

Then we will have the Gore plan that talks about, if you do what we want you to do, we will furnish some money. If you hire teachers, we will help you. If you do new school construction, and I would say also and if you are urban, we may help you. But it certainly will not be to the most of the hundreds of thousands of school districts in this country, only a few privileged few.

Now, it is interesting as we listen to this debate that we keep it in perspective. The Federal Government claims that they provide seven percent of the basic education money from K-12, seven percent.

Now I am going to give my colleagues the actual figures to Pennsylvania, the fifth largest State in the country, a sophisticated State, 3.3 percent of the money in school districts. Of the 530 school districts in Pennsylvania, 3.3 percent of their budget comes from the Federal Government.

So the question I ask is, that is 47 percent of seven percent, so what happens to the 53 percent? Is it all chewed up in Federal and State and regional bureaucracies that we know are often funded by the Federal Government? If that is the case, then if we are going to impact education from Washington, we have to figure out how to get the money into the classroom.

Last year and the year before, we had a program called Dollars to the Classroom that took a lot of programs and made it much easier for school districts to use them and get the money out to the school districts without all the bureaucratic work that is needed, without the grantsmen, without the consultants that you need to get Federal money.

It is interesting for the American public to realize, Mr. Speaker, that one of my most suburban school districts gets just a little over one percent of its money from the Federal Government. Are we going to fix education in that community? I have dozens of school districts that get between one and two percent of their money from the Federal Government.

Are we going to fix education there?

We can help a little bit. We can guide a little bit. But if we are going to have Washington-based programs that they have to apply for that they have to meet all the requirements of, most smaller school districts will not even apply.

I think it is important as we listen to this presidential debate that we talk about getting dollars to the classroom, that we require accountability, but not Federal bureaucracies in charge of our school districts.

My colleagues, we cannot improve education by more Federal programs, more Federal bureaucrats, more Federal rules and with only 47 percent of the Federal dollars reaching the classroom if Pennsylvania is like most States. And I believe that is probably the case in most States.

So it is important that if we are going to really help education from

Washington that we allow the local leaders, we make it easy to get the Federal dollars there. If they need maintenance, they can do maintenance. If they need teachers, they can hire teachers. If they need books, they can buy books. If they need computers, they can buy computers. Not Washington telling them, we will help you if you do what we think you should do.

So I think it is very important as we listen to this Presidential debate that we realize that Washington cannot make our school districts better. We can only be a small player if we get the money to the school districts and we allow them to make the decisions that teachers and the administrators and the parents involved in their young people's education, that Washington does not have the answers, Washington will not make it better, it will make it more complicated, few dollars will reach the classroom.

All these bureaucracies that are funded with that 53 percent do not teach a student, do not make a classroom better, do not make a school better, and does not help the role of education.

So as I conclude my comments this evening, it is important that we get the money to the classroom, that we require accountability that students can read, they can do math, they can do science, and they know English. That will give them the basis for their life and will give them a good education.

#### ENERGY DEREGULATION

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

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, as things are cooling off here in Washington and the temperature of the city is dropping, to the relief of the local communities, back in San Diego things are heating up. And sadly, they are heating up not because of the weather but because of the inappropriate action of Government and the inaction of those who should be taking care of their constituents.

A few years ago, the State legislature of the State of California tried an experiment called energy deregulation, at the same time that those of us in the Congress were working on deregulation of telecommunications. But unlike what we did successfully here in Washington, the State did not assure competition, access, and infrastructure for the energy consumers of San Diego County, and soon to be the entire State of California.

Now, it may seem like a political comment to say that, when politicians make mistakes, terrible things happen. But I think too often some of our elected officials do not consider the impact on the real people in the community who are out there doing the great things that we take for granted.

Mr. Speaker, I am in a sad position tonight to announce that an institu-

tion in my district in Pacific Beach, a landmark that has been there for 54 years, is going to close because the State legislature of the State of California passed a so-called energy deregulation bill that is now causing electric power rates to rise to such astronomical levels that small businesses are going bankrupt.

