

also was a veto of an inflation adjustment to the level, the threshold at which the earned income tax credit would be eligible for. That veto cost a low-income family with two children \$421 per year in terms of the earned income tax credit. That is real money.

Mr. ARMEY. I thank the gentleman from California. That benefit denied by the Clinton veto was a benefit that would have accrued to the most low-income earners in America, not only all of my rich friends as they were discussing earlier.

The gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) is a man of great insight on the budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ARMEY. Madam Speaker, let me say I am going to invite the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) to come back next week for another such session and let him lead off with his good insight.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS

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

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), our majority leader, very much for leading this very informative hour on programs that are so very important to our Nation, to our seniors, to our American taxpayers.

Madam Speaker, I would like just to comment some on that. I have had the great privilege this last 8 years of serving on the Committee on the Budget, and I have seen over the last 6 years during the time that we have had the Republican Congress accomplishing some tasks that many thought we could never do, i.e., the first balanced budget in 60 years. Something which, by the way, President Clinton and the Vice President, AL GORE, vetoed not once or twice, but three times.

Also, something we thought we would never see was welfare reform. And, again, even though Ronald Reagan once said that, "There is no limit to what you can accomplish as long as you don't care who takes the credit"; well, our Republican Congress, we were able to reform welfare. It has been reduced by more than 50 percent on the average in the 50 States.

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Those are individuals who are now out working being productive. Again, the President vetoed this twice, not once, but twice, and then I know he and the Vice President were out taking credit for it. Again, it does not matter who gets the credit, but it happened, and it happened under the watch of this Republican Congress.

What have we done balancing the budget? Welfare reform? We have seen that we have been able for again for

the first time in some 40 years to begin paying down the national public debt. As a matter of fact, up to this point, we paid it down by \$350 billion. And in this next year, we are down, that is over the last 3 years, for another \$240 billion paying down the public debt; that debt which rests on the shoulders of our children and our grandchildren, money that past Congresses have spent more than what we had.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the majority leader, and those who are watching look on this chart that I have here, what it does, it compares Vice President AL GORE'S budget and proposal, spending proposals, that he has and compares it with Governor George W. Bush's.

Now, this chart was prepared and the statistics were put out by the National Taxpayer Union Foundation, and it shows that right now the on-budget surplus for the next 10 years is projected to be \$2.1 trillion. It is interesting to look at Vice President GORE, who is running for President, his spending, his expenditures add up to \$2.8 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, I might mention Governor Bush's spending adds up to \$766 billion, his spending proposals. Well, the difference from what is projected as surplus over the next 10 years and what Vice President GORE would spend would put us in some \$638 billion deficit again. In other words, under his administration, we would again return to deficit spending. And where does that come from?

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the majority leader, knows of the legislation which I authored and which passed this last year. We, as Republicans, put a lock box on not spending the Social Security money that had not been spent yet. And we passed that overwhelmingly out of this House, 416-12 this year, and that had been spent since 1935, all that money, and it amounts to several hundred billion dollars a year, but we had been spending that which was a surplus spending on ongoing programs.

This year we passed an additional lockbox on the Medicare. Now, where would this \$638 billion come from what GORE would spend? Well, it would come, Mr. Speaker, come from the Social Security money that should be going to pay our seniors. Is that right? No, it is not. Can we afford, this country, to turn around and go back into the direction that we were going for years here where we spend on promises to everyone that may be well meaning, but spending money that we do not have? I think the answer is clearly no.

Mr. Speaker, of course, here in about another month and a half we are going to have an election that will determine whether the American public is going to go back to the failed policies of tax and spend that we have had in the past, or whether or not we are going to continue the direction that this Republican Congress has led us in in the last

6 years moving towards again fiscal responsibility.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Texas, the majority leader for this time.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, let me just say what the gentleman's charts shows is that the pundits are right, if Governor Bush is President during the worst of time, we might lose the surplus, but it also shows that if Vice President GORE is President during the best of times, he will spend the surplus.

Mr. HERGER. That is right; he only spends one-third of the surplus, the rest is for paying down the debt further and for perhaps some tax relief and some other good things.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, we are about to approach the end game negotiations, probably behind the scenes, the end game negotiations on the budget, and the appropriations process has started already.

We have gone through a process of preparing a budget which sets forth the general contours, the outlines of where we want to go with respect to our expenditures for each particular function of government. We did that some time ago, and then we have gone through the passage of 13 appropriations bills in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I understand they have not passed all of those bills in the other body, but we have passed them in the House of Representatives. In a situation where there is disagreement between the majority party in the House, they have the votes to pass whatever they want to pass, if there is disagreement between the majority party in the House and the White House or the majority party in the House plus the other body, they agree but then the White House disagrees, then the only way we resolve those disagreements is through a negotiation process, which takes place at the very end of the progress of the other steps that we have taken.

Mr. Speaker, we are about to approach that point in the year when we have a special situation. For the first time in many decades, this Nation has a surplus, and it is not a small surplus at all. The Federal surplus keeps changing every day, but positively changing. It was \$200 billion a few weeks ago, and now I understand we are talking about \$230 billion as the most conservative estimate of what the budget will be available for some kind of processing by the House and the executive branch.

