

H.R. 4094, AMERICA'S BETTER CLASSROOM ACT OF 2000

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, the challenge confronting us today and the future of education in America is before us. We, as a Nation, must put education as the number one priority if we are to meet the needs of the 21st century, if we are to look at where our children are going to be. We need to invest in education. We need to make sure that class size reduction is in our classroom.

We need to make sure that we do modernization in our classroom. If we look at today's society, if we look at where we were, many years ago many of us were very fortunate, that when we went to school, class sizes were small, we were able to have the relationship between 25 and one ratio. In today's classroom, we have 45 to one ratio. It is ridiculous.

How can we have our children learn? How can we get them to progress and how can we hold accountability when we have so many students in our classroom? We have to put a high priority, that is why we have to look at modernization. We have to look at classroom reduction. If not, what is going to happen to our children? And if we look at modernization, we also have to look to create an atmosphere that is good for our children as well.

When they go into the classroom, we want to make sure that the faucets work well, that there is no broken window, there are no leaking roofs. If we look at technology, we want to make sure that everybody is competitive, that our children and others have the same opportunity that other individuals have. It can only happen if we fund education at the highest level.

What we also have to make sure that we do is, if we have 100-some teachers that we have the accountability. If it is not there, what is going to happen to us? What is going to happen to our children? Our children are at stake. Our future is at stake. They are our future. They are our future taxpayers. They are the ones that are going to guide our Nation, but it is our responsibility to provide for them; and if not, we fail America, we fail our children.

Let me tell say, Mr. Speaker, we have to invest more, and the agenda by the Democratic Party right now and the bipartisan H.R. 4094 deals with a lot of these problems right now, deals with the classroom size, deals with modernization, deals with teacher training, deals with incentives, deals with tax breaks; and at the same time we also have to provide incentives for students to go on to our community colleges and our State colleges.

In California alone, we have over 6 million students in K through 12. If we do not begin to take steps to build additional schools, what is going to happen to our children there? And these

children that are ready to go on to a 4-year institution or community colleges where they are overcrowded, what is going to happen to them? Are they going to have access to our community colleges or State colleges or universities?

The answer is no. That is why we also have to provide a tax incentive and tax break and a tax tuition to make sure our children have that opportunity. We all have to come together. This is not a partisan issue. This is a bipartisan issue. This is about America. This is about our children. This is about investment.

Let me tell my colleagues, when I hear teachers telling me that they are out buying supplies because we are not providing the funding. My son is a teacher at a junior high school and he is going out and spending money. He just became a teacher this year, and let me tell my colleagues he is going out and buying supplies. They should not have to buy supplies. We should fund education. We are not investing enough in education.

The Republican Party plan right now does not invest enough money in education. We have to put more money in education. It is an investment in the future and at the same time we have to deal with Head Start programs, preschool programs, after-school programs, provide the incentives so our children have that opportunity to learn in an environment that is conducive. How can someone go to a school in our ghettos and some of our other areas where they are not even fixed and they are not compared to other institutions, and they look at TV and they see a modern school in that area and they say the environment is great?

Well, teachers have to also be motivated. They are motivated when they know they have good schools, they have the equipment, they have the tools and the instruments to teach our children. It can only happen if we provide those funds.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of work ahead of us. We have got a big agenda ahead of us right now, but we have to come together; and if we do not come together, America will lose.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION PROPOSED RULE FOR AUDITING FIRMS

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the rule proposed by the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, that would affect the consulting affiliates of auditing firms.

The proposed rule was brought to my attention over a month ago by constituents concerned about its effect on large accounting firms who also perform consulting services for their clients.

In response to the concerns raised by some of my constituents, I wrote to

SEC Chairman Arthur Levitt and asked that the comment period on the rule be extended past its September 25 deadline and that the rule be modified to address the concerns raised by members of the accounting industry.

Under no circumstance was it my desire or intention to delay the ultimate decision to next year and a new commission. I particularly want to go on record as opposing any attempt to require a delay through legislative means.

I continue to believe all parties involved, including the accounting industry, should strive to reach a workable and mutually agreeable compromise before a final determination is made. It is my hope as the SEC moves forward with this rule they will remain open to the comments and concerns raised by the accounting industry and the challenges it faces.

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

(Mr. PAUL 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 Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

OUTRAGE AT STATE DEPARTMENT'S DISMISSAL OF SAILORS WHO DIED ON THE U.S.S. COLE

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

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my outrage at our State Department's callous and thoughtless dismissal of the young men and women who died on the U.S.S. Cole.

I will quote from an October 16 State Department memorandum telling Voice of America to quash an editorial on terrorism, and I quote from that: "The 17 or so dead sailors does not compare to the 100-plus Palestinians who have died in recent weeks."

Since when are American lives less valuable to our State Department than Palestinian lives? Yes, my colleagues heard me right: our State Department dismissed the lives of our young sailors who died on the U.S.S. Cole. Something is really wrong when the Federal bureaucracy is writing off our servicemen while the rest of the Nation is mourning.

Mr. Speaker, I do sincerely grieve for the Palestinians and Israelis who have lost their lives in the tragic conflict over the recent weeks; however, when our own State Department dismisses the lives of our young men and women protecting our national interests overseas, something is truly wrong and heads should roll.

