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Sincerely,

TOM BLILEY,
Chairman.

THE HIGH COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as I have on numerous occasions, to speak out about the high cost of prescription drugs for families all across America, and particularly for older Americans who are regularly using the largest number of medications on a daily basis.

I have for over a year now been leading an effort in Michigan when speaking with seniors, getting letters from them, have set up a hotline for people to call and share their concerns and stories about the high cost of their medication.

As a result of that effort over the past year, I have come to this floor sharing stories and reading letters from my constituents urging that we pass a comprehensive Medicare benefit for prescription drugs, one that is voluntary, one that is within Medicare, and will help our seniors pay for the costs of their medications.

Once again, today I rise to read a letter. I would like to read a letter that says, "Dear Debbie, I don't call this fair for an elder citizen on fixed income to pay \$2,100 a year to just stay alive. I need my heart patches every day to make my ticker keep going, my inhaler so I can breathe, and pain medication to help me with the daily pain of my bones. Thank you for listening to me. Sincerely, Beatrice J. Homan."

Mrs. Homan has also reported to me that she often does not buy her medications because she cannot afford them.

I have now twice taken busloads of seniors from Michigan across the bridge to Canada to demonstrate the dramatic differences in costs between our country and Canada. I would like to share with the Members, because we just took a trip a week ago, how we could make a dramatic difference for Beatrice Homan and the seniors of Michigan if we were to first allow prescriptions to be purchased by our pharmacists at a lower price in Canada, if in fact that is available, and secondly, if we were to lower the costs of prescription drugs in our country and provide a Medicare benefit for our seniors so that they can have real health care coverage.

We have Medicare that has been set up since 1965, but it does not cover the way health care is provided today. Under Medicare, we could go in the hospital and have an operation. We could get the prescriptions in the hospital. But most seniors and most of us are going to outpatient clinics, getting

home health care, needing our prescriptions on an outpatient basis. That is what Medicare does not cover. It is outdated. It needs to be fixed. With the greatest economy we have had in over a generation, we can do it if we have the political will to make it happen.

I have had the opportunity to take our seniors from Michigan to Canada, and let me give an example of the differences in the costs.

Barbara Morgan normally pays \$273 a month for her medications, and just crossing the bridge, 5 minutes across the bridge, we lower the cost from \$273 to \$31.83, a savings of 88 percent.

Lonnie Stone normally spends \$800. We were able to get his same medications, FDA-approved, American-made, in Canada for \$268, a savings of 67 percent.

Dorothy Price normally pays \$477. We were able to cut her costs by 66 percent, to \$163.20.

Ilene Carr normally pays \$1,071.30. We were able to cut that by 50 percent, cut in half a \$1,000 prescription drug bill.

We can do better than this. We are fortunate in our country to have wonderful public facilities in which research is done that our drug companies use to then produce products for the market. We are fortunate that we encourage that through taxpayers' funded tax credits to help with that research. We help to fund that, and yet in this country we are paying more than any other country in the world. Every other country is sold these same drugs, American-made, helped to be subsidized by the American taxpayers for less.

We can do better, Mr. Speaker, and I would strongly urge my colleagues to make prescription drug coverage under Medicare a priority.

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

(Mr. METCALF 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 Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WICKER 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 California (Mr. HORN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HORN 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.)

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

(Mr. BOEHLERT 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 Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE NEED FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about one of the most critical issues facing our Nation. That is the education of our children. Hopefully as this afternoon goes on I will be joined by some of my Democratic colleagues to discuss this issue and the need for national leadership in this whole area of public education.

We spend an awful lot of time in this body arguing back and forth about appropriations and budgets. We have just finished today doing that, and on and on. But what gets lost too often in all the sound and the fury of the legislative debate is the central meaning of the choices that we make and the people that it impacts so directly.

My colleague, the gentlewoman from Michigan, was just talking about prescription drugs, real live people. Education is about real live young people.

The budget and spending choices that we make help us define what our priorities are. They express our values. A whole lot more than what we argue about those values being, our actions speak for what our values really are.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I in the Democratic Caucus have been working now for several years trying to give greater priority to education in the budget process.

Let me explain to all of my colleagues, the budget process is where the action takes place. We can talk about authorizing committees and they are the people who write the policies, et cetera, et cetera. Before I came to Congress I served as a legislator in North Carolina. I chaired the Committee on Appropriations for 4 years. Let me remind my colleagues, words are cheap, actions cost money.

I have often said to folks, there is a big slip between the lip and the hip. It is easy to talk about it, it is tough to put actions to words when it really comes to making it happen.

I go into an awful lot of schools. Before I came to Congress I served 8 years as State superintendent of my State

schools. Children are pretty smart people, a lot smarter than some of us give them credit for. They know the difference between phonies and real folks who really mean what they say and say what they mean.

When they ride by a brand new \$22 and \$23 million prison to go to a run-down school building, one that the wind blows through in the wintertime, with no air conditioning, they do not have the books that they need nor the technology they ought to have, they can figure out right quick what is important in their community.

My colleagues and I have been working hard to make sure that we can focus in on these issues, because we do value education, because we know that lifetime learning or lifelong learning is the key to the American dream, not only for the middle class, but to allow people to move up into the middle class.

Education is the one thing in our society that allows people the opportunity to move up. I say it is great. It is the thing that levels the playing field. No matter what your ethnic or economic background, with a good education, you have a chance.

