

are now trying to identify individuals as they surf the Web to isolate where they visit and what they are viewing.

This new data collection practice is most often described as Internet profiling. Internet profiling describes the practice of joining a consumer's personal information with that of his or her Internet viewing habits. To develop this detail profile, a "persistent cookie" must be attached to the consumer's cookie as they move through a Web site.

A persistent cookie is a small text file copied for varying lengths of time to consumers' computers to track their movements while they are online. It is almost like somebody following you on the street, Mr. Speaker; and we have protections against that.

My legislation would prohibit Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Web site operators from allowing third parties to attach these persistent cookies to a consumer's computer without his or her knowledge and consent. And that is the biggest purpose. If someone wants to give their consent, then that is their business.

For example, we have these grocery cards all over the country that gives us a discount. We understand that by taking that discount that Safeway or Kroeger's or someone else is actually seeing what we buy at the grocery store. We agree to that in a way.

The legislation requires the Federal Trade Commission, the FTC, to promulgate rules specifying that all operators of a Web site or online service provide a clear and conspicuous notice of their privacy policy in clear, non-legalistic terms.

The bill also requires a Web site or online service to provide consumers with an option to prevent the use of their personal information for any activity other than the particular transaction. And finally, the privacy policy must clearly state how any information, collected information will be shared or transferred to an external company or third party.

While my legislation gives consumers more information and control over how they use the Internet, I have also included a provision that will hold e-commerce companies to their privacy policies.

With insolvency of many dot-com companies, oftentimes the only tangible asset left to satisfy creditors is a consumer's transaction and personal information.

The global use of the Internet is beneficial only so long as the information traveling through cyberspace remains private. Consumers will pull back from this burgeoning information and commerce tool if they believe their privacy is being invaded.

While I understand there are many differing approaches to the use of Internet privacy, I believe this legislation addresses a critical component of Internet privacy debate; and I look forward in working with this Congress, Mr. Speaker, also to make sure that

our constituents have that privacy that they expect and also that they will think they have.

THE THREE R'S PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to come before the Chamber today to talk about what is the most important issue facing our country today and certainly in the future, education: How can we prepare our children to become adults with the skills and the knowledge that they need to succeed and compete in the world today. It is a challenge that we are presently not meeting to the degree that we should, and it starts with K-12 education.

Right now we are losing too many students before they even make it through high school, too many students who are not developing the skills and the learning experiences that they need. How can we go about fixing that problem?

Well, for the most part, this is a local issue. This is something that States, school districts and local communities are going to be the primary drivers on in terms of fixing the problems, investing the resources and making the decisions. And I think we should keep that in mind, as the United States Congress, that we want to make sure that we empower the locals to do the job that they are in the best position to do.

But the Federal Government does have a role. There is a lot of people that say that the Federal Government does not have any business being involved in K-12 education because it is a State and local issue, period. I disagree.

On the single-most important issue facing our country, the quality of our child's education, I think all taxpayers would like to know that some of that money that they pay in taxes to the Federal Government is going to help improve our K-12 education system since it is such an important issue to all of us.

But the question that we are addressing here today is, what is the proper role for the Federal Government? How can they best use the money that they spend?

Right now the Federal Government is responsible for about 7 percent of the school district's budget. Are we getting the most we can for those dollars? Are those dollars going to the right places? Are they coming with the proper amount of flexibility? I do not think so.

Myself and a number of colleagues of mine have introduced a bill on education called the Three R's bill. The gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) and others have cospon-

sored this to try to shift the focus of the Federal role in education to improve it and to make it work better. There are some basic principles that we want to outline today that we are headed towards on this program.

First and foremost is we do need to make an increased investment in education. And have a chart here that lays out what our goals and priorities are, and that is the first time.

There are many people that would like to believe, I guess, that we do not need to spend more money to make education better. And I will agree that we do not need to only spend more money, we have to make it more efficient, more effective and more accountable as well. But when we look at our crumbling classrooms in one end of this country to the other, the crushing need for school construction, at the coming shortage of teachers that we have, at the growing class sizes, at the growing needs for technology in our schools, there is no question that we as a Nation need to make a greater investment in K-12 education, and that is something that we ought to start with.

But the other thing is, when we are looking at the Federal Government, where should we send our money? Those Federal dollars should be targeted to help where we can best help, and that is driving those dollars out to the communities that are in poverty, to the poorer communities that frankly do not have the same access to education that other communities have.