There is another surplus for Social Security, which is a lockbox; that means we are not talking about money that would be taken away from Social

Security, because they have generated their own surplus, whereas we can give some part of the \$230 billion to Social Security, they have their own surplus already.

We do not have to rush to the rescue of Social Security with the surplus. We have some alternatives for what we do with the surplus. Mr. Speaker, I want to just go back to the point where the budget process started. I want to speak for the Congressional Black Caucus, which set forth its alternative budget during the beginning of the budget process.

Now that we are at the end of the process, the negotiations that are going to take place will take place between the Democrat-controlled White House and the Republican-controlled Congress, both Houses of Congress. And we need to get on the agenda and we have to talk to the public in order to get on that agenda.

We need to have you, members of the public, understand that public opinion will decide whether certain items go on to the agenda of the discussions that take place.

We would like very much to get on the agenda from the White House side of the table to have the President understand what our final concerns are in this budget. We are concerned, like everybody else is, about certain priorities, but now that we are down to the last moment and the clock is ticking, we want to emphasize certain very special concerns that we have.

Let me just go back and read from the introduction of a Congressional Black Caucus Alternative Budget to set a frame of reference for my final proposals today.

We started with an introduction which reads as follows, carrying forward the great Democratic party traditions, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, Harry Truman's Marshal Plan, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society that produced Medicaid and Medicare, as advocates for the Democratic party mainstream philosophy, the Congressional Black Caucus sets forth this budget for maximum investment in opportunity.

We call our budget a budget for maximum investment and opportunity. As we prepare the year 2001 budget, we are blessed by the long, warm rays of the sun of a coming decade of surpluses. Compassion and vision are no longer blocked by the spectrum of budget deficits. The conservative estimate is that there will be a \$1.9 trillion non-Social Security surplus over the next 10 years.

I made that statement several months ago. We know it is greater than \$1.9 trillion, the estimate. Using very simple logic, we should be able to project about \$200 billion for the year 2001 budget as this window of opportunity opens.

Investment for the future must be our first priority. Maximizing opportunities for individual citizens is synonymous with maximizing the growth and expansion of the U.S. superpower economy. It is the age of information, stu-

pid. It is the time of a computer and digitalization. It is the era of thousands of high-level vacancies, because there are not enough information technology workers with enlightened budget decisions. We can, at this moment, begin the shaping of the contours of a new cybercivilization.

If we fail to seize this moment to make investments that will allow our great Nation to surge forward in the creation of this new cybercivilization, then our children and our grandchildren will frown on us and lament the fact that we failed not because we lacked fiscal resources, but our failures, our very devastating blunder, was due to a poverty of vision.

We have custodians of unprecedented wealth in a giant economy, but midget minds and tiny spirits have seized control and the only big sweeping idea being generated during this budget discussion is a negative Republican proposal for a monster tax cut for the wealthy. At a time when positive generosity is possible, such a proposal maximizes great selfishness.

Now, this was at the time of the consideration of the budget and since that time, the Republican majority has retreated somewhat on the size of its proposed tax cut. We welcome that retreat, but we think of the lack of voices for investment, we want to invest a portion of the surplus in human resources, and we want to follow up that budget statement which was made, a very general statement made at that time, we want to follow up with more specific recommendations now.

The boldest and the most vital proposal contained in our CBC budget alternative was at the heart of this function; that is, funding for school construction, responding to the fact that the American people in numerous polls have indicated that their number one priority for Federal budget action is education.

Each of the budgets being present that were presented at that time offered education increases, but only the CBC budget has chosen to focus on the kingpin issue of school physical infrastructure. While we applaud the President's inclusion of \$1.3 billion for emergency repairs, we deem it to be grossly inadequate.

We support school financing via the Tax Code, however, most of the local education agencies cannot borrow money without a lengthy taxpayer referendum procedure.

The CBC proposes a \$10 billion increase over the President's budget for school construction. This amount would be taken from the \$200 billion surplus. In addition to this 5 percent for infrastructure repair, security, and new construction, the CBC budget proposes another 5 percent, another \$10 billion to address other education improvements. In other words, only 10 percent of the overall surplus would be utilized for the all-important mission of investment in human resources, only 10 percent.

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We proposed that at that time. We would like to underscore that proposal and say that we were talking about education, of course education improvements for everybody, education improvements for the entire Nation.

In fact, in my piece of specific legislation, our school construction, H.R. 3071, I proposed construction funding to be allocated to all schools throughout the Nation based on the number of school-age children in each State. There would be no other qualifying features except school-age children, which meant that every school district in the country would be able to receive some of the proposed Federal school infrastructure and modernization and construction funding.

We are now, as I said before, at the point where the negotiations specifically on amounts of money to go into this so-called omnibus budget that we hear about, omnibus appropriation act, the actual allocation of funds is going to take place somewhere between now and October 15. We have various projections on when Congress will adjourn. But I suspect that the outer limit in an election year like this that we will dare go will probably be in the middle of October.

So, therefore, I think it is reasonable to project that somewhere between now and October 15, this omnibus budget, this end-game negotiation product will be produced; and we will have to vote on it.

