

two resolutions have been introduced here in the House of Representatives, and 12 bills have been introduced in the Senate. Yet despite the overwhelming support for election reform, Congress has not acted on any piece of election reform legislation. Even more, just last week, the House and the Senate both passed budgets that provide no funding for election reform.

On top of that, the Bush Administration has not only refused to make election reform a priority, but it has also refused to even comment on it. At a meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus eleven days into his presidency, President Bush indicated that he intended to make election reform a priority of his Administration. This promise, however, has been nothing more than words. Election reform is an issue that demands presidential leadership in order to succeed. President Bush has not been up to the task.

In order for election reform in this country to be a success, a partnership must be forged between the states and the federal government. Improving voting systems and investing in voter education programs is not cheap. It costs money—a lot of money. It is disheartening to think that as states revise and revamp their election systems, the federal government is not there to assist them in their efforts. It is both unfair and unrealistic for states to spend millions of dollars updating their election systems and incur the associated costs without the federal government helping out. I am confident that state legislatures will continue to address the specific problems that exist in their state's election system, but I am less optimistic that Congress, under Republican leadership, will take the necessary steps to reinstall America's confidence in its election process. If Congress does not play a part, particularly in the area of funding, then it is almost certain that the majority of these state initiated election reform programs will fall well short of satisfactory.

We have a unique opportunity here in Congress to reassure every American that he or she will never be denied the right to vote. Congress can create universal standards that do not infringe upon a state's authority to oversee its own election process, and at the same time, ensure that every vote is counted. Former President Jimmy Carter has gone so far as to say, "The Carter Center has standards for participation as a monitor of an election, and the United States of America would not qualify at all." This is more than embarrassing, it is shameful.

In the coming weeks, Congress must address the problems that exist in the American election process. Congress needs to pass a universal provisional ballot measure that requires poll workers to offer any person not appearing on the eligible voters list the opportunity to cast a provisional ballot. In addition, Congress needs to pass a universal anti-purging measure to reinforce the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Congress also needs to provide funding to states to assist them in the upgrading of their election programs. Finally, Congress needs to address other possible means of election reform including universal poll closing times, lengthening the amount of time Americans have to vote, the counting of military and overseas ballots, and voter and poll worker education and training.

Mr. Speaker, time is running out for Congress to pass meaningful election reform legis-

lation. America's election process has fallen under the scrutiny of the people it seeks to empower. Without the support of the federal government, not matter how much legislation states pass and how hard states attempt to reassure their citizens that the problems of Election 2000 have been solved, voters will remain skeptical. People will walk away from the polls wondering if their vote will count. This cannot happen. If Congress does not act immediately, then the lessons learned from the disasters of last year's election will be lost. Quite frankly, this is not something the people of South Florida and the rest of the country want to hear.

RECOGNIZING THE IEEE MILESTONE AWARD

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers in recognizing and paying tribute to the achievements of those involved in electronic technology as part of our nation's space program from 1950 to 1969.

As was originally stated in President John F. Kennedy's "Special Message to the Congress on Urgent National Needs," delivered on May 25, 1961, our space program was an effort of monumental proportions in terms of scientific advancement, financial commitment, individual dedication, as well as personal and organizational sacrifice. The dividend of the efforts represented by this IEEE Milestone designation and other honors is the peace, without nuclear confrontation, which our nation and others throughout the world have been so blessed to have experienced.

As this is the 37th IEEE Milestone designation in the world, and the only one to recognize the United States space program, we applaud the advances in electrical and electronics engineering which this international honor represents.

The citation for the Milestone plaque is as follows:

ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY FOR SPACE ROCKET LAUNCHES, 1950-1969

"The demonstrated success in space flight is the result of electronic technology developed at Cape Canaveral, the Kennedy Space Center, and other sites, and applied here. A wide variety of advances in radar tracking, data telemetry, instrumentation, space-to-ground communications, on-board guidance, and real-time computation were employed to support the U.S. space program. These and other electronic developments provided the infrastructure necessary for the successful landing of men on the moon in July 1969 and their safe return to earth."

I urge all of my colleagues to join with me as we celebrate this IEEE Milestone which recognizes the men and women of our nation's space program.

HONORING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNER JUDY BLUESTONE

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 4, Judy Bluestone will be honored with the 2001 Community Service Human Relations Award by the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

This award is given to those individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service and leadership, two qualities that are exemplified in Judy's work within her community. Since moving to Milwaukee in 1985, she has exhibited a tireless dedication to numerous worthy causes throughout the area.