If they live in a wealthy or tax-rich community, they have a number of options for funding the programs that they need in school. If they do not, they do not have as many options, they cannot simply raise a \$100,000 from the parents or pass a levy or bond issue to generate those dollars.

□ 1315

The Federal Government should target their dollars that they send to get to those poor communities. We do not do a good enough job of that right now. Too many of those dollars are not going to the communities that truly need them. Our bill adjusts those formulas to drive them out primarily based on need, based on those poverty-based communities that we are headed towards.

The other major problem of the Federal role in education right now is that it is too bureaucratic and there are too many strings attached to those dollars that are sent out. That is a problem in a couple of different areas. First of all there is insufficient flexibility. The needs of one school district may not necessarily be the same as another. The needs in Seattle may not be the same as Chicago or Spokane or South Bend, Indiana, there may be differences in what they want, but the Federal Government is very prescriptive in how we send the dollars out. They have to be spent in a certain way. That reduces the flexibility of those local communities to best use those dollars. But the

other problem with it is the bureaucratic nightmare that goes with it.

The way the Federal structure is currently set up, there is somewhere in the neighborhood of 60 different Federal programs, pots of money of varying sizes that all school districts in the country have to compete for. They fill out grants to go get these dollars. There are a whole series of problems with this process. First of all, the communities that need these dollars the most, the poor, the rural communities, they do not have the money for grant writers. They are struggling just to provide the educators they need in their school districts. So it becomes a snowball effect. They do not have the money to hire the grant writers so they cannot get the additional money the Federal Government is providing and the dollars do not get driven out where they are truly needed. But even in communities that have large school districts, you do not want your school district personnel to be grant writers. You want them to be educators.

There is a school district in my congressional district that estimates in 1 year they spent 900 person-hours filling out Federal grants for money. Think of what those 900 person-hours could have been better used for to help educate our children. We need to give them that flexibility and freedom from the grant writing that is currently required of so many school districts. We drive our dollars out in a way that does not require that, that gives them that greater flexibility and lifts them away from that bureaucracy.

The last issue I want to touch on is accountability. As I mentioned, we certainly need to invest more in education. But we also need more accountability, more effective results. The biggest reason for that is you cannot fix a failing school. You cannot educate a child that is not learning to read or write or develop the math skills that he or she needs if you are not aware of it. If we are not measuring the results of our schools and our students, we do not know where they are at. Now, this is something that should be State driven, no question. But I believe it should be the policy of the Federal Government to require States to keep track of how their schools are performing, so that parents can know what is going on and so that, most importantly, we can meet the needs as they come up. So that is another important part of our bill is we require States to measure performance at least three times during the course of K-12 education. In my home State of Washington, we do it in the fourth, seventh, and tenth grade. Different States do it at different places, but there needs to be a measurement so we know how the schools are doing.

But the second most important part about accountability is the part that I think we are doing the weakest job on as a country, and, that is, once you find out the schools that are not succeeding, the students that are not suc-

ceeding, what do you do about it? Are you then investing and making the changes necessary to fix the problem? It is nice to know, but it is far more important to get in there and fix the problem so that all of us, all of our children, have access to a quality education. What our bill does is it requires that measurement and then once you find out what schools are not performing, we set aside money for the States to go into those specific schools and improve them and make them work better, to get the results that we need.

Our bill is a significant change in Federal education policy. It is a change that reflects the need to spend more money certainly but to target those dollars in an appropriate place, to increase local flexibility so that they are not filling out Federal paperwork but, rather, educating our children and to have accountability, to measure results so that we know how our children are doing, how our schools are doing, so hopefully we can step up and improve them. I feel there is no more important issue that this Congress will deal with. I am pleased that the President has shown an indication to move in this direction. We have some differences on the proposal that he has outlined. But we also have a lot of similarities. I think there is a good chance that this Congress will make a significant change in education policy.

With that, I am joined by several colleagues today who are cosponsors of this bill and share with me in our desire to get it passed and change this role. I would first like to call on the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS).

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH). We appreciate that so much.

I am glad to say, Mr. Speaker, the national debate has shifted to our American system of education. Recently, President Bush offered a comprehensive education package. I am glad priorities concerning education are taking the national stage now, because improving our schools makes all our lives better.

