtually all Latino or African American—have produced Stanford 9 test scores that equal levels found in more upscale cities. In some cases, the Inglewood schools register math scores surpassing those in largely white enclaves of affluence such as Irvine, Malibu and Beverly Hills.

That success seems attributable to reforms that feature an intensive focus on basic reading skills, constant testing to detect students who fall behind and relentless teacher training. The model was perfected at two campuses that eschewed bilingual education and social promotion when both were popular, and that stuck with basic phonics when the rest of the state turned to a "whole language" approach to reading.

"You don't have to be white and rich to learn," said Nancy Ichinaga, principal at Bennett-Kew Elementary, one of the district's top-performing schools, along with Kelso Elementary.