Certainly in today's global economy, America's international competitiveness is absolutely dependent on our people's ability to perform knowledge-based jobs. These are the kinds of jobs that produce the best jobs, the best goods. We provide the best goods and services in the world, there is no question about that. But if we are going to remain a world leader, we have to make sure our education lives up to those same standards.

In the new economy of this Information Age, what people can earn absolutely depends on what they learn and what they can continue to learn in their lifelong learning processes.

We have been trying to get Congress to give higher priority to strengthen our neighborhood schools, our neighborhood public schools, and demonstrate how much we value public education for our children. But, unfortunately, I must say that the House Republican leadership has pushed through Congress a number of very large tax bills.

Let me tell the Members what the challenge of that is. I am in favor of targeted tax cuts. I think we ought to have them, but we ought to decide what our priorities are and put a balance on it, because if we do those first there will be no money for education for our children when the time comes.

It is not right to leave our children behind and deny them the kind of educational investment that they need to make sure we have a world class education. We cannot do it without an investment. The last time I checked, computers cost money, new schools cost money, quality education and paying teachers and keeping good people in the classroom costs money.

No business in their right mind would put their businesses in some of

the buildings we ask our children to go to school in today. Yet, we say we want quality education. We all want it. We ought to have the courage to make sure our elected leaders live up to the commitment, and not let them get away with just talking about it. I strongly oppose these kinds of misguided priorities.

I am pleased this evening to have joining with me my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), who is certainly a leader in education, who has worked hard in a number of areas. She is making sure that education is available to all children in the public sector, making that a priority.

I am pleased to yield to my friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), for her comments.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, it is great to be here tonight. My dear friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), has been an excellent leader in education, not only in this Congress but throughout the Nation for many years, and we value his advice and his leadership on the issues that are so important to parents and to this Nation, given the need for educational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I stand here to discuss the importance of technology in education. We have talked about the digital divide and how the gap has widened between those who have and those who have not, and especially among urban areas as well as rural areas of our children who have not had the opportunities to advance in this highly technological environment.

We have a great deal at stake when it comes to the technological literacy of this Nation's teachers and students. A strong work force and a strong economy depend upon the quality of our schools, the preparedness of our teachers, and the ability of our students to compete in an increasingly technical world.

The ability to use computer technology has become indispensable to educational, career, social, and cultural advancement. In the new millennium, technological literacy has not become only a basic requirement but a life skill as well.

It is then imperative that students are equipped with technology skills at an early stage in life by teachers who are skillfully trained to integrate technology in their curriculum and classroom learning environment.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Internet access in public schools has increased from 35 percent to 95 percent, and classroom connections have increased from 3 percent to 63 percent from 1994 to 1999.

While these increases indicate positive responses to the need for technology in the classroom, we must be cognizant of how efficiently and effectively this technology is being used.

According to the President's 1997 Committee of Advisors on Science and

Technology, a ratio of four to five students per computer represents a reasonable level for the effective use of computers within schools.

□ 1645

In my district, however, Mr. Speaker, the ratios are much higher. In the city of Compton, the ratio is 18 students per computer. In the city of Lynwood, the ratio is nine students per computer. In Long Beach, the ratio is eight students per computer.

Considering the socioeconomic demographics of my district, these numbers are just not acceptable. The children in my district and insular districts across the country are falling behind, and something must be done to stop it. Equipping our schools with technology is the first step in fulfilling the challenge to promote technological literacy in our schools.

Another real challenge lies in feeling the vast training gap and in providing trained teachers who can incorporate computer technology in all aspects of the learning experience.

A study by the National Center for Education statistics found that only one teacher in five felt very prepared to integrate technology in the subject they taught. This fact is not surprising when, according to a study by the Milken Exchange on Education Technology, teachers on average receive less than 13 hours of technology training per year, and 40 percent of all teachers have never received any technology training. That is really a travesty.

In addition to that, teachers receive far less technology curriculum integration training than basic computer skills training. Forty-two percent of teachers have had 6 or more hours of basic skills training within the past year, compared with just 29 percent of teachers who had an equal amount of curriculum integration training.

Yet, research shows that training on integrating technology into education programs has a greater impact on teachers than basic technology skills training. Clearly, the key to successfully integrating technology into the classroom will not be in installing more hardware or software, or wiring schools to the Internet, the key will be training teachers to be integrators.

Now is the time for action. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that, by the end of the year 2000, some 60 percent of jobs will require proficiencies in the use of a broad range of information technologies. By the year 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will be growth of 70 percent of technology-related jobs.

This issue, however, is not focused solely on preparing students to assume the jobs of the future. More important is the need to prepare students for America's life and culture, both of which will be influenced heavily by technology.

In order to produce a citizenry ready to accept upcoming technological challenges, we must be willing to make a

significant investment in education. By preparing teachers and students, we are paving the way to a brighter, more prosperous future.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) so very much. I think he recognizes as much as I do how digital divide and technological training is so important to students as well as teachers in planing for the future.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for that point. She certainly has been a leader in this whole area of technology, in the digital divide, but she may want to comment on this further, because I think it is critical for our colleagues to understand.

It is not just to say, as the gentlewoman said, we provided the resources, because the E-Rate has been helpful working with the administration getting that out there so we get the rate down. So many times, people forget, and I think our colleagues here forget, even though we put in roughly 7 percent of all the funds at the Federal level for education, we can be a real catalyst by providing leadership and training and staff development and all of those things.