Right now I want to appeal to everybody listening who cares about education to become a part of the process. They become a part of the process by understanding the power of public opinion in this process. Public opinion is always being monitored by both parties. Leadership is always watching the polls, watching the results of focus groups. There are various ways in which public opinion makes itself felt here in Washington.

So I want my colleagues to understand that there is a danger right here that, despite the fact that we have enormous wealth, we have a huge budget surplus, the danger that we are going to make some ridiculous blunders. There is a danger that we are going to make some decisions about how to spend the first \$200 billion or \$230 billion of the surplus over this 10-year period which will set a pattern; and we will get set in that pattern, and we will find ourselves spending, utilizing funding in the same way for the next 10 years.

It is possible for the political leadership to make horrendous blunders. We know that wars and all kinds of catastrophes have been caused in the past by political leadership. Very intelligent, very well trained, very experienced, but still they make outrageous blunders. We know that is possible.

I would like to use the Roman Empire as an example that Rome was a great civilization, and it was in terms of technology, in terms of military

power, in terms of law. The Roman law is the basis on probably most of the civilized nations' legal systems today. The Romans started it all, a huge system of law with a level of courts and appeals. In addition to their military might and their technology prowess, the great civilization of Rome seemed to have it all.

But at the same time the Romans were inventing concrete and building magnificent structures and conquering the rest of the world at that time, the Romans were feeding the Christians to the lions in the Coliseum. The leadership of the Roman Empire, the politicians of the Roman Empire, the elected officials such as they were of the Roman Empire, were feeding the Christians to the lions at the height of the Roman civilization.

Politicians can make great blunders sometimes, and we must be aware of that. Public opinion has to be the check and balance on some of these blunders. We could look at the education situation in America now in terms of where it was a century ago and continue to make decisions as if we had little red schoolhouses and as if we still had teachers who were so dedicated that they would give their lives to the profession without being appropriately compensated.

We could act as if we are fighting wars with rifles. It was a long time when the rifle was supreme in the war, in any wars fought. We have evolved modern military technology.

The cost of a rifle now is not the way we judge whether or not we have a decent defense budget. Rifles are the least expensive item. If we were to look at the cost of rifles and say, well, we ought to have a defense budget which is reflective of the cost of rifles, it must be greatly reduced. We do not do that with the Department of Defense.

We have nuclear aircraft carriers that cost \$4 billion and \$5 billion. One nuclear aircraft carrier costs more than \$4 billion. We recognize in modern warfare one has to have that kind of system. One F-22, talking about 20 some million dollars a piece, each time we make a mistake and fire one of these test rockets in our new proposed antimissile defense system, the mistake costs us \$100 million. So in terms of defense and technology for the 21st century, we are ready to spend the money.

But when we start talking about education and schools, we want to go back to the Dark Ages, we want to go back to the horse and buggy era; and we think that 10 percent, 10 percent of the surplus is too much to dedicate to an increase in the education budget.

That is what the Congressional Black Caucus introduction, as I have just read, said we needed. It is a conservative request to say that if one has \$200 billion, dedicate 10 percent of the \$200 billion to an improvement in the school and education system. Invest in human resources.

Let us not think of schools as not needing that kind of money because,

after all, it is only chalks and blackboards and low-paid teachers. Let us think of schools in the 21st century and all the kinds of needs that they face and be willing to invest at least 10 percent of the surplus in education.

Updating our Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget is a statement that we are preparing now to address to the leadership of the Democratic Party. We would like to at this point become more specific. Time has gone by. No one is addressing the request for 10 percent, half of which was to go to school construction. No one is addressing that. We are running out of time.

So we would like to go back and approach our leadership with a new request. The members of the Congressional Black Caucus are convinced that we are at a pivotal point in this 106th session of Congress and we are at a critical point in the history of our Nation.

For the first time in many decades, we have a Federal budget surplus, and we anticipate a significant surplus every year for the next 10 years. We have a window of opportunity to make positive budget decisions this year which will set a pattern for the next 10 years.

We, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, have already stated our general budget and appropriations priorities through the Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget which emphasized the need to use our surplus to invest in human resources.

Since the countdown for the endgame negotiations has now begun, we wish to state our priorities in more specific and concrete requests. First, we wish to state that we agree with the prevailing wisdom that a large percentage of the \$230 billion surplus should be used for debt reduction.

Remember, I said we had now gone beyond \$200 billion, and the conservative estimate now is that the surplus after we get through with the Social Security surplus, and it has its own lockbox, leaving that aside, we still have \$230 billion surplus as a conservative estimate.

We agree that the greater portion of that ought to be used for debt reduction. Pay down the national debt. Why is it important to pay down the national debt? Because when we pay down the national debt, we eliminate the interest payment on that debt that happens every year. We have a huge amount of money that just goes into the budget every year to pay the interest on the money that we owe.

If we pay down the debt, we eliminate the need for the interest payment at such a large size, and the money that would have gone into the interest payment can now be put into the regular budget for meaningful and productive activities. Or we can continue to pay down the debt with the money we save. It makes sense to use a large part of it to pay down the debt.

We also concur that some portion of the allocation of funds from the sur-

plus should be used to strengthen Medicare and to provide for prescription medicine benefit. We are in agreement. If we have \$230 billion, then most of it should go to pay down on the debt, but not all of it. Because, I mean, who would make this kind of choice?

