

and participate in my state's primary election. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes Nos. 234, 235, 236, and 237.

EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

HON. PETER HOEKSTRA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation of the House Education and the Workforce Committee conducted an oversight field hearing last Monday in the State of Minnesota.

Among the most informative presentations made before the member participants was one delivered by Mr. John H. Scribante, a Minnesota businessman and honorable American.

Mr. Scribante's passion for children and their need for first-rate learning opportunity was most impressive and we hereby submit for the RECORD the remarks of Mr. Scribante regarding the important topic of school reform.

Mr. Speaker, we commend the excellent observations and conclusions made by Mr. Scribante to our colleagues.

EDUCATIONAL FASCISM IN MINNESOTA

(A statement submitted by John H. Scribante—Entrepreneur)

(Respectfully submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Committee on Education and the Workforce, June 6, 2000)

STATEMENT

We're gathered here this morning at a very interesting time . . . 56 years ago today, D-Day, 2,500 Allied soldiers died in Normandy fighting Fascist Germany for the freedom for Americans to pursue liberty. This offers us a unique perspective on this monumental issue of educational change. We're poised at the beginning of the 21st century, and while the rest of the world is abandoning central labor planning, Minnesota is driving through School-to-Work programs for central control of its economy against the will of the people.

Consider that in just over 200 years, this country became the Greatest Nation on Earth. We've had more Nobel Prize recipients than any other industrialized nation. We've sent men into outer space and brought them back alive; we've pioneered open-heart surgery, and our science and technologies are copied worldwide. Those who accomplished these incredible feats were the product of an education system that emphasized academics, not life-long job training.

I've been to Eastern Europe, I've seen the life destroying results of governments trying to plan the economy and control education, and I've spoken to people who have been subject to their central controls. This is not what America was founded on . . . and besides; it has been proven not to work. Those of you who have sworn to uphold the United States Constitution will be hard pressed to support such a system of tyranny.

Today in Minnesota, the best interests of children have become secondary to the interests of bureaucrats, unelected non-profits, and economic forecasts. In many districts,

The world is open-ended. We don't know what we will learn tomorrow. We can be sure that at any particular time, we are overlooking valuable information and opportunities. Our knowledge is incomplete and resources are, undoubtedly being misdirected.

However, we have a 225-year proven method for discovering and correcting these errors called Capitalism. Entrepreneurs search out instances where resources are being under-utilized and redirect them to those that produce profits . . . nothing else approaches its power to stimulate discovery. The application of this principal in education should be obvious. Since we don't know today what we may learn tomorrow about educational methods and knowledge, we need entrepreneurship in education. Government is not equipped for the task.

History has proven, time and time again, that where competition does not exist, mediocrity ensues. Nowhere is this truer than in many of America's public schools.

If you must have government-funded education, at least leave the private schools and home schools alone to compete for ideas and innovation.

BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN DUPED

Businessmen and women are being told that they can and should become partners in the education of our children. With tax funded incentives, subsidies, reimbursements, and free training . . . how can these businesses resist?

According to the Minnesota School to Work publication called Making Connections, page 11: the SCANS report instructs business to "look outside your company and change your view of your responsibilities for human resource development. Your old responsibilities were to select the best available applicants and to retain those you hired. Your new responsibilities must be to improve the way you organize work and to develop the human resources in your community, your firm, and your nation."

The Minnesota STW program seeks 100% employer compliance and further provides a "Work-Based Learning Coordinator" to "help" me in my "responsibilities" of complying with this lunacy. Who is running my business anyway? I've got all the capital at risk . . . Just leave me out of this mess.

This experiment may be very attractive in the short run . . . but business will pay in the long run in higher taxes to fund these programs, in less educated people and a loss of economic freedom. Productive labor is their goal, not an educated populace. This will be the end of a free America.

My company needs entrepreneurial minds and intellectual capital. People who can think, read, write, and add. I interview many young people who are products of Minnesota schools, and they cannot solve simple conversion equations. Who is training students for what I need? What is wrong with teaching people how to think? I don't need work skills . . . I need people who can think of great ideas and be willing to put their knowledge to the test!