The President's proposal has much merit, but let me tell my colleagues about another education proposal and that is what the gentleman from Washington is talking about today, the Three R's Act. This bill demonstrates that both parties are willing to invest more in education and support strong accountability measures. The Three R's bill streamlines the Federal bureaucracy, allows for more local control, increases funding for poor schools and allows for more teacher and principal hiring and recruitment. The Three R's Act actually streamlines 50 Federal programs into five performance-based grants. It also provides for more resources to schools with high concentrations of poor children to help States meet their new performance goals. This will also be of particular benefit for my State, Mississippi.

I recently released a report conducted about class sizes in our congressional district. The gentleman was talking about it earlier. The study revealed that over 80 percent of young children in these grades were taught in classrooms that exceeded the national goal of 18 students per classroom. That is in my district. It is important that some of the funds from the Three R's Act or any education bill go to help reduce class sizes. Smaller class sizes have been proven to increase student achievement, reduce discipline problems and increase the amount of instructional time teachers are able to spend with students. Class size reduction has the strongest effects on children in kindergarten through third grade. A study conducted in Tennessee, for example, revealed that in the fourth grade, students from the smaller classes still outperformed the students from the larger classes in all academic subjects.

In order to have a comprehensive solution to ensuring that our children receive a quality education, we must invest in school construction and modernization, mental health professionals and more guidance counselors in our schools, technology in the classrooms and smaller class sizes.

With smaller class sizes, a teacher can better identify the needs of the students, provide individual attention, and spend less time on disciplinary matters. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Congress on an education bill that will strengthen our education system for the 21st century.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) who serves on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and has been a leader on education policy for the full decade he has been in Congress and is one of the prime drivers behind this legislation.

Mr. ROEMER. I appreciate the very kind words from my good friend and fellow New Democrat from the State of Washington (Mr. SMITH). I want to applaud him for his hard work on this bill over the past year and a half. I want to thank the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS) for the eloquence in his statement. We will be joined by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) to talk about education as well from his vantage point on the Committee on Education and the Workforce where he has joined me working on these efforts for the past several years.

I also want to commend all the New Democrats that have worked so hard on education legislation over the past several years. We have a host of people that dedicate their careers in public service to trying to improve opportunities for young children, for people that are going back to school, whether they be 28 or 48 years old, to get a better education, whether it be a nontraditional student at 33 years old going to a community college. We are interested in working in areas to improve

education for Americans across the country. The New Democrat Coalition has been a driving force to try to come up with these new ideas, to try to work with the Senate where, with this particular bill, the Three R's, we have worked with Senator BAYH, my colleague from Indiana, and Senator LIEBERMAN from Connecticut to craft this legislation. And where we look to work in a bipartisan way with our fellow Republicans across the aisle, with the new administration and with all those people across the country that continue to say that education is the single most important issue across America.

You can go into a small business or a large business and the first thing out of their mouth is education, to improve productivity. You can go into a labor union and talk to people about training opportunities and apprenticeship programs and the first word is improving education. You can talk about Democrats and Republicans, the Bush administration, the former Clinton administration, the nexus is here, the rivers are all coming together for us to finally work in a bipartisan way to achieve some much-needed results in improving public education in this country.

Now, we are 2 years behind, ladies and gentlemen, 2 years behind in reauthorizing the most important education bill where there is a partnership between the Federal Government and our local schools, locally driven, I might add, for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have proposed a bill that the gentleman from Washington has just very, very quickly outlined, and done it very well. That I think is a very, very good starting point and a possible ending point, for good bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the ESEA proposal. Let me outline two or three major components of this bill and then maybe touch on a brief area of disagreement with the Bush administration, and then conclude with the importance of resources and investment for public education in this country.

First of all, what we do in this Three R's education proposal which has been dropped today, I think the number will probably be H.R. 345, is we consolidate a number, 50 to 60 Federal programs, down to five competitive Federal grants. These five areas, including title I for the poorest children; teacher quality to improve on the number of people going into the teaching profession and coming out, maybe going in at mid career; we talk about public school choice and expanding choice to empower more parents. Those are the five critical areas to consolidate and make sure that these decisions are not driven by Washington, D.C. but are driven by the local community with help and assistance from the Federal Government.