But when we talk about technology and hardware, it reminds me of someone who would buy a car and then do not let one drive it. Because we have so few pieces of equipment in some cases in some of our schools, those who do not have the resources, depending on where they may be in the country. That is wrong. It is absolutely wrong. It is like buying an automobile and say, well, we are going to park it here, and one gets to drive it every week or so.

But that is what we do with technology. We do not even let the teachers use it. Then until we have training on the staff, we are doing a better job. We have got a long ways to go. The gentlewoman may want to comment on that as it relates to this whole issue of the digital divide because that is really what we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, this is very true. As we have looked into the digital divide, we do find that, not only is that divide among the students in the classroom, but among the teachers as well.

We find that a lot of the computers that are given to students in the inner city area are really all outdated computers that cannot really be used for training, nor has the teacher had training on computers as well.

I have a program in the Watts area where we are now asking for old computers to come into that area where we will train young folks to prepare, do maintenance on old computers. Then once they have done that, we train them on that computer and then send that computer home to the parents for the kid to learn on.

This is a whole new innovative concept in helping parents as well as students to understand the realization and the importance of technology. We also find that teachers are very fearful because the curriculum and the liberal arts colleges are not putting technology in the curriculum for training or the teacher training program.

So the gentleman is correct. It is important that, as we look at the digital divide, we look at that division within the teacher training programs as well as the students who are, for whatever reason, have been given old outdated computers that really do not do anything in terms of teaching them.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, we have, and I am sure it is in several other States, certainly in North Carolina, where we have a group that actually are taking computers, corporate folks are providing for them. Once they will take all of the insides out of the computer, they are putting new components and booting them up.

The students, then, they are really becoming technicians for computers. Those computers then go to the classroom. In a lot of the cases, this came as a result of things we were already doing, but we escalated it during the flood of eastern North Carolina because we lost an awful lot of equipment in a lot of our schools. That is starting to take place now in a lot of places in our country.

What is happening to these young people, they may go into the university or they may go into the private sector, because they now are technically capable of making substantial salaries working on computers. That may be what the gentlewoman is talking about when she is talking about her digital divide.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I am talking about. When the gentleman from North Carolina spoke about the E-Rate and the wiring and how that is important; but the most important thing is to get adequate computers into the classroom. The ratio should be as such where students will get the type of computer training that is necessary to ensure that the training that they have will be commensurate with their going out getting a job once they have completed their secondary education or even post secondary education.

I will say, as well as serving on the National Commission on Teaching on America's Future, as we look at the whole integration of technology and to the teacher training program, we find that a lot of the professional development that teachers are taking now are suggesting, or those who are giving that, suggesting that that professional development training require a certain amount of computer literacy.

I am very thankful that the gentleman from North Carolina sought to bring us to the floor today to talk about education. We cannot talk enough about education and about the opportunities that are out there for the

children of the future and teachers of the future if we, indeed, have the propensity to put the computers in the right spot.

So I see others who have joined the gentleman from North Carolina on the floor. I will move out if the others move in.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina very much for arranging this special order on education which is dear to all of our hearts but certainly is one that he has provided leadership, and I want to acknowledge that leadership and that commitment and that love for it.

But I wanted to engage the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), before she left, on her concern in raising appropriately the whole training of our students and providing the technology within our schools and put it in the context of something we are going to be doing very shortly in this Congress.

We are going to be voting on the H1-B visas, which is critical for the high-tech companies in making sure they have the staff capacity, not only to do the work they are currently doing, but also to be on the cutting edge in doing the technical research and responding to new opportunities. They have made a compelling case that, indeed, they do need them. I am convinced that they, indeed, need those high-tech individuals.

But what is troubling about the fact, and I believe they are correct, what is troubling about that is that our education system here in America has not produced a sufficient supply that they can feel they can rely upon unless they forever increase.

That is not to curtail bringing in intelligent, gifted individuals who may not be resident. I think that is what makes our country great, that we have that diversity. But to allow that to continue without putting intervention, we miss an opportunity.

So our rhetoric will be able to be tested. We have a window of opportunity, I think next week, if not next week, very soon. Given this need and our response, what do we say to the high-techs? Not necessarily in penalizing them, that is not what we want to do. But we want them to engage in fostering the education systems that are in our high schools, in our colleges. If necessary, what are they doing from China? What are they doing in India? What are they doing in Asia that automatically produces in that system a superior engineer? It is not that we are not producing engineers. It is not that we are producing programers but not apparently the ones that meet those criteria.

So there has to be a forcing of that relationship first to make sure we have a pool and understanding at the elementary and secondary work.

Then the additional one is that I think we need to really, in addition to increasing the penalty or the fee they pay, I think they have monies, they are not short of money, what we are short of is their relationship and their involvement in our communities.

So we ought to forge a relationship that says, you have this need here, you are making this request, well, there are American citizens that also need those jobs, and we are just asking you if you would please, sir, please, madam, work with our citizens in rural areas and inner cities and our students so we can give you the product you need.

That requires, not a commitment in theory and theme, but a numerical commitment by year, 2 years, 3 years we can make ourselves.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, that is an important point as we deal with it. I think we need to keep in mind and remind our colleagues that it really is called, not just H-1-B visa, working at the top, but it is called for a need for investment at every level.

For instance, on the 100,000 teachers we are talking about that Congress has been engaged in, and we are still fighting the battle to get this year to reduce class sizes for children in the kindergarten and third grade level. That is where we create and get young people interested in the sciences and the mathematics, to create those scientists 8, 10 years from now. The only way we are going to do it is engage them early.