The small business I am speaking of is DeVaney's Bakery in Pacific Beach. It has been a bakery that has been around since 1946. It has been a family-owned business that has served not only the local community but the entire sub-region of the coastal area that we call San Diego.

It is sad to see that Sacramento adjourned, Mr. Speaker, this year before they addressed this absolutely critical economic and social crisis in San Diego, which is soon to spread throughout the State of California. I would hope that the speaker and every Member of this Congress would join with me in asking that we try to work together here to do what we can to save the constituency and the citizens of San Diego County, and soon to be California, from this horrendous mistake by the State legislature.

Mr. Speaker, it took a bipartisan effort in Sacramento to create this disaster that is closing down this landmark in Pacific Beach.

□ 2000

I would ask us here in Washington to step forward and make a bipartisan effort to save businesses throughout San Diego County and California from the devastating effect of this legislative mistake in Sacramento. So I ask us to learn from this tragedy of DeVaney's Bakery and let us work together at trying to see what we can do to protect the constituents from Sacramento's mistake. I hope we do not find excuses to walk away before we can address this issue. It is sad that Sacramento did that. I would ask us, both Democrats and Republicans, to work together. I hope I am not here next week announcing the next business that had to go under.

I would remind Mr. Speaker that this is not just a San Diego problem. San Diego and California has been a driving force at generating revenue for this Federal Government that has constituted what we call the surplus. If we do not address this power crisis in San Diego, it will not only spread throughout California, it could severely hurt the entire Nation's ability to continue the economic prosperity that so many of us in elective office want to point to and take credit.

Now the challenge is, will we rise to protect this economic recovery by addressing this government problem that was created in Sacramento and may only be corrected now by working together to protect the consumers, the taxpayers, the citizens and, yes, even small businesses like DeVaney's Bakery that has been around so long and will not be around tomorrow because of

mistakes that have been made by others, but that we must address.

#### END-OF-SESSION ISSUES

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

#### BANKRUPTCY REFORM

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, we are nearing the end of the current session as everyone knows and it is very apparent that nerves are frayed and that tempers are short but that is to be expected. That is an occupational disease of being a Member of Congress or of being the member of any parliamentary body anywhere in the world. But we have a special affliction here in Washington because we indulge in this almost every single year with every single year's budget, with every single year's end incessant haggling over minutia and some grand themes in this end-of-the-session battle in which we find ourselves once again.

Bankruptcy reform, which began some 3½ years ago in this very Chamber, is one of those grand items to which I refer as being includable in the end package of legislation which we will be considering in the next few days, perhaps after the new CR is passed even into next week. But there is a distinct difference in taking the bankruptcy reform measure and putting it at the end process for the purpose of yet one final vote on it. It is one that has been thoroughly debated. It is not like at the last minute some appropriator jams something into the omnibus bill at the end about which we know nothing and we are surprised months later to learn that there is a swimming pool now in the middle of the desert where never there was one before. Those kinds of special favor types of items continue to appear in the end product. We acknowledge that. Sometimes we wonder whether there is anything we can do about it except to adopt the proposal that I have proposed for 18 years, no, no, for many, many years now, that is, to have an automatic continuing resolution if we have not reached a budget by the end of the budget year.

In any event, the bankruptcy reform bill is not like that swimming pool in the desert. Rather, it is a measure that has been well received by Members of the House, by Members of the other body, by the business community, by the credit unions of our Nation, by taxpayers groups, by taxing authorities like States and local governments, all manner of working entities in our country have testified before us, giving us ample evidence upon which to base this movement to make sure that everyone gets a new start, a fresh new start who deserves one but who, by the same token, will guarantee in that process that those who can repay some of their debt should be compelled to do

so in a fair, proportionate way in which we have fashioned the mechanism for doing just that.