Why is it that government vigilantly looks for predatory pricing, anticompetitive, and monopolistic behavior in the private sector, and yet it is the greatest offender?

To quote Ralph Moore "The REAL credit in life should go to those who get into the ARENA—if they fail, they at least fail while DARING TO BE GREAT. Their place in life will never be with those COLD AND TIMID SOULS who know neither victory nor defeat."

In a free market economy, consumers ultimately determine what is produced. What school or government bureaucrat could have predicted ten years ago how many webmasters we would need today? From the information I've seen from the Department of Labor's SCANS reports, they're planning on teaching manure spreading, car washing, working the fryer at the diner and how to take a message off an answering machine.

In St. Cloud, MN, the STW program has already put a company out of business and severed off the arm of a 17-year-old student running a machine on a STW assignment.

School-to-work is a dangerous shift in education policy in America. It moves public education's mission from the transfer of academic knowledge to simply training children for specific jobs. And most tragically, the job for which it will train will have little or nothing to do with that child's dreams, goals, or ambitions.

Parents, however, in this three way partnership with business and the State may be troubled knowing that their children are the pawns that the educational system trains to meet the needs of industry.

The economic goals of education should never be promoted over the virtue and importance of knowledge itself. School to work transition issues would disappear if schools focused on strengthening core curricula, setting high expectations, and improving discipline and forgetting about retrying failed ideas.

THE RESULT

The sad truth is, in exchange for federal chump change, the state of Minnesota sold out its commitment to high academic standards and agreed to follow national standards based on moral relativism, politically correct group thinking, and getting kids out of the classroom to work in local businesses, beginning in kindergarten.

Our state threw out a system of education that worked brilliantly for most all Minnesota youngsters. It worked brilliantly, that is, until approximately 35 years ago when Minnesota public education started flirting with the progressive, trendy movement away from high academic standards. Under the Profile of Learning, high academic standards are practically banned from the classroom.

In 1993, the Minnesota legislature repealed 230 education statutes, thus creating a structural vacuum to make way for the new federal Goals 2000 system already in the works. This left Minnesota without tried and true standards.

There are no longer any course requirements for any child in Minnesota. No 4 years of English, no 4 years of history, no 3 years of math, or a year of geography, or years of science. Most public schools don't have a copy of the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution and few even mention them in classes.

This system is really nothing new. Tyranny has always waited in the wings, ready to step to center stage at the first hint of apathy towards freedom.

For over 230 years we've enjoyed the finest freedom and prosperity the world has ever known. Yet we were warned by Edmund Burke that, "The eternal price of liberty is vigilance." As a people we've been asleep at the switch, and now our entire nation, not just Minnesota, has signed on to this crazy new system of totalitarianism, where everyone is under government's control, from cradle to grave.

This system has been tried around the world, across the centuries. But it is radically new for those of us used to freedom. This new system has more to do with fascism than freedom.

Now we need to work to eliminate the entire STW & Goals 2000 system, while there is time. As Sir Winston Churchill wrote to convince the British to join in the fight against Nazi Germany: "If you will not fight for the right—when you can easily win without bloodshed, if you will not fight when your

victory will be sure—and not too costly, you may come to the moment when you will have to fight—with all the odds against you—and only a precarious chance of survival. There may be even a worst case. You may have to fight—when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to perish than to live as slaves.”

CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY IN TAIWAN: INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIEN

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the peaceful and democratic transition of executive power in the Republic of China on Taiwan. On May 20, 2000, the presidential inauguration of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) leader Chen Shui-Bien marked the culmination of decades of political, social, and economic reform. Chen's ascent to power—the first President not a member of the long dominant Kuomintang (KMT) party—is only the latest illustration of the democratic culture that characterizes Taiwan in the twenty-first century.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Taiwan reflects the principles envisioned by Dr. Sun Yat-sen when he led the successful movement to overthrow the Chinese emperor and the undemocratic imperial system nearly ninety years ago. While the times after Dr. Sun's victory initially were tumultuous—civil wars, World War II, the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and the establishment of the Republic of China on Taiwan—they strengthened the Taiwanese people and forced them to overcome obstacles that stood in the way of their freedom and prosperity. By the 1970's, Taiwan had become a thriving marketplace of industry, ideas, and culture. It exported products to all corners of the globe and won the respect of the largest and most vibrant free market economies.