If one receives an income bonus, either one's stocks pay off well or better than one expected, one suddenly receives a bonus at one's house, one's family, and one of one's children is going to college, one can now pay for their college tuition without having to borrow money, would one pay one's mortgage off instead of paying for the tuition of one's child who is about to go to school? Or would one invest in that tuition for that child, let them go to school, and continue one's mortgage for a little while longer?

I mean, we do not rush to pay off debts because there is a great virtue in paying off all debts. In the system that we have concocted, sometimes it makes sense to have long-term debts while we invest in immediate priorities.

I always say now do not use all of the money to pay down the debt. Invest some of the money in human resources. Is it so difficult to understand that? We want to emphasize the need to use our surplus to invest in human resources.

Since the countdown for the endgame negotiation has now begun, we wish to state our priorities in more specific and concrete requests. We were talking about a round figure of 10 percent for education for school construction, and another 10 percent for other education improvements. We were talking about focusing on the priority of school construction but also having money recognizing the other kinds of needs that we have.

First, we wish to agree with the prevailing wisdom, as I said before, that a large percentage should go to pay down the debt. Secondly, however, we contend that, after these priority steps are taken, there should be a significant investment in human resources. At least 10 percent of the surplus should be invested in education, 5 percent for school construction, and 5 percent for other school improvements.

We propose that another 10 percent be invested in housing, health care, and social services in our Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget. For the benefit of the Nation, the Congressional Black Caucus still stands firm on the adoption of all of these proposals.

If we had 10 percent for education and 10 percent for housing, social services and health care, that is 20 percent. We still have 80 percent. Out of that 80 percent, we can deal with shoring up Medicare, providing a Medicare prescription medicine benefit, giving a tax cut, a tax cut starting with the people at the lower rung instead of at the top, and paying down the debt. We still have quite a bit of money left. So give us our 10 percent for education.

Since the hour is late and the negotiations have begun, we now find it

necessary to move from general concerns to specific emergencies. Within the African American community, education remains as our greatest emergency. This is a solution that makes it possible to resolve most of the other problems we face. Education remains as our greatest emergency, the solution that makes it possible to resolve most of the other problems we face.

I might add that the problems faced by the African American communities are not unique. Low-income communities, working families communities face similar problems all over America. So when I propose a solution for problems that we face, particularly in the areas represented by the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am proposing solutions that apply to much of America where working families live who are not necessarily African American.

Our crisis education situations require a systemic and well-targeted Federal emergency education initiative. Right now, we are weary of the ability to deal with the problem in the terms we state it. There probably will not be an overall 10 percent for education. The mechanism is not there.

The leadership in charge appears to be ignoring the polls and public opinion for a change. Very rarely are the polls and public opinion ignored. But in a case of the demand for more government support for education, it is very interesting how the leadership of both parties choose to sort of talk about the problem without committing resources equal to the public demand.

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So the public demand has to be louder. We need to hear more from the public. And I will talk about that in terms of school construction in a few minutes. But I think that we have to now think in terms of a Federal emergency education initiative to deal with the fact that, in general terms, the problem of the worst schools in America escalates. The problem in the worst communities, which need the greatest amount of help, continues to escalate. So we want a Federal emergency education initiative which directly addresses the most critical problems of the worst schools of the Nation.

While the larger national education problems are being considered, we must have an immediate intensified initiative to address the Nation's schools which serves populations where more than 50 percent of the students qualify for free school lunches or where schools are failing and their local systems or the State authorities are ordering that they be closed down because they are just not functioning. They do not meet standards that have been set. Those are crisis schools. They are in crisis situations. They are in crisis school districts. So we need an emergency initiative to meet the crises.

I am defining the crisis situation quite clearly. The school lunch program, children who qualify for the

school lunch program, are the poorest children in America. We have used that as a benchmark for measuring how funds are allocated by the Federal Government. The E-rate, for example, the most recent and most creative allocation of national funds, is done on the basis of the number of children who qualify for free school lunches. A school where 90 percent of the children qualify for free school lunches can get a 90 percent E-rate discount; where less qualified, the E-rate goes down. So the discount for the E-rate is less in the schools that are a little better off, and the wealthier schools of course can get a 15 percent standard discount, but no greater than that in the areas where the schools are serving students who do not qualify at all for the school lunch program.

So for crisis situation schools we need a Federal education initiative, and that initiative should contain the following components:

One major component has to be accelerated school construction and modernization. We must move faster to relieve our school systems of the burden of some of their cost for school construction, school repairs, school modernization. We must do that.

I regret to report the fact that there seems to be this determination, a dogged determination, to ignore school construction needs, not only here in Washington, but a dogged determination in State governments and in city governments. Certainly New York is an example of a situation where 2 years ago the mayor of the City of New York had a \$2 billion surplus. \$2 billion is not like \$200 billion, but for a city to have a surplus of \$2 billion is significant, especially since this city has seen hard times and we have had deficits and had a brush with bankruptcy at one point in the last 20 years. So to have a \$2 billion surplus was a great window of opportunity for the city.