Since the gentlewoman from North Carolina raised that issue, let me just share with her some examples, because many times people, some of our colleagues on the other side want to jump on partisan politics and talk about how bad the public schools and what they are not doing.

Let me just share with my colleagues the student mathematic achievement is improving. That takes a while. It takes an overall commitment and sustained investment over time. Between 1982 and 1996, student improvements have improved their achievement on mathematics by the National Assessment of Education Progress. But the problem we have is, even though the improvement is there, we still need to have more.

If we reduce those class sizes at the early grades where we can really excite a young person in mathematics, and they can see where it leads to, the ones who really we are losing are those in the point the gentlewoman made on the digital divide earlier, they are in those schools that do not have the resources to get them engaged. If no one engages those young people early, it is amazing. My colleagues have been in the classroom as I have, all of you have, it is amazing what one sees in the eyes of those students. Once one sees it in their eyes, one sees exciting things happen.

□ 1700

And down the road, all of a sudden the youngster decides I want to be an

engineer, and maybe there has never been an engineer in their family. But that is how we turn it around. We are probably always going to bring in some of the best from around the world; but we should not, I agree with the gentlewoman, we should not leave the gap open for all the people.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I agree with both overtures of what both my colleagues have just said. I think mainly we must see in this H-1B bill some provision by which outreach can be done in our urban and rural communities to begin to train our young folks in the area of math and science.

Secondarily, I think there has to be an outreach program to the HBCUs of students who are already in math and science. We do have young folks who are coming out of these schools ready to go into the jobs that they are talking about; but if we have not gone to those campuses, and we do not know that they are there, then we tend to think there is not a prepared group of folks out there waiting for the jobs.

When I was director of Gender Equity for Los Angeles Unified, we had to make sure that we went around this Nation and look in every nook and cranny to try and get those who have been prepared for those particular subject areas and disciplines that we were looking for. I think we have no other recourse but to make sure that this bill has some provision of having the high-tech companies utilize those fees for outreach and for training of those who are in that digital divide and in that gap.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Actually, some of them are. And what we want to do is to increase that.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. To expand, yes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. To expand that. And even those that are, we do not have a numerical number of expectancy of their growing their own and their hiring.

So if we increase the amount of money, which I think they will willing cooperate in, because I have not found a high-tech company that says that money will be a problem, I think where the challenge is, and I am not sure it is a challenge we cannot overcome, I think where there may be some resistance to committing themselves to is a numerical number. On the other hand, that is what H-1 visas are all about, increasing the numbers. I am just saying that as we increase those numbers, we should increase the number of a goal that we are willing to commit to; that we will educate, and we will train and we will hire from rural America and from urban cities. The same numerical goal that these companies are requesting the government come and double. That is all I am saying.

It obviously should be something that is workable and that they are willing to do, because it is an investment in America. It is an investment in our communities. It is an economic

stimulus that a young person in Wilson County or in Edgecombe County or in the gentlewoman's Compton community knows that there is a company that is interested in me. And, guess what, they are going to do real well because they want to make sure that they fulfill that requirement.

We will not have to look for that person. We will not have to get a recruiter to recruit that person from abroad. They are committed early on. This is not something that is brand new. We have done this before. We have done this in science. Remember when we wanted to send explorers in space? We had a National Science Foundation. We gave scholarships. In high schools we had these academies. I am saying we can put that same kind of energy, saying that Americans' ingenuity and our talent needs to be reinvigorated and give people that incentive.

I just think this is an opportunity to open that door. And I think things in education that we can help in as a government are the technology centers. It is critical. Adding new technology, reducing the class size, making sure kids know more early on in science and math. And we are doing better in science and math.

Years and years ago, I tell people a hundred years ago, I used to head a program at the University of North Carolina for health professionals. At that time the issue was how do we get more rural kids and minorities to go into the health profession; how do we get doctors and nurses. Well, we could not wait until they came out of college. We had to get them in high school. So what we did in high school was to stimulate their teachers and others, and then some of the college students would come early in their career, not at the senior year, but early in their career, and give them advanced courses in math and prepare them for the MCATs and get them with the expectation that they can excel. We just put them on an accelerated path.

So I think the education system, in marrying it with the opportunities, is why education becomes important.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. If I can just ask the gentlewoman from North Carolina to yield for just a second, and then I know the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is here, and he has been absolutely a divine young man to sit here and wait for us as we talk about this, and he wants to get into the fray; but the one thing I am concerned about as well with this H-1B bill is that it is inconceivable as to whether they are professionals who are coming over or persons, as the gentlewoman has just mentioned, straight out of high school.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to discuss the importance of technology in education. We have a great deal at stake when it comes to the technological literacy of this nation's teachers and students. A strong work force and a strong economy depends on the quality of our schools, the preparedness of our teachers and the ability of our students to

compete in an increasingly technical world. The ability to use computer technology has become indispensable to educational, career, social and cultural advancement. In the new millennium, technological literacy has not become only a basic job requirement, but a life skill as well. It is imperative that students are equipped with technology skills at an early stage in life by teachers who are skillfully trained to incorporate technology in their curriculum and classroom learning environments.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Internet access in public schools has increased from 35% to 95% and classroom connections have increased from 3% to 63% from 1994 to 1999. While these increases indicate positive responses to the need for technology in the classroom, we must be cognizant of how efficiently and effectively this technology is being used. According to the President's 1997 Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology, a ratio of 4 to 5 students per computer represents a reasonable level for the effective use of computers within schools. In my Congressional District, the ratios are much higher. In the city of Compton, the ratio is 18 students per computer. In the city of Lynwood the ratio is 9 students per computer and in Long Beach the ratio is 8 students per computer. Considering the socioeconomic demographics of my district, these numbers are just not acceptable. The children in my district and in similar districts across the country are falling behind and something must be done to stop it.