Secondly, we demand more accountability and results from our schools, from every teacher, from every single child, to make sure that they can live

up to the standards and the requirements of this new economy, so that they can meet the needs upon graduation from high school that are going to be needed by our businesses, by our unions, by our hospitals and our banks, so that they make certain requirements and that diploma is meaningful coming out of high school, that diploma means they have met certain assessments and skill levels, but that we do not also overtest and put a Federal mandate on our local schools. There is a delicate balance that we try to reach in this bill between recognizing the needs to test our students and demand more from our students but also not give unfunded mandates to our local schools.

Thirdly, and I will talk about this a little bit more, we target new resources, new investments, new opportunities to some of the poorest children in inner city and rural areas in America that are not getting the same opportunities to a good education that some other students might be getting.

Now, the CBO today is releasing new figures that say over the next 10 years, the Federal surplus will swell to \$5.6 trillion. Now, on a cautionary note, ladies and gentlemen, 1 month ago their preliminary figure was \$6 trillion, but with the economy slowing down, they have readjusted that by \$400 billion in the last month. If we have an energy crisis, if we have a recession, if we have a problem overseas, that could significantly go down from that \$5.6 trillion initial guesstimate.

We do not know what it is going to be over the next 10 years. But certainly in this town where people are rushing to increase a tax cut, where they are rushing to throw money at defense, the very first thing that we are going to try to do in this session of Congress is work in a bipartisan way on investments in results of better public education. Certainly we can afford to invest some more resources into our education system, for quality teachers, for more public school choice, for professional development opportunities for our teachers, and smaller class sizes, things that are going to make a big difference in the quality of the student graduating from school.

□ 1330

So we will be fighting for more resources, and this bill devotes 35 billion extra dollars on top of current funding over the next 5 years to education for ESEA.

Consolidation, accountability, new resources, and less bureaucracy here. I think this is a very, very strong bill to work with the Bush administration and our fellow Republicans in a bipartisan way to finally get ESEA reauthorized.

There are a couple of areas of disagreement that I think our colleagues will probably talk more about. One of them is how do we address failing schools. If the school is not adequately preparing, if the school is not adequately requiring, if the school is not

adequately making sure that that student is getting good results and learning, then we need to do something about that school.

The Bush administration proposal is to say we are going to give that student a \$1,500 voucher to then leave that public school and take it somewhere else. Well, the first problem is, the \$1,500 voucher could not really get someone in the door of a private school. They still have a \$2,000 or \$3,000 or \$4,000 required payment to make for the tuition. But secondly, it starts to take vital money away from that public school that is failing.

The slogan is, "Leave no Child Behind." Well, one is leaving a school, an entire school, behind with that philosophy. We say in our bill, for a failing school, we are going to demand more. We are going to require more. We are going to remediate that school. We are going to put teachers or principals on probation. We are going to do more to make that school work with empowering parents with public school choice and charter schools and magnet schools and alternative schools, but keep that \$1,500 in the public school system.

We also have differences in some other areas that I will not get into on the amount of testing, on the amount of resources that we devote, but we will probably talk more about these ideas as this bill makes its way through. I think there is a great foundation between our bills to begin working together, with 80 percent agreement and bipartisan reauthorization of ESEA.

I will conclude by again saying that I am very, very proud of the people that have worked so hard to put this new Democratic Coalition bill together and look forward to working in a bipartisan way to see that reauthorization of ESEA is a possible stepping stone to working in a bipartisan way on other issues.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I just want to, before calling on my next colleague, amplify the point that the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) made about where the new Democrats are coming from on this issue. For years, there has been this sort of frozen public debate going on between Republicans and Democrats, with Democrats arguing that more money needs to be spent and Republicans arguing that there needs to be more accountability for results; and that as a consequence we have not done anything. We really have not moved forward significantly in either area.

What this bill represents and what the new Democratic Coalition has worked so hard to do is a way to find a middle ground to bridge the gap and recognize what we ought to do is both. We certainly ought to have a more accountable education system that measures results, that tells us who is succeeding and who is not. We also need to invest resources; and that is going to be a major, major topic of conversation between us and the White House, is

how much money are they willing to put into this to help make sure we do not leave any child behind. If we are talking about ratcheting up the tax cut from a trillion to \$1.6 trillion to \$2 trillion to whatever it winds up as being, think about what we could do with some of those dollars if they were invested in education if we actually made a difference on things like class size and school construction and investing in those poor communities that do not have adequate access.