Not a single penny of that surplus was spent on school repairs and school construction. Now, this is in a city which at that time had more than 175 schools that were still burning coal in the school furnaces. We have something like 1,200 schools in New York, and 175 are so old or neglected that they still have furnaces that burn coal. This is in a city where the air already is polluted enough; in a city where asthma is a major problem. We still burn coal in some of the school furnaces and not a single penny of the \$2 billion surplus was allocated by the mayor of the City of New York to assist with school repairs.

Not a single member of the city council, certainly no member representing part of my district, spoke up. Some of them, who are quite friendly with the mayor of the City of New York, did not speak out against the coal-burning furnaces in our district. They did not say, look, we ought to use some of this money to get rid of the coal burning furnaces. We have a situation where children are placed at risk.

Certainly if they have asthma, it is aggravated by the fact they go into a situation where there is coal dust in the air. Coal dust is in the air no matter how good the filter situation is.

I know this is true because the first house I ever owned was a house that had a coal burning furnace, and we had all kinds of filters and did all kinds of cleanup, but the coal dust still got through and the coal dust was there. I was very happy to replace that coal-burning furnace with a gas-burning furnace because just the battle with the dust was enough to merit a movement as fast as possible away from a situation with a coal-burning furnace.

When we have hundreds of children who go to school every day throughout the winter into a situation where they are placed at risk by coal-burning furnaces it ought to be declared an emergency. We ought to have both the city and the State, as well as the Federal Government, moving as rapidly as possible to remove those remaining 175 coal-burning furnaces.

I am told by the school construction authority that, as a result of our agitation for the last 3 years, they now have a schedule whereby by the end of the year 2001 all of the coal-burning furnaces will be eliminated. Now, they will be eliminated after having existed for all these many decades since the invention of better, more efficient oil-burning and gas-burning furnaces. But this is an emergency which is ignored by public officials.

Yet this is only one of many emergencies related to the problem of school construction. We need funds at every level to go into play and to deal with basic problems that schools face. I do not ever represent school construction as being the only problem or the only priority that our schools face. The training of proper teachers, certified teachers, science teachers, math teachers, that is a problem equally as important; and I do not want to downplay that. Having decent laboratories in schools and decent libraries, there are many priorities.

But I do point out the fact that the school building, the edifice, sends a message like no other component of the education system sends. It says to the children and it says to the teachers and the community that the people who are in charge, the elected officials who make decisions, whether they are Congresspeople or city council people or State legislators, the people who make the decisions care. It is a highly visible statement.

If a school no longer has a coal-burning furnace, it meant that we cared about the situation enough, we cared about education, we cared about the students. If a school is not overcrowded to the point where classrooms have to be held in the hallways or in closets converted into classrooms, or there is a situation where the children have to start eating lunch at 10 a.m. in the morning because the students have to be cycled through the lunchroom because the lunch building that was built

for 500 children now has 1,500. There are schools that must have three or four lunch periods and the first lunch period begins at 10 a.m., when the child just had breakfast.

Now, some of my colleagues might say, well, that is an unusual situation; why should I talk about an extreme situation. Well, if a survey were to be conducted in any big city in America, we would find similar things are happening; and it happens in New York City on a large scale. There are a large number of schools where children have to eat lunch at 10 a.m. in the morning. And yet we are in a situation now where we have surpluses at the State level, surpluses at the city level, and surpluses here in Washington.

I would like to say to every parent listening, or every decent citizen listening and who knows a situation where children are being forced to eat lunch at 10 a.m. in the morning, just after they have had breakfast, I would like to see our sense of decency and fair play be brought to bear on this outrageous practice. It is child abuse to force a student to eat lunch before 11 a.m. in the morning or after 1 p.m. Those who eat after 1 p.m. are hungry; those who eat at 10 a.m. do not want to eat breakfast. They are not hungry. They are being force-fed. That is child abuse.

We have accepted this as a routine, ordinary part of getting through the school emergency situation in New York. The school space emergency situation is like routine now. Every year they announce, well, we are 26,000 or 20,000 seats short. That happens at the beginning of the school year and we wonder, what happened; how did they deal with the problem? Well, somehow they crammed them into hallways, they crammed them into closets, they put them into situations where they have to eat lunch at 10 a.m. in the morning. They come to grips with the problem. They solve the problems by dehumanizing the children.

So every parent, every decent human being in New York City should do all of us a favor by rising up and saying, look, we will not tolerate this kind of child abuse any more. Join us in a court suit. Let us go to the health department. The health department regulates day care centers and Head Start. They have tight regulations on what happens in facilities that serve children, but they put a waiver on the board of education. They have nothing to do basically with the operations of the board of education and the schools.

So many kinds of horrendous things happen in respect to school space, ventilation and, in this case, the actual serving of lunch, which would not be allowed to happen in a day care center or Head Start center. We should not tolerate it any longer.

For those people down here in Washington who are now pushing aside all discussions of school construction, school repairs, and are genteelly talking about everything else in education,

but who refuse to recognize that there is a need in the area of school construction, I say that they are part of the problem of forcing this child abuse situation where we are forcing children to eat lunch just after they have had breakfast. These people must bear part of the blame. They may not be as bad as the Romans, who were feeding the Christians to the lions at a time when they had great prosperity and a high civilization, but they are guilty of something on a smaller scale that I think their grandchildren would not be very proud of.