Equipping our schools with technology is the first step in fulfilling the challenge to promote technological literacy in our schools. Another real challenge lies in filling the vast training gap, and in providing trained teachers who can incorporate computer technology in all aspects of the learning experience. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that only one teach in five felt very prepared to integrate technology in the subject they taught. This fact is not surprising when, according to a study by the Milken Exchange on Education Technology, teachers on average receive less than 13 hours of technology training year per, and 40 percent of all teachers have never received any technology training. In addition, teachers receive far less technology curriculum integration training than basic computer skills training. 42 percent of teachers had six or more hours of basic skills training within the past year, compared with just 29 percent of teachers who had an equal amount of curriculum integration training. And yet, research shows that training on integrating technology into education programs has a greater impact on teachers than basic technology skills training. Clearly, the key to successfully integrating technology into the classroom will not be in installing more hardware or software, or wiring schools to the Internet. The key will be in training teachers to be the integrators.

Now is the time for action. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that by the end of the year 2000, some 60 percent of jobs will require proficiencies in the use of a broad range of information technologies. By the year 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there will be growth of 70 percent in technology related jobs. This issue, however, is not focused solely on preparing students to assume the jobs of the future. More important is the need to prepare students for American

life and culture, both of which will be influenced heavily by technology. In order to produce a citizenry ready to accept upcoming technological challenges, we must be willing to make a significant investment in education. By preparing teachers and students we are paving the way to a brighter more prosperous future.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Well, I get the understanding, and let me correct myself, my understanding is actually there is a requirement they must be professionals. I think there is a standard. So I did not mean to suggest that. I think they are either engineers and meet a certain requirement and may have worked a year. I am not sure, but I think there is even a dollar amount for which they cannot go below.

I am just saying that as we approach this, why do we not look at the education system and say how can we use this need in the community as a way to stimulate our high schools and colleges and our private sector to have a more rigorous curriculum and a commitment to hire so the next time around we will be ready to meet this criteria and use the same experience we have had before.

Again, I want to commend the gentleman.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and I see now that my friend from Maryland is here, and I appreciate his being here this evening and I would yield to him.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership in this area, and I certainly want to thank my two colleagues with us this evening.

As I was listening to the discussion, I could not help but think about a program in my district where Morgan State University works with an elementary school. They have about 40 students that work with elementary school students, mainly concentrating on the areas of science and math. So these young children are exposed to these Morgan State University college students, and they become interested after school in science and math; and they are doing extremely well.

I really believe that we have to teach the children's strengths. I always think about the story of Steven Spielberg when he was a little boy. Apparently his mother did not have very much money, but she got him a camera because he had told her he was interested in a camera. So he got a little simple camera, and he began to take pictures and make little slides and then movies, and the next thing you know, look where he is. But she saw where his strength was and she went there.

As I was listening to the things that the gentlewoman was saying, she is so right, because just a few weeks ago I was sitting in a meeting with hospitals from Maryland, and they were sitting there talking about how they needed to go outside the country to get nurses. Yet I have young people who are in my district who, if they were exposed at an early age and given some encouragement and nourishment and taken into

the hospitals or whatever, might very well be the nurses that they are looking for. Yet they are going beyond the borders of our community trying to find nurses.

So we are fortunate, and I pointed out to them, that we have another project, Johns Hopkins Hospital, which has been ranked number one in the country, has a program with a high school, Dunbar High School, where they actually bring in young high school students into the hospital working with doctors, learning about various professions in the medical field. That program has been going on for 20 years, and a lot of those students are now going into the medical profession. Why? Because they were exposed to something. Why else? Because they had an opportunity.

So the President said today at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, many of us have the intellect, but not all of us get the opportunities. So I do appreciate what the gentlewoman has said as well as the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina and congratulate him on the special order he is leading now, and to wish all my colleagues a great weekend as they proceed with their return to their districts.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I thank the gentleman.

I also thank the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Speaker, and if he will yield for just a moment more. As we are talking about this whole thing of education and mathematics and opportunity for young people and giving them a challenge and a vision, I would just tell the gentleman that the students in my home State of North Carolina, where we have paid a lot of attention, as have a lot of others to this whole issue of mathematics over the last several years in education, as I was talking earlier on regarding the NAPE scores, which really measures mathematics, their national average scores have gone up three times the national average over the last several years on the NAPE scores, because we have paid a lot of attention to it. We have measured it. Some of the greatest gains have come from our minority students, which is crucial, because we have absolutely no child that we can waste in the 21st century. All of our students are so needed as we get there.

And we have other good news as well that I will share with the gentleman and then yield back to him. Student science achievement is improving, and that is important. SAT scores have increased dramatically, not only in my State but we have seen them go up across the country. A lot of people have battered public education and beaten down our teachers and others. They fail to hear these good things

that are happening. And I want to pay attention to the good things that are happening for a lot of children who come from some tough backgrounds and tough opportunities who are already achieving. ACT scores are up. Students are taking more AP exams.

I would share with the gentleman what an AP exam is. When people say what does that acronym mean, it really means an advanced placement course for a student who is in high school. Let us say the school only offers a second year of algebra and the student wants to take physics or something else. They can actually take an advanced placement through a mailing and then they can take that test. It is a college level course at high school, and some students can take several courses, saving a lot of money when they get to the university. And we are seeing that improved tremendously.