Mr. Speaker, I will submit the State Department's memorandum for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and would like to thank C-N-S-News.com and its executive editor Scott Hogenson for breaking this important story and shedding light on this contemptible behavior by our State Department.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

END-OF-THE-YEAR SPENDING ORGY IN CONGRESS RIGHT NOW

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, we seem to have an end-of-the-year spending orgy going on in Congress right now. David Broder mentions in his column in The Washington Post today that spending for fiscal year 2001 will be \$100 billion more than allowed under the last major budget deal, according to the "Congressional Quarterly."

Apparently most of the congressional leadership feels that we have to give into the excessive spending demanded by the President, because the alternative is to shut down the government. Unfortunately, there simply are not enough fiscal conservatives to override presidential vetoes. However, we are spending away a surplus that we do not yet have.

We are jeopardizing the economy and our children's future in the process. We now have a foreign trade deficit of almost a billion dollars a day. This means we are buying roughly \$350 billion a year from other countries more than we are selling to them. This is primarily because we have entered into bad trade deals, deals good for some big multinational companies, but very bad for small American businesses and American workers.

Most economists agree that we lose roughly 20,000 jobs per billion, and no country can sustain a \$350 billion-a-year trade deficit for very long. Do we ever wonder why so many young people are working as waiters or waitresses or why so many young people are going to graduate school because the good jobs are not there for even college graduates like they used to be?

Along with this foreign trade deficit is all the spending our government does in and for other countries. The liberals found out many years ago that foreign aid was very unpopular, so they just started spending foreign aid money through numerous other foreign programs.

They will very misleadingly say that our foreign aid money is less than 1 percent of our Federal budget. What they do not say is that we spend in ad-

dition to regular foreign aid, many billions more through the military, the Agriculture and Commerce Departments, the State Department, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and on and on and on.

This administration has deployed our troops around the world more times than the six previous administrations put together, mostly just turning our military in international social workers. Billions and billions and billions in Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Right now we are spending \$2 billion a year on what the Associated Press has described as a forgotten war against Iraq.

□ 1915

Most of our people do not even realize we are still bombing there against a nation now so weak that it is absolutely no threat to us at all unless our continued bombing forces them into some type of desperate terrorist actions.

Many large companies benefit greatly from these trade deals and from our sending billions to other countries in military or non-military missions. They and their allies in the national media and elsewhere have made it politically incorrect to oppose these trade deals or oppose sending mega billions overseas.

Those who do oppose all this foreign spending or these trade deals that benefit big international corporations are very falsely accused of being isolationists. However, if Members hear anyone make this charge, they should realize immediately that this name-calling simply means that the person calling someone an isolationist is trying to avoid an argument on the merits.

This Nation should be friends with every nation. We should have all sorts of foreign exchange programs and diplomatic relations, and send our experts in every field when requested, and lead international fundraising in times of human catastrophe. But this does not mean that we should keep sending billions and billions overseas, or continually bombing people who have not threatened us, or be the world's policeman through our military.

President Kennedy said in 1961 that with just 6 percent of the world's population, we must realize that we are neither omnipotent nor omniscient, and that there is not an American solution to every world problem. Now we are less than 4 percent of the world's population.

George Washington warned against entangling alliances with foreign countries, and Dwight Eisenhower warned against a military-industrial complex that would commit us all over the world simply so that it and its companies could get more money.

Professor John Moser, writing in the Autumn 1999 issue of Ohio History, noted that Senator Robert Taft was often falsely called an isolationist when he was really a conservative na-

tionalist. Moser writes of Taft: "... he was remarkably prescient on many of the problems inherent in a highly interventionist foreign policy: unprecedented accumulation of power in the hands of the executive branch of the government, curtailment of civil liberties at home, the charge of 'imperialism' arising from American influence abroad, and most importantly, the danger of what Paul Kennedy referred to as 'imperial overreach,' the extension of overseas commitments beyond the ability of a nation to meet them."

Senator Taft once said, "Nothing can destroy this country except the over-extension of our resources." We should heed these words today.

STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT RATES

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, there is much good news in higher education this year and we should take a few moments in the House of Representatives to take note of it. This is news for which we can all take some credit—the Congress, the Administration, borrowers, colleges and universities, lenders, loan guaranty agencies—so it is in that spirit that I offer these observations.

Twenty to 25 years ago, few people left college with student loan debt. But today, student loans are a fact of life for millions of students and graduates. They have opened the door of opportunity to individuals who otherwise would have no options to improve their earning potential.

President Clinton recently announced that the student loan cohort default rate is the lowest on record, falling from a high of 22.4 to 6.9 percent.

This represents a savings to taxpayers of approximately \$7 billion over the period from fiscal year 1993 to fiscal year 2000. But more importantly, it speaks volumes about the Department of Education's program flexibility and willingness to work with borrowers.

Secretary of Education Riley noted that this record has been achieved by "a robust economy, strong department management, tougher enforcement tools authorized by Congress, and stepped up efforts by colleges, lenders, guaranty agencies, and others."

What makes this even more noteworthy is that the decline in defaults came at a time when student loan volume was tripling and educational opportunity was expanding to more low-income students, entailing higher risks. It is a great achievement.

The President also recently announced a reduction in interest rates for students in the Direct Loan Program who make their first 12 payments on time. Students have especially welcomed this reduction in college costs. Student organization leaders have noted that all students benefit when the Direct Loan Program can offer the same kinds of repayment incentives as the bank-based Federal Family Education Loan Program.

This encourages healthy competition between the programs, which makes students the ultimate beneficiaries.

This reduction is possible because of the change Congress made in the 1998 Higher