We have the money, we have the wealth, we have a surplus, we can deal with the problem of school construction. If the Federal Government were to give a portion of the money, it would stimulate and force the State governments and city governments to do more. We could eliminate these major problems of school overcrowding. We could eliminate that in the next 10 years. We have the resources to do it. So let us stop the child abuse. Do not force students to eat lunch, and parents should be indignant, and everybody else indignant, about that kind of child abuse.

A second problem is that the outdoor and inside pollution caused by coal-burning furnaces constitutes a direct threat to the health of all children, and teachers too. Children with asthma are particularly placed at risk in these situations, in a city with an asthma epidemic. The mayor of the city, a little more than a year ago, had a special asthma initiative. And they are so cruel, so much like the Roman politicians, because they deliberately never mentioned coal-burning furnaces as part of the problem. That was not an accident.

There are coal-burning furnaces in schools. If they draw the map of where the largest concentration of asthma cases are, where the asthma epidemic is, we can see the overlap with the places where we have the schools with the coal-burning furnaces. Any intelligent person can see the correlation, but the correlation was not recognized deliberately. Many articles in the newspapers were written, but nobody wanted to offend his majesty in city hall so they never said coal-burning furnaces are part of the problem, Mr. Mayor. Why not appropriate some money to get rid of coal-burning furnaces?

We are part of the problem if we do not take the initiative now and use some of the funds we have here. Whose money is it, the \$200 billion surplus? Does it belong to the Federal Government? My friends on the other side are telling us all the time it is the people's money. All taxes are local. All funding of government comes from the local level. We want to give it back. It is not a great act of generosity by the Federal Government to make money available for school construction or any other local purpose. It is one way we can help education without becoming

involved, without being accused of trying to take over the decision-making process at the local level.

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It is a capital expenditure, school construction. Go in, give the money, and oversee the process of getting the building going and get out. You do not have to stay around to interfere with operational decisions of the school board. Just help with the immediate physical infrastructure problem.

Item three: the departments of government should fully enforce all health and building codes in school buildings and no waivers should be granted.

Along with coal-burning furnaces, which should not be allowed by the health department in schools, you have many other violations. There was a survey done with the help of the United Federation of Teachers. The teachers union pushed for a survey. And every school building in New York has been inspected and there is a record of violations, a computerized record of violations. And many of them have numerous violations which, if they were not schools, they would be forced to immediately make the repairs or close down.

So we elected officials, members of government, decision-makers are part of the problem if we allow these violations to continue to exist jeopardizing the safety and health of children in our schools.

We also have a problem with school libraries and laboratories and facilities which allow children to really get the kind of education they need.

The Board of Regents of New York State, like many other State bodies, have established certain standards and no child will be able to graduate and receive a diploma of any kind. They used to give a general diploma. If you did not pass the mathematics, the science and the English and the couple other regents tests, you got a general diploma. Well, they have decreed that no child will get any diploma if they do not pass certain Regents tests.

Among those tests is a Regents science examination. We ought to postpone, eliminate the mandated Regents science examination required before a student can qualify for a diploma unless and until we have all high schools equipped with laboratories where they can have real science teaching take place.

Science teachers will tell us now that theoretical science teaching, teaching only through theory, is not complete science instruction; you have to have laboratories. And yet, if you do not have the physical facilities, you use these old buildings which if you probably installed a decent laboratory, something will malfunction. They will catch fire or blow up.

They do not have the wiring or the ventilation. They need in many cases totally new buildings, or they need massive renovation in order to have a decent science laboratory.

We are enforcing standards and we are dumping on the students' backs the

responsibility of learning while we do not want to use valuable resources. The dollars are here. The money is here at the Federal level and at other levels, and we want to ignore it. I am not sure why. Some people say because the majority of the Members of Congress, their children are either in private schools or they are in suburban schools, which are very well taken care of. They do not have construction repair problems.

I hate to believe that my colleagues do not accept the responsibility for all the schools and all the children in the Nation. At a time when we have the resources, I hate to believe that they turn their back on a portion of the population which very much needs to have an investment in their education.

We have shortages of all kinds. Everybody is complaining about information technology shortages; we do not have young people who can actually fill the jobs. In the information technology industry, we do not have the people to do the computer programming, and we are importing people from outside.

On the floor of the Congress, we are going to have a discussion of H-IB which lifts the quota for the number of professionals who can come into the Nation because we need those professionals from outside the Nation to fill the jobs.

And on and on it goes, the discussion which ignores the simple fact that, in the long run, we have to train our own population, we cannot rely on school systems of foreign countries to provide us with the manpower, with the professionals or any other degree of manpower in this digitalized economy that we need.

So let us invest and let us have the broad view, the compassion necessary to see that, in our inner city schools, in our schools which serve the poorest youngsters. And there is a correlation between the construction problems and the schools which have overcrowding and the schools which do not have laboratories the schools which have the least number of certified teachers, the correlation is always in income.

The low-income schools, where the parents have the least education and the least ability to deal with the system, they are always the ones who have these problems.