I think we need to make sure that the White House shows us a commitment on the investment side as well as on the accountability side. We as New Democrats are trying to do both because we recognize that both need to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague and friend, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), who is also a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce and has been working on these issues for a number of years.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), for yielding me this time and also securing this hour for general discussion about education policy.

As my friend from Indiana pointed out, there is a convergence of energy and interests and anticipation really in doing something good in this session of Congress in regards to reforming the education system in this country.

I am a proud sponsor, as a member of the new Democratic Coalition, of the RRRs program that the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) has just laid out for us. I think it is a realistic proposal. It is credible, and it is long overdue.

The consolidation aspect is much needed. It will increase flexibility to local school districts so that the decision-makers, those who are intimately involved in reforming the education system, will have an opportunity to implement the reforms that they know will succeed at the local level; but it also recognizes importantly enough that we have to be committed to making a major investment if we are going to see the results that we are demanding now from our school districts and the administrators.

This is a very exciting proposal. It is a very good starting point. Many of the features that we have in this RRR proposal are very similar to what the new administration and President Bush just announced last week. In fact, last Thursday I had the opportunity to go to the White House and sit down and have a good conversation with the President, along with a few other members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, in regards to the proposals that he released last week. There are a lot of good proposals that President Bush is bringing to the table on education reform, not least of which is his philosophy that there is a Federal role in the education system, in the education of our children.

It was a philosophy that in recent years, at least, we were fighting on the

Committee on Education and the Workforce. Many of our colleagues in this Chamber were actually advocating shutting down the Department of Education, claiming that there was no Federal role at all to help with local school districts and the resources that they need in order to make the improvements that we would like to see. President Bush is saying, no, that is wrong. There is a role. We have a responsibility, and there is a way for us to work together in a bipartisan fashion to assist these local school districts in making these reforms.

There are also some points of contention, issues that we are going to seriously debate and get into as we get into the formulation of education policy, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that we have to get accomplished this year in committee; not least of which is the whole idea of accountability, and what people mean by that, because it has various definitions. It has various meanings.

I think what we have with the RRR proposal from the new Democratic Coalition is a requirement that we want to see student performance measured so that we can take corrective action, take remedial action for students who are detected as falling behind, so that they are not left behind as they progress through the education system.

I would hate for us in this Congress, though, to work on a system of accountability which merely establishes a regime of sanctions and penalties, and I am afraid that with the private voucher proposal in the President's plan that we could very easily get to that step where we would be draining precious and limited resources from the public education system that we want to support and put it into the private sphere, where there are, granted, a lot of good private schools doing wonderful things throughout the country. But let us face it, the private school system does not have the same type of system of accountability that the public school systems currently have. Nor would we necessarily want to attach strings and a lot of accountability with the funds that go into private, and especially parochial, education.

I am very concerned about the separation of church-and-state issues if accountability follows the Federal dollars, which is an issue that really has not been aired all that much when one gets into the private voucher plan, and one that we really need to be more careful about in our discussions as we go forward. There are some very attractive features in what the President is calling for, what we are calling for in our education plan, the emphasis on professional development programs so we have the quality teachers in the classroom, which is perhaps the second most important determinant of how well our students are going to perform, right after parental involvement.

I hope we do not lose sight of the necessity of investing in professional de-

velopment of the school leaders, principals, superintendents, the administrators. Everyone who has been involved in the school system realizes how important it is to have quality people in those positions to quarterback the education system and to provide guidance and implement the reforms that are necessary. The President, too, is emphasizing, as President Clinton before him, early childhood literacy programs which, again, received fierce resistance in this House over the last 4 years, the Reading Excellence Act. President Bush is now asking for a ramp up in early childhood literacy programs, and I applaud him for that, but there is one area that hopefully we can embrace and form bipartisan consensus around, and that is for this United States Congress to live up to the Federal responsibility and obligation to fully fund special education costs throughout the country.

Our obligation is roughly 40 percent of the special education costs that school districts have to incur in order to educate these children. These children deserve to be educated. They deserve to get a good education, but it requires an investment because of the special needs that they bring to the classroom. We have only been funding it at roughly 12, 13 percent. If we can get to that 40 percent level, which will require a substantial investment in special education, IDEA is the program's name, that would free up a lot of resources then by its very nature at the local school districts. That would provide them with