So when we bring this massive bankruptcy reform bill to the end game, we are not shoving it into some omnibus bill hoping that nobody sees it. No, we are bringing it to the floor after I would say one of the most thorough continuing debates that any subject has received for many, many years. I know, because I and my staff have been involved in it from the very beginning, through many, many hearings, hundreds of documents, many private discussions and consultations with bankruptcy experts and with credit institutions and with bankrupts themselves, people who have filed for bankruptcy, women who are left in a home without a husband, without a provider, providers, people who deal in State government with the complex problems of support and support collection. You name it, we have heard from that kind of individual in our regular hearing process. That is what is so bountiful in the outcome of the bankruptcy reform movement, that indeed it is the product of every coloration in our society of people who have to do business with each other in order for this economy to continue to work as well as it has.

By the way, in almost every set of remarks that I make back in my district about bankruptcy reform, I pride myself in reasserting that within the hearing process, it was not just a cameo appearance by people where we knew what their testimony was going to be and we ho-hummed our way through those hearings, I have to maintain and I will to my dying day that the final product of bankruptcy reform reflected actual testimony recommendations and clarifications made by the witnesses from out there in the world of commerce and in the world of the bankruptcy courts themselves. So it was not as if we were prompted by a pre-prepared agenda with cooked legislation that we were just going through the motions in these hearings but, rather, an intense investigation into the entire process. We learned from it.

I remember after the first hearing that someone testified on behalf of, I think, women, or single mothers or people who were devoid of support in their own household, but I was so struck by it that I instructed my staff to make sure that the next time there will be language in our next version of the bankruptcy reform that will cure the problem brought to us by that witness. As I say, this was legislative magic at its best, witnesses testifying, developing solutions to problems, and we who were charged with the responsibility of packaging all that in a reform measure succeeded in doing so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

#### EDUCATION

Mr. SCHAFFER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to talk about education. Tonight there will be a debate between the two Presidential

candidates and we of course all across the country are looking forward to that. Education is likely to be one of the issues raised. I say this because, politics being as it is, candidates tend to look to opinion polls to help identify those issues that are the most important to the people in the country. When they are inclined to do that in America today, they will find that education is the number one issue on the minds of most Americans. My point tonight is twofold, one, I want to talk about some of the work we have done here in the United States Congress as a Republican majority and as Republicans across the country to try to elevate the importance and prominence of education and to push forward a plan that is designed to improve the quality of education in America, and secondly I want to talk about what has been done over the last 8 years, because, without a doubt, the Clinton-Gore regime that has held the White House for the last 8 years has defined itself as an administration that has missed many opportunities and has failed to lead with respect to education.

I will start out by quoting the Vice President. He published a report called Report of the National Performance Review. It was published in 1993. In that report back in 1993, here is what the Vice President said, and I quote:

The Department of Education has suffered from mistrust and management neglect almost from the beginning. To overcome this legacy and to lead the way in national education reform, the Department of Education must refashion and revitalize its programs, management and systems.

My point being, Mr. Speaker, is that going all the way back to 1993, the Vice President of the United States fully understood the nature of the U.S. Department of Education, an agency that hemorrhages cash on virtually a day-by-day basis. This is an agency that we look to to try to get dollars to the classroom, to utilize the education expenditures of the American people in a way that will help children learn but, to our disappointment and even to the disappointment of the Vice President and others over at the White House, this Department of Education has failed in its noble mission.

One does not have to look too far to find examples of that. Here is the reality of what has occurred since 1993. Just a few month ago, the General Accounting Office in reporting to the Committee on Education and Workforce of the House said the following, and I quote again:

The Department is riddled with continued weaknesses in information systems controls which increase the risk of unauthorized access or disruption in services and make Education's sensitive grant and loan data vulnerable to inadvertent or deliberate misuse, fraudulent use, improper disclosure or destruction which could occur without being detected.

That was in testimony to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations going back to March of this year.

We have seen similar other kinds of characterizations of the Department of