Another item: the use of trailers in school playgrounds. The use of trailers in school playgrounds to relieve overcrowding should be limited to situations that are temporary substitutes for buildings under repair or in the process of construction. We should become indignant. Everybody out there should look at those trailers, and sometimes they have been around 10 years or more, and say that this was supposed to have been a temporary solution.

Children should not have to go to school in trailers. They should not have to be in situations where in the winter time, in order for them to go to the bathroom, they have got to come

out of the trailer and go into the main building. They should not be in situations where the ventilation and the situation is not up to par in terms of the square footage necessary to accommodate a full class of children.

We should become indignant about the continuation of an emergency use of trailers when we have a \$200 billion surplus. The mere dedication of 10 percent of that will allow us in 10 years to wipe out these kinds of problems.

Teachers for the classrooms is another program that we have emphasized greatly. We want to reduce the ratio of children to teachers. We want teachers to have smaller classes. All of us are in favor of that. I never heard of a Republican or Democrat against teachers having smaller classes.

But there is a racketeering process set in the inner-city communities, certainly in New York City. We have taken the money to reduce the ratio of children to teachers, but since we do not have the classrooms, it is not happening. Sometimes they put in an additional teacher, an additional teacher goes into a crowded classroom. That is not what we meant. And you do not have the kind of teaching taking place when you have children crowded into a classroom, even though you have a second adult. That is not what is meant.

We are spending large sums of money for teacher development or a number of other kinds of options that are in the law which they can take, while they stall on the basic problem of getting more teachers into the classroom.

You cannot get classrooms that have smaller class sizes unless you build more classrooms or renovate classrooms. Teachers for the classroom funding ought to be used to lower the ratio of students to teachers within separate classrooms, not for the assignment of a second teacher to a crowded classroom or for some other auxiliary purpose. More classrooms must be made available.

Otherwise, the number one item in our program, in our platform of teachers to the classroom, which we all are proud of, that item is sabotaged and we are really not honest about what we are doing.

Finally, accreditation should be denied to any school which lacks an adequate physical infrastructure. I talked about laboratories. But the playroom space, the gym, all these things are part of the experience necessary to educate young people.

Substandard and nonaccredited school buildings ought to be closed. We ought to create a crisis. Instead of continuing to accept these half measures which are dangerous to the psyche of kids as well as to their physical bodies, let us wage war on our own decision-makers. Let us understand that it is possible that we can make real blunders here and have blinders on. They are blinders which say school construction, that is too radical, anything related to school construction will give the impression that we are big spend-

ers; and we do not want to be accused of being big spenders.

It is all right to have \$4 billion for an aircraft carrier. It is all right to spend \$218 billion for highways and roads over a 6-year period. But do not talk about school construction \$10 billion a year. Do not even talk about \$2 billion a year.

I want to applaud the President for at least putting \$1.3 billion in the budget that he proposed. But since he proposed that, there is very little discussion. As we get closer to the end-game negotiations, I do not hear any discussion about the \$1.3 billion direct appropriation in the budget that the President proposed.

All I hear about is the \$25 billion that is being proposed in the Committee on Ways and Means to loan. We have a proposal that \$25 billion would be available. The Government is willing to pay interest on up to \$25 billion. So a local school district or the State can borrow money, and we will pay the interest. Rah, rah, rah.

We have a \$200 billion surplus, and all we are willing to do is to pay between \$3 billion and \$4 billion in interest or money borrowed by the local governments.

Will it help New York City and New York State? Not likely. Because you have to have a school bond issue on the ballot. People have to approve the borrowing of money to build schools before you can borrow the money. And there are other places in the Nation with similar problems.

I am all for what is now called the Rangel-Johnson school modernization bill. I am one of the cosponsors. And we should go forward with it. But it is only a small part of the problem. It can help districts which are able to use borrowed money and use it rapidly, but do not have to go through a process of taking it to the voters. We have turned down in the last 10 years two bond issues that might have helped schools.

So we need direct appropriation. The Congressional Black Caucus would like to specifically request that we have more direct appropriation to be allocated to the schools in crisis situations. That is the schools that are serving large numbers of low-income youngsters who qualify for the free lunch program and the schools that are being closed down because they are not functioning properly.

There is a crisis. There is a crisis out there, and we need to rally to meet that crisis. We should not allow future generations to look upon the situation we face now when we have a golden window of opportunity, a \$230 billion surplus and we are so blind, so hard-hearted, so mean-spirited, so whatever that we cannot see the need to invest in students and young people.

What other reason is there to not set aside a substantial portion of a \$230 billion surplus for education?

Substantial is conservative. We talked about we are asking for 10 percent. Ten percent of \$200 billion is \$20

billion. Ten percent of \$200 billion is \$20 billion. Over a 10-year period, 10 percent is \$200 billion for school construction and other education improvements.

Why are we going to pass up this opportunity and be guilty of history saying that we were no better than the great Romans? We had the technology. We had the economy. We had the military might. Rome was really a village compared to the United States of America at this point in history. There is nothing that has ever existed like the United States of America colossus. We are a colossus.

Given all of this, how can we not make an investment in every human being out there? The human investment is the key now. Brain power drives everything. Brain power is obviously the kind of power that sustains us now and will carry us into the future. Let us at least have the vision to make the investment in the brain power.