A mother of two, Judy has always been concerned with the needs of young children. She is on the board of the Betty Brinn Children's Museum as well as Start Smart Milwaukee, a child advocacy organization. Her love for the arts is shared with children through her work with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra.

However, Bluestone works with more than children in Milwaukee's artistic community. She is beginning her third term on the Milwaukee Arts Board, and also devotes her time and energy to the Artist Series and Skylight Opera Theater. In 1995 she was appointed co-chair of the United Performing Arts Fund's annual campaign.

Judy's tireless effort on behalf of such organizations as the United Way and the National Council of Jewish Women has garnered her a number of awards and distinctions. She is a recipient of Israel's Golda Meir Award and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Civic Alliance Award. In 1999 she was elected president of the Women's Division of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. Her outstanding contributions to the causes that she holds dear serve as a model for community activism that few of us could live up to.

And so it is my great pleasure to join the American Jewish Committee, as well as all those whose lives she has touched, in congratulating 2001 Community Service Human Relations Award winner Judy Bluestone on this richly deserved honor.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 15TH AN- NIVERSARY OF MACOMB COUN- TY'S RETIRED AND SENIOR VOL- UNTEER PROGRAM

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 15th anniversary of one of Macomb County's most helpful and caring volunteer organizations, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Since 1986, they have been providing outstanding assistance to seniors in and around my district.

An organization of senior citizens and retirees, the RSVP's mission is to provide independent living assistance to other seniors. They serve an invaluable role in the community as peer companions and aides. Whether

they are delivering meals, helping administratively at senior centers, or just playing chess with a lonely patient, the volunteers of the Macomb RSVP are helping return the luster to the golden years of so many of our senior citizens.

I would like to thank each and every one of the volunteers who give their time and energy through the RSVP. They take advantage of their good health, good natures, and good hearts to assist those not as blessed by circumstance. To those they visit and assist, they truly are one of life's blessings.

I urge my colleagues to not only recognize Macomb County's RSVP group on their 15 years of service, but also to seek out, and if necessary take an active role in creating a Retired and Senior Volunteer Organization in other communities, and support their efforts to care for our elder population.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2001

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Good Samaritan Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Act of 2001." This legislation removes a barrier which has prevented some organizations from donating surplus fire fighting equipment to needy volunteer fire departments. Under current law, the threat of civil liability has caused some organizations to destroy fire equipment, rather than donating it to volunteer, rural and other financially-strapped departments.

We know that every day, across the United States, firefighters respond to calls for help. We are grateful that these brave men and women work to save our lives and protect our homes and businesses. We presume that these firefighters work in departments which have the latest and best firefighting and protective equipment. What we must recognize is that there are an estimated 30,000 firefighters who risk their lives daily due to a lack of basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In both rural and urban fire departments, limited budgets make it difficult to purchase more than fuel and minimum maintenance. There is not enough money to buy new equipment. At the same time, certain industries are constantly improving and updating the fire protection equipment to take advantage of new, state-of-the-art innovation. Sometimes, the surplus equipment may be almost new or has never been used to put out a single fire. Sadly, the threat of civil liability causes many organizations to destroy, rather than donate, millions of dollars of quality fire equipment.

Not only do volunteer fire departments provide an indispensable service, some estimates indicate that the nearly 800,000 volunteer firefighters nationwide save state and local governments \$36.8 billion a year. While volunteering to fight fires, these same, selfless individuals are asked to raise funds to pay for new equipment. Bake sales, pot luck dinners, and raffles consume valuable time that could be better spent training to respond to emergencies. All this, while surplus equipment is being destroyed.

In states that have removed liability barriers, such as Texas, volunteer fire companies have received millions of dollars in quality fire fighting equipment. The generosity and good will of private entities donating surplus fire equipment to volunteer fire companies are well received by the firefighters and the communities. The donated fire equipment will undergo a safety inspection by the fire company to make sure firefighters and the public are safe.

We can help solve this problem. Congress can respond to the needs of volunteer fire companies by removing civil liability barriers. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and look forward to working with the Judiciary Committee to bring this bill to the House Floor.

This bill accomplishes this by raising the current liability standard from negligence to gross negligence.

CAN TESTERS PASS THE TEST?