Another point I would make before I yield is that we are all concerned that our schools be totally safe, every one of them. And we want that, and we should. But the truth is violence is down in our public schools dramatically; and public school teachers, by all the statistics out, are really better educated than they have ever been. And, on average, they are better educated than many of them who are in some of the private schools we have in this country. More students out of our public schools are going to the universities.

What folks forget is that we have more children in public schools today than we have ever had in the history of this country. Now, the challenge we face is if we have more people, guess what that is going to mean? Our resources are strained because classes are more cramped, we need more teachers, we need all the things to support them, and if we are going to have smaller class sizes, we have to run faster just to keep up. And that is the point the gentleman was making, as we start trying to encourage young people to get into the professions that they may not have thought about.

One of the points the gentleman made as we were talking earlier, and the gentleman is absolutely right, is that the challenge we face today is recruiting people to teach our young people. How do we recruit the quality people we need to get there? There was a time in this country when we had a fairly adequate supply of teachers. Unfortunately, it was a time when the opportunities for women were not what they are today, because they either went into nursing, clerical jobs, or into teaching, and we were blessed by that.

But once we opened the doors to all professions, and we should have, not only for women but all others, that then made the job of retaining and attracting the people we need in education and in nursing, as the gentleman mentioned earlier, more difficult. This means that we have to pay more attention to making sure that those professions not only are attrac-

tive but the conditions they work under are also attractive.

And number three, we must pay them an adequate wage. We can no longer say that they cannot move from point A to point B. They are going to move. My son teaches school. It costs him just as much to buy a loaf of bread in the local store as it does the president of a local bank that may make four or five times as much. Now, obviously, people go into education or nursing or into professions or rescue squads or fire departments to make a difference, and we are talking about education.

□ 1715

The truth is we have to start valuing and honoring those teachers and say to them, you do a good job, we appreciate what you are doing, instead of beating up on them all the time.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I was just thinking about what you were saying. It is important that we do pay our teachers wages that are reasonable and that they can live off of. There was just an article in the paper in Baltimore that stated that as we move towards September, the September opening of school, we have a teacher shortage and we are doing everything in our power to find teachers. But one of the things that is for sure, we have got to pay them. We have got to pay them well.

I want to go back to something you said about conditions of teaching. I was talking to some friends of mine who teach in private school. The interesting thing to note is that these folks were actually making a little less than they would make in public school. I said to them, why did you make that change? They said, because of the conditions. They were able to teach smaller classes. Their hearts are into making sure that every child succeeds, that no child is left behind, and they felt that the conditions, if it got to 34 or 35 kids in a class that trying to teach it was very, very difficult, not that they did not want to do a good job but it was very hard to be effective.

I agree with you. One of the things that I was thinking about, too, as you were talking is that in Baltimore, one of our first high schools to get blue ribbon status was a school that I graduated from in high school that just got this national blue ribbon status, Baltimore City College High School. One of the things you were talking about a little earlier was the advanced courses, college courses. What that goes to is high standards, high standards and high expectations. I did not want to let that go by.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. For all children.

Mr. CUMMINGS. For all children. I think what happens so often is that if you have low expectations, then children do not even know the standard to even reach for the high expectations. But one of the things that I have noticed, you and I had a discussion not

long ago about when we go into our schools and what makes a good school, what do you see in a school, what do you experience in a school when you are visiting that tells you without anybody showing you any scores that it is a great school? One of the things that we talked about was that you had a strong principal. You had excitement. You could just see it on all the walls, the bulletin boards, that things were happening. But there was also an air of high expectations. I think that that is one of the things that we have got to get back to, that high expectation. When you talk about the schools that you have just talked about doing better, that sends a message to other schools and it says, if they can do it 20 miles down the road, we can do it, too. When Baltimore City College High School in Baltimore became one of the few predominantly African American schools in the country to become a national blue ribbon school, not only did it mean a lot to the students at that school but it meant a lot to the entire community. There were other students who were at other schools similar to Baltimore City College High School saying, we can do it, too.

We have got to get back to that, to that positive role model stuff. A lot of times we hear about negative role models. I think years ago you had a lot of positive role models. There are a lot of positive role models today, in students, in schools, in neighbors. I think the things that we are talking about today are the good things about our schools. You are right. We hear so much negative, negative, negative but there are so many wonderful things happening since the last time you and I discussed this, because we have seen some smaller class sizes, we have seen our children in like the first, second and third grade, we have seen their scores going up in Baltimore, too, substantially.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. That is absolutely right. That is why it is imperative that this Congress not go back on the commitment they made and to keep putting that money in there. All of us use the language of the new economy. It is true, it is propelling our business cycles, everything is revolving around it but we have got to provide national leadership in this vital area of education, so that everyone can be a part of this new economy. We cannot leave people behind. If we do not make sure that every child gets a good education, that we set high standards, we have high expectations, they will not be a part of it. If you deny in my opinion a child an education, a quality education, you have denied the whole family of that because once they get married, you have created a whole second class citizenship for those children. Across this country, the American people are calling out for greater investment in public education. They do not care whether it comes from Washington or their State capital or the local. They want the investment in education. When we invest that money,