There are alternative education proposals being proposed by the Republican candidate for President and the Democratic candidate for President, the leadership of the House. All of the general outlines and the general plans that are being set forth we cannot quarrel with; we applaud. Most of the approaches on both sides are approaches that address serious problems related to education in America.

The problem is priorities. The problems is seeing an emergency. The worst schools in America should not be deserted. The worst schools in America should not be abandoned as we prepare plans and we allocate resources for education. The worst schools have to be dealt with first.

If we solve the problems of the worst schools and we deal with the challenges that are faced by the worst school systems, then we are in a position to deal with all the others. They become much easier. If we solve the problems faced by the worst schools, we also recoup the lost resources that we face as those youngsters fail to enter into the stream that carries them through high school graduation into higher education institutions.

We need improvements of all kinds. The Congressional Black Caucus will be proposing to the leadership in the next few days as we move into the finality of the end-game negotiations that we examine not only the school construction, which is the first priority, but Pell Grants need to have more money. We need a technical research center for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Teacher recruitment needs more funds. Training and the certification of teachers is still a major problem. The 21st century learning centers, the after-school centers, we need more of them. In our crisis, school districts, every district should have some of those learning centers.

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They should not be allocated on the basis of competitive grants but allo-

cated on the basis of need. We should have more money, produce more centers and allocate them on the basis of need. We are firmly convinced that a demand of this kind is in the interest of all of America. If you address the problems that are the worst problems, you will certainly be in a position to solve all the rest of the problems. Construction should not be pushed off to the side and abandoned as an undesirable activity because it might cost money. It will cost so much more to build prisons in the future, to build correction facilities in the future. It will cost so much more to have to compensate for the waste of human resources that will result from our failure to educate those who are in greatest need.

I would like to end by saying we are at the end of a process we started when we covered the Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget. Our priorities are the same. We would like to zero in and talk about specific dollar figures for school construction in the communities where they have the greatest need. If you are not going to do it for everybody, at least we should do school construction in the communities with the greatest need. At least we should have an aggressive program for teacher training, teacher recruitment and certification of teachers in the communities with the greatest need. If we are not going to address the education problem generally as we should address it, at least we insist that you focus the dollars that are available through the surplus on the schools which have the greatest need. We can do no less.

NIGHTSIDE CHAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, again another nightside chat. I have two very important subjects that I want to address with my colleagues this evening. The first subject is going to be Wen Ho Lee. That is a name that is familiar to all of you. He is the gentleman, and I can tell you that I stretch the words when I utilize the word "gentleman," you will follow me a little later on, out of New Mexico who was arrested by the FBI at Los Alamos lab. I intend this evening to tell the other side of the story of Wen Ho Lee.

The second thing, of course, is a complete shift of agenda. I want to talk about Social Security and the obligations all of us have to the future generations on saving Social Security, on doing something about Social Security that is going to make a difference for these generations, on doing something about Social Security so that Social Security is there for these future generations, on doing something about Social Security so that those young people, the generations behind those of us

who are midlife in our working careers, so that those people have some kind of voluntary choice, some kind of voice in how their investments are made, so that they can get a return better than the 1 percent return that most of us on Social Security will experience under today's program.

But first of all let me begin with Wen Ho Lee. The last few days have been amazing to me in the press. In fact, the last month. I used to be a police officer. My district is in Colorado. I used to be a police officer out in Colorado. So I do have kind of a law enforcement slant. But through my years of law enforcement and also through my years in the practice of law, especially the areas where I did family law, I found out something pretty interesting in my early career. It is kind of like if you have a small child that comes up to you, you have two kids, two small children that have gotten in a fight with each other. The one child comes up to you and explains their side of the fight. They tell you what in their mind is the truth. Then the other child comes up to you and tells you their side of the story which is exactly contrary to the side of the story that you just heard but in their eyes that is the concept of the truth. In other words, the truth usually is out there and there are almost always, and I learned this time after time, when I would arrive at the scene of an accident or at the scene of a fight or at the scene of a domestic dispute, I always found that when I first got there, most of the time you better listen to the other side of the story because most of the time the facts are not as they appear upon first arrival. That is exactly what has happened here.

In the last few days or the last month, I have almost been sickened by reading some of the national media that makes Wen Ho Lee, this gentleman right here, sound as if he is a martyr, makes him sound as if he is a hero. And these news media reports and some of the people, one of the things they like to jump up and they play the race card. Forget it. It is not going to work in this one. They play sympathy. "Well, he was picked upon. The poor guy was abused." Forget it.

You better listen to the second side, the other side of the story. How easy it is to trash the FBI and trash the Attorney General. I can tell you I am no fan of the Attorney General, but in this case the Attorney General is right. In this case the Federal Bureau of Investigation is right. I stood on this floor in front of you as one of the harshest critics of the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a former police officer when they goofed up at Ruby Ridge which in my opinion was one of the darkest black eyes that the FBI has given to law enforcement in law enforcement's entire career in this country.

So I think I approach this from a fairly impartial view. I criticize the FBI when I think they should be criticized. I am not a fan of the Attorney