

wealthier by having this kind of magic that will develop with the magic of compound interest is one way to increase retirement benefits and save the system.

Some people have said it is too risky. I show this chart just because this represents the up and down of a 30-year average. Over a 30-year average for the last hundred years, the average income is 6.7 percent.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE THOMAS EWING AND THE HONORABLE JOHN PORTER, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to two retiring Members of the Illinois delegation who have faithfully and effectively served their constituents and the citizens of this Nation.

First, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING), who spent 17 years in the Illinois General Assembly and rose to the position of assistant Republican leader and deputy minority leader before he came to Congress. In Congress, TOM EWING has focused much of his attention on issues relating to agriculture, crime prevention, education, economic growth and health care.

It has been a pleasure to work with him, and I wish him well as he returns to the very pleasant, peaceful, and friendly community in and around Pontiac, Illinois.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I turn my attention to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER), who is completing his 11th term as a Member and is the very astute, sensitive, and effective chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education of the Committee on Appropriations. He is founder and cochairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. He has been cited many times by various budget watchdog groups and has stood in the vanguard on environmental issues.

JOHN PORTER has been a strong supporter of biomedical research, a friend of community health centers, and has stood tall against the continuous spread of HIV/AIDS. The Core Center of Chicago stands today as a model to fight these dreaded diseases and is indeed a testament to the support which JOHN PORTER gave to its efforts.

One of the things that I have always liked best about JOHN PORTER is his ability to convey optimism even when the cupboard is practically bare. He is always eager to look, to see, to try and determine and figure out whether or not he can find greatly needed resources for these programs.

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I thank him for his sensitivity to the issues facing America and especially my district and wish him well in retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Honorable Donald Lemm, Mayor of Bellwood, Illinois, on the occasion of his pending retirement.

Mayor Lemm has lived in Bellwood all of his life, he and his late wife and four children and five grandchildren. He and his current wife, Joy, live at 517 51st Avenue. Mayor Lemm is a graduate of DePaul University with a degree in business administration and accounting. He is a member of the VFW and served in Korea with the 71st Station Hospital as sergeant major.

Prior to becoming mayor, Donald Lemm was a CTA executive for 40 years, serving in the capacities of training specialist, methods analyst, superintendent of bus and rail transportation, and retired as manager of insurance and pensions. He also served as administrative assistant to the chairman of the CTA Board and was retained by the Chicago Transit Authority as a consultant for 3 years after retirement.

Mayor Lemm is active in St. Simeon parish, has served several times as president of the Holy Name Society, is a member of the St. Simeon Contemporary Choir and St. Simeon Traveling Troop, is a lector and minister of the cup, and has served as a member of the parish financial planning commission.

Prior to becoming mayor, Donald Lemm served for 16 years as village clerk. As mayor, he has led the Village of Bellwood into the new millennium, opening up opportunity, creating increased property values, and serving as the role model.

Mr. Lemm has demonstrated what it really means to be a true public servant, always putting the interests of his community and his people above any personal interests.

And so, I am pleased to congratulate him on an excellent public career and wish him and his family well in retirement.

#### FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 115. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4811) "An Act making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes."

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Con-

necticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. STENHOLM 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 Illinois (Mr. CRANE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CRANE 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 Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KIND 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 gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BIGGERT addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. MOORE 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 Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### EDUCATION AND CONDITION OF SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

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

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a few minutes to bring to the attention of the Members of the House some information with regard to education and the condition of schools around the country, both in the State of New York and nationwide.

In New York, for example, there are a total number of 4,172 schools currently operating in the State. The total State and local district school construction spending in the most recent year for which figures are available was \$1.6 billion.

According to the Census Bureau, New York, along with Texas and Florida, spends the most on the cost of school construction. However, despite being among the top three spenders for school construction, the poor condition of too many New York schools sends a clear signal that State and local funding is simply not enough to meet modernization needs.

In New York, as is true in many places around the country, the local school districts rely on the local real property tax to pay for the cost of education, including construction and modernization of our schools.

Ninety percent of the schools report a need to upgrade or repair buildings in order to bring them up to a good overall condition. In other words, 90 percent are less than good. Sixty-seven percent report at least one inadequate building feature such as the roof, plumbing, electricity. Seventy-six percent report at least one unsatisfactory environmental factor such as air quality, ventilation, or lighting. There are computers in the schools, but there is only one computer for every 16 students, 16 students trying to use each computer.

In 1998 and 1999, New York paid \$618 million in interest on school debt. Again, this money comes out of the local real property tax. Sadly, these statistics reflect the condition of school buildings in almost every place around the country.