there is something else they are asking for and they are going to demand, and I think the Republican leadership has missed this because they want to talk about vouchers and take the money out of the public schools and that is wrong. We do not need to do that. We need to leave it in the public sector because it would drain the resources away and deny some children the opportunities they need. My colleagues, you and others who have participated in this this evening, I think we do have a better idea. We want to invest in a national commitment of education excellence, where schools are accountable to the taxpayers for raising those standards that you have just talked about and that every child has an opportunity to learn at a much higher level than ever before. I say that because improving education in this country is about creating a classroom environment where children can learn and teachers can teach. We need to foster greater connection between students, teachers and parents. When I say parents, I am talking about the community. Our schools can do better. They will do better. But they need our help to do better. They need our constructive help. They do not need our constant criticism, berating and pushing them down. A child knows when you are being positive and you are helping. You can be critical in a positive way. A child knows. So do their parents. They know if you really want to help. They also know if you are being condescending and you are ignoring them. We have a responsibility in my opinion, the highest body elected in this country, to provide that kind of leadership. We need to work together to get it done.

I think one of the best ways we can improve education is, number one, certainly what dollars we put out to reduce class sizes will not do it all. We know that. We are not that dumb. But we know it sends a powerful signal that we care. And about school facilities. We cannot build all the schools that need to be built. I put a bill in, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), and Congresswoman JOHNSON have come together on a bill to provide billions of dollars. That will not do it all, but it sends a powerful signal that we care. When we started in this country making sure that every person, and you remember this, would have a telephone, we were not here, but Congress said, by gosh, the person at the end of the line is going to have a telephone, we are going to have a policy that makes it happen. We were not involved in telecommunications until then. We were not involved in electricity until we decided that the person at the end of the line in the most rural part in the mountains is going to have electric power and it changed America. We can do it today. In an age when education is at a premium that it has never been at before in this country, we are beyond the time when we can educate 25 or 30 or 40 percent. We have to educate

100 percent. Every child has to be a part of it.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Someone once said that children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. Children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. As I listened, I could not help but think about the other day when I was jogging in a park near my home. As I was jogging, I literally ran past my eighth grade civics teacher. She waved. I did not realize it was her. Then I thought about it, I thought, she looks so familiar. I turned around and I said, Ms. Wilder, thank you for all that you have done for me. Thank you for all that you have done for me. Because I realized that here was someone who impacted my life back in the eighth grade, a son of two parents who never got past the first grade, but I knew that that teacher had impacted my life tremendously and taught me civics, some of which I use in this Chamber today, some 40 years later.

And so all I am saying to you is that I agree with you, and there is something else that I just want to add, a footnote to what you just said. The American people want our children to be all that they were meant to be. I think one of the saddest things is for someone to have the potential and not be given the opportunity to be all that they can be. What does that deprive this wonderful society of? Of doctors, of heart surgeons. We have a gentleman in Baltimore, Dr. Benjamin Carson at Johns Hopkins Hospital who was almost a dropout from school. Now he is one of the most renowned neurosurgeons in the world. All I am saying to you, when we think about what we are trying to do here and talking about our schools and lifting up our children, I just believe in my heart that every child when they are born, there are certain things that are in that child that an education brings out. When we do the things that we are doing, that is, give them fertile ground in which to grow, then they can become all that they can be. But if we do not give them those opportunities, the things you just talked about, giving them classes that are small enough so that they can learn, giving them teachers that are skilled, giving them computers so that they can learn the best technology, giving them the tools to allow them to grow, then they are not only deprived for a few years, they are deprived for a lifetime.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. The gentleman is absolutely correct. I remember something a friend of mine said when I started down this road to public life when I was really earning my living in the private sector where I was for 18 years. I was chairman of the board of county commissioners, he was on the board, we were here in Washington many years ago at a Chamber of Commerce meeting, incidentally, and he made a statement I have never forgotten, because we were involved in building schools and doing some things. He

said, "Don't ever forget, you are making decisions for people who have not yet been born." We forget that too many times. Here in this building, the United States Capitol, the most powerful Nation in the world, we cannot say we cannot take care of our children. We cannot say we cannot have a better education system because we can afford it and we can require excellence. We need to provide support for our teachers as they do their difficult, and it is a difficult job, but it is a critically important job, maybe one of the most important jobs we ever ask anyone to do outside of what families do for our children. We have had enough teacher bashing by people in this House, some of them on the other side of the aisle. Rather than talk about block grants to people, let us send the money down, I hear block grants as if that is the answer, make them compete for it. I was a superintendent for 8 years. You cannot plan a program on a block grant because you have got to compete for it every year. You only have a program when you have got money coming in and you know you are going to have it to hire quality teachers. People are not going to take jobs if they do not think they are going to have it next year. They will go somewhere else.

The final point that I would make, and it triggered a thought with me when I heard you talking about opportunities for all of us. I wonder how many of us who now currently have one of the greatest privileges any person can have, to serve in the United States House of Representatives, would be here had we not had an opportunity for good public education when we were growing up. I would not be here.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I know I would not either.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I think a lot of my colleagues would not be here. I think we have to recognize that someone made a sacrifice for us. They paid taxes at my local school when school was really a nice building there, one of the nicest buildings in my community. I am grateful for that. If I ever complain about it, I hope someone will remind me, because I have a great debt to them. But I also have a debt to all the young people who are not my children because we only have three and they have been blessed to go through the public schools but I owe a debt to all the rest of the children. Because someday as one of my friends who was very successful, he will never have to worry about his Social Security because he is well off, but he made a statement serving on a task force that I had appointed my first year as superintendent to improve education. He said, I want every child to get a good education. I do not care where they come from. I do not care what their ethnic background is. I just want them to make a lot of money so I can draw Social Security.