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 21, 2001

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, the House is about to vote on a plan to make annual testing of students from grades 3–8 mandatory throughout the nation. I hope that no one will vote on that proposal before reading the following excellent report on the great difficulties involved in implementing a national program of annual testing.

[From The New York Times, May 20, 2001]

RIGHT ANSWER, WRONG SCORE: TEST FLAWS TAKE TOLL

(By Diana B. Henriques and Jacques Steinberg)

One day last May, a few weeks before commencement, Jake Plumley was pulled out of the classroom at Harding High School in St. Paul and told to report to his guidance counselor.

The counselor closed the door and asked him to sit down. The news was grim, Jake, a senior, had failed a standardized test required for graduation. To try to salvage his diploma, he had to give up a promising job and go to summer school. "It changed my whole life, that test," Jake recalled.

In fact, Jake should have been elated. He actually had passed the test. But the company that scored it had made an error, giving Jake and 47,000 other Minnesota students lower scores than they deserved.

An error like this—made by NCS Pearson, the nation's biggest test scorer—is every testing company's worst nightmare. One executive called it "the equivalent of a plane crash for us."

But it was not an isolated incident. The testing industry is coming off its three most problem-plagued years. Its missteps have affected millions of students who took standardized proficiency tests in at least 20 states.

An examination of recent mistakes and interviews with more than 120 people involved in the testing process suggest that the industry cannot guarantee the kind of error-free, high-speed testing that parents, educators and politicians seem to take for granted.

Now President Bush is proposing a 50 percent increase in the workload of this tiny industry—a handful of giants with a few small rivals. The House could vote on the Bush plan this week, and if Congress signs off, every child in grades 3 to 8 will be tested

each year in reading and math. Neither the Bush proposal nor the Congressional debate has addressed whether the industry can handle the daunting logistics of this additional business.

Already, a growing number of states use these so-called high-stakes exams—not to be confused with the SAT, the college entrance exam—to determine whether students in grades 3 to 12 can be promoted or granted a diploma. The tests are also used to evaluate teachers and principals and to decide how much tax money school districts receive. How well schools perform on these tests can even affect property values in surrounding neighborhoods.

Each recent flaw had its own tortured history. But all occurred as the testing industry was struggling to meet demands from states to test more students, with custom-tailored tests of greater complexity, designed and scored faster than ever.

In recent years, the four testing companies that dominate the market have experienced serious breakdowns in quality control. Problems at NCS, for example, extend beyond Minnesota. In the last three years, the company produced a flawed answer key that incorrectly lowered multiple-choice scores for 12,000 Arizona students, erred in adding up scores of essay tests for students in Michigan and was forced with another company to rescore 204,000 essay tests in Washington because the state found the scores too generous. NCS also missed important deadlines for delivering test results in Florida and California.

"I wanted to just throw them out and hire a new company," said Christine Jax, Minnesota's top education official. "But then my testing director warned me that there isn't a blemish-free testing company out there. That really shocked me."

One error by another big company resulted in nearly 9,000 students in New York City being mistakenly assigned to summer school in 1999. In Kentucky, a mistake in 1997 by a smaller company, Measured Progress of Dover, N.H., denied \$2 million in achievement awards to deserving schools. In California, test booklets have been delivered to schools too late for the scheduled test, were left out in the rain or arrived with missing pages.

Many industry executives attribute these errors to growing pains.

The boom in high-stakes tests "caught us somewhat by surprise," said Eugene T. Paslov, president of Harcourt Educational Measurement, one of the largest testing companies. "We're turned around, and responded to these issues, and made some dramatic improvements."

Despite the recent mistakes, the industry says, its error rate is infinitesimal on the millions of multiple-choice tests scored by machine annually. But that is only part of the picture. Today's tests rely more heavily on essay-style questions, which are more difficult to score. The number of multiple-choice answer sheets scored by NCS more than doubled from 1997 to 2000, but the number of essay-style questions more than quadrupled in that period, to 84.4 million from 20 million.

Even so, testing companies turn the scoring of these writing samples over to thousands of temporary workers earning as little as \$9 an hour.

Several scorers, speaking publicly for the first time about problems they saw, complained in interviews that they were pressed to score student essays without adequate training and that they saw tests scored in an arbitrary and inconsistent manner.

"Lots of people don't even read the whole test—the time pressure and scoring pressure are just too great," said Artur Golczewski, a