Two years ago, I conducted a school modernization study in the district that I represent, which is a largely rural district in upstate central New York. It has five small cities, but the rest of the district is largely rural. In addition to finding similar results as those I have just mentioned, I discovered also that nearly one-third of the schools in the New York State district that I represent were built before 1940. More than one-third of the schools surveyed reported being cited for fire code violations at some point within the previous year. Over half the respondents said that overcrowding in their classrooms was a serious problem.

This is costing us. It is costing us in the education of our children and the ability of those children to perform in the future, and it is going to cost our economy unless we face up to this problem.

The Democrats in this House, along with President Clinton and Vice President GORE, believe very strongly that in order to get our schools into the condition that they should be in the Federal Government needs to help local school districts afford to repair and modernize our schools.

We have a bipartisan bill. It is sponsored by Republicans as well as Democrats. It would provide \$22 billion in public bonding authority to help rebuild and repair over 5,000 public schools. This bill would bring \$2.5 billion to New York State alone for school construction and modernization.

The bill is popular in this House. It has 228 sponsors, including a number of

Republicans as well as Democrats. And yet, the Republican leadership has thus far refused to allow for any consideration, any reasonable debate or a hearing on the floor of the House.

According to the General Accounting Office, a record 52.7 million children are enrolled currently in elementary and secondary schools across the country. That number is expected to climb to 54.3 children within less than 8 years. Thousands of new public schools will be needed within the next few years to accommodate rising enrollments.

We cannot expect States and local school districts, relying as they do on local real property taxes, to shoulder this financial burden. We ought to bring this bill to the floor of the House. We ought to give it careful and thoughtful consideration. We ought to give the Members of this House an opportunity to debate and vote on the bill.

The 228 sponsors believe that if that happens the bill will pass and we will provide the relief that is necessary for school districts and the children and the families they serve across the country.

I hope that before we leave here this bill will come to the floor and we will give it the consideration that it needs. The future of our country and specifically the future of our children and communities all across America depend upon modernizing our schools, providing these school construction funds.

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

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

#### AMERICA'S BETTER CLASSROOMS ACT

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow my colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) in speaking about our public schools.

Once again, I rise to express my deep concern over the state of the schools across this Nation, which are overcrowded and in disrepair. In these precious last few days of the 106th Congress, I call upon our leadership to pass comprehensive school modernization legislation.

I strongly believe that education is a local issue, but overcrowding is a local problem which deserves a national response.

Just 1 month ago, I stood here holding a letter signed by over 300 students from Peabody Elementary School in Santa Barbara, California, expressing their desire for passage of school construction legislation.

At this school, students receive a top-notch education. Unfortunately, the students also feel the disturbing effects of overcrowding. This is a school built for 200 students, but now it has an enrollment of over 600.

The added portable classrooms take up precious playground space, which should be used so that students can take part in physical education and activities.

I have visited other schools in my district which suffer from similar circumstances. In Santa Maria, the Oakley School's enrollment is currently over 800, while the school was originally built for 480 students. The first of four lunch sessions begins at 10:30. The last children do not finish until well after 1:30 in the afternoon.

In San Luis Obispo County, Cambria Grammar School was built to handle 200 students. With eight portable buildings, they now have 345. Students have very limited playground space here, and their kindergarten needed to move to a nearby middle school because of overcrowding. This kindergarten is now housed in a portable room with a small, fenced-in playground.

I spent over 20 years as a school nurse in the Santa Barbara school system. I have seen firsthand the damage that deteriorating school buildings can do. Students cannot thrive academically if they are learning in overcrowded and crumbling buildings at the most crucial time for learning in their lives.

We simply must do better for our students. I strongly support the America's Better Classroom Act. This legislation enjoys bipartisan support and has 225 cosponsors. It would provide approximately \$25 billion in interest-free funds to State and local governments for school construction and modernization projects.

Such funding would help schools like Peabody, Oakley, and Cambria Grammar School to make improvements in classrooms and playgrounds that would help reduce class sizes.

When I think what our local educators are forced to deal with and the struggle they are engaged in to address all these problems, I am awed and impressed by how they pull it off each day. They all deserve our most heartfelt appreciation, and I applaud them for the work they do.

I believe that Members of Congress should come to the Central Coast of California and see the crowded conditions that students and faculty must contend with on a daily basis. Then I think we could see some action.

Here in Congress we must set our standards high to ensure that all children have a healthy and safe start. All children deserve to have safe, clean, modern schools to attend each day.

So, Mr. Speaker, I join with the students of the Central Coast of California and I ask that we bring H.R. 4094 to the floor for a vote before this session of Congress comes to a close. There is no excuse not to debate this important bipartisan bill. The 106th Congress is