He said that for a lot of folks who were not there because he did not need the Social Security. But he was making a statement of values, a statement

of values. We should never forget. We have an obligation to a lot of folks who made a lot of decisions for us before we were here and we do not need to pull up that net or that rope behind us for all those children who are out there.

□ 1730

We need to make sure they have a quality facility with the things they need, the things the teachers need to help. We need to make sure in this Congress we stand up and provide the leadership. We do not need to lay down and play dead for special interests.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Because if we lay down and play dead, our children die, and it is as simple as that. You are right, we cannot afford to lay down and play dead, because we have so many people who are depending on us. When you asked that question, when you made that statement, rather, you wondered how many of us would be here if we did not have the teachers that were involved in our lives and the education. I can tell you, I know I would not be here.

Someone once said that every successful child, if you look at the history of any successful child, you will realize that there was at least one cheerleader for that child standing on the sidelines rooting them on. And, guess what? In many instances they were teachers standing on that sideline, but not only standing on the sideline, but getting on the field and holding hands and nurturing and encouraging and running with them and telling them what they could do.

So that is what it is all about. I am so glad that the gentleman did take this time to dedicate to it. There are so many subjects we could have been talking about, but here we are talking about the field of education.

One quick other thing. When we talk about exposing our children to opportunities and exposing them to the kinds of things that they need, just a few weeks ago in our district, in the 7th Congressional District of Maryland, which is basically Baltimore City, what we did was we got a few computers, five computers, I think it was, from EPA, and we presented them to an elementary school.

I am going to tell you, the kids, you would have thought we had given them \$1 million. But in talking to the principal of the school, she said you know what our biggest problem is? She said our biggest problem is that the children do not want to go home. They stay in the computer room.

She said something else that really touched me. She said, you know, we used to have an attendance problems with our little boys. She says now our attendance situation is something like 99 percent for our boys. Why? Because, again, they are teaching to their strengths. They are teaching to their strengths, and that makes a difference.

It is not only that you expose children to various opportunities, but you also need to know what direction are

they going in. Some of them may want to be an artist, some may want to be a doctor, some may want to be a lawyer. But it is those teachers, I am telling you, that see it early on, and they can make a lot of judgment calls early on and begin to guide those children in the right direction.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I thank my friend from Maryland. I thank him for joining in this special order this evening.

In closing, I would say that our communities need help in not only building quality public schools that have good discipline and foster positive learning environments for our children, they need resources for teachers to make sure we have reduced class sizes and the tools in it.

The final point I would make, having served last year on the Speaker's Bipartisan Working Group on Youth Violence, we came out of that talking about some of the things we could do to help make a difference. One of the reports that came out of that was character education. We put in a bipartisan bill on that now, to talk about those things we can do, schools can do, parents can do, communities could do, to make a difference in our school.

I think nothing is more important in our Nation for the public wealth than for the training of youth in wisdom and virtue. Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. That is not unique. That was said by Ben Franklin. It is still true today, as much as it was over 200 years ago. That is important.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for joining me this evening, and would like to call on this Congress to truly make education its highest priority this year, as we turn the corner on the 21st Century.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING A REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO THE SAME DAY CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Mr. DREIER (during the special order of Mr. ETHERIDGE), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-732) on the resolution (H. Res. 550) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE DEVASTATION OF CANCER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before giving my special order on cancer, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) to

speaking about a good friend of mine and his and this entire body.

TRIBUTE TO RON LASCH

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding. I will be brief, but I especially thank him for yielding, because I know this evening he is going to be talking about something very important and very personal to him.

I did want to take just a moment or two to pay tribute to, as the gentleman from Texas said, a good friend of ours, a loyal employee of this House of Representatives, somebody who served this House extraordinarily well for so many years, Ron Lasch.

It was just a little over 41 years ago that Ron Lasch came to the House of Representatives as a young page. I know, because I was also here at that time as a page. I was a page over in the U.S. Senate at that time when Ron came under Mr. Whitnall's sponsorship to the House of Representatives.

Along with Don Anderson, who, of course, went on to become the Clerk of the House of Representatives, we all graduated in 1960 from the page school. Most of us went on with our lives and did other things, went away to college and began families, went into the service, but Ron Lasch, along with Don Anderson, stayed here in the House of Representatives. I mention that because he has given an extraordinarily large part of his life and his service to the House of Representatives.

For the last 16 years I have served in the House and have had an opportunity to know Ron in a different capacity, in a professional way as well in the personal way that I knew Ron Lasch. His service here I think has been absolutely extraordinary.

His leaving the House of Representatives is something in keeping, I guess, with Ron's personality, in that he left without telling any of his friends that he was going to do this. He insisted that he was determined there would be no farewells for him, at least while he was around. I guess he cannot stop us once he is gone from here.

That is why I think many of us have taken an opportunity in the last couple of days to rise, realizing that Ron Lasch is not in the back of the Chamber like in his usual position there. We miss him, so we have taken this opportunity to rise and to reflect on just how much he means to this House of Representatives.

This institution gets criticized, and I think perhaps sometimes quite justifiably, but very often the unsung heroes of this place are the staff that make it work. Some of them get on television right behind the gentleman from Texas, and they are seen every day. Others of them are in the back of the Chamber or off the Chamber. But, together, collectively, they are what makes this place work. They are what makes this place run smoothly. They are the glue which often holds it together. They are very often the institutional history of this body.