In recent years, economic justice has been mirrored by the flourishing of social justice, human rights, and democracy. During the 1980's Taiwan's leaders lifted restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. As these constraints were eased, the openness of political debate grew exponentially. Competitive local and regional elections were first held in 1980, followed by the development of opposition parties and Taiwan's first competitive presidential election in 1996. The victor of that campaign, President Lee Teng-hui, received a mandate to continue his principled efforts to liberalize Taiwanese society.

Mr. Speaker, these progressive reforms seem likely to thrive under the leadership of President Chen Shui-Bien. The son of a farm laborer, he excelled in his studies and became a prominent defense attorney. During the early 1980's, Chen began providing legal assistance to opposition leaders, and this eventually led him to enter politics in a more active capacity. This was not a simple calling during the pre-reform years. Chen, the editor of a dissident magazine, Formosa, served time in jail on a trumped up libel charge brought by a government politician. He persisted, however, and he eventually served as a DPP member in the

Legislative Yuan and later as the mayor of the capital city of Taipei. His success in the latter role prompted Time Magazine to name him as one of the 100 most promising young leaders of the 21st century.

President Chen's inaugural address offered more evidence of his commitment to freedom and political openness. He proclaimed his devotion to human rights with a passion that demands respect: “We are also willing to promise a more active contribution in safeguarding international human rights. The Republic of China cannot and will not remain outside global human rights trends. We will abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention for Civil and Political Rights, and the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. We will bring the Republic of China back into the international human rights system. . . . We hope to set up an independent national human rights commission in Taiwan, thereby realizing an action long advocated by the United Nations. We will also invite two outstanding non-governmental organizations, the International Commission of Jurists and Amnesty International, to assist us in our measures to protect human rights and make the Republic of China into a new indicator for human rights in the 21st Century.”

Mr. Speaker, as the founder and co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, I applaud President Chen's determination to stand up for justice and civil liberties.

I am also confident, Mr. Speaker, that Taiwan under the leadership of President Chen Shui-Bien will continue to work for peace with the Mainland in the years to come. Chen has pledged to continue negotiations with China and increase economic and social cooperation across the Taiwan Straits. He realizes that understanding—not violence and conflict—offers the promise of ending the tension between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. As Chen explained to an Asian Wall Street Journal reporter last April, “Pursuing lasting peace in the region is not only our highest goal, it is also the moral responsibility of the leadership.”

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in offering wholehearted congratulations to President Chen and Vice President Annette Lu on their inaugurations, and in commending the people of Taiwan for their commitment to peace, democracy, and human rights.

FAREWELL TO PAGES

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude to all of the pages who have served so diligently in the House of Representatives during the 106th Congress.

We all recognize the important role that congressional pages play in helping the House of Representatives operate. This group of young people, who come from all across our Nation, represent what is good about our country. To become a page, these young people have proven themselves to be academically qualified. They have ventured away from the security of their homes and families to spend time in an unfamiliar city. Through this experience,

they have witnessed a new culture, made new friends, and learned the details of how our Government operates.

As we all know, the job of a congressional page is not an easy one. Along with being away from home, the pages must possess the maturity to balance competing demands for their time and energy. In addition, they must have the dedication to work long hours and the ability to interact with people at a personal level. At the same time, they face challenging academic schedule of classes in the House Page School. I am sure they will consider their time spent in Washington, D.C. to be one of the most valuable and exciting experiences of their lives, and that with this experience they will all move ahead to lead successful and productive lives.

Mr. Speaker, as the Democratic Member on the House Page Board, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this group of distinguished young Americans. They certainly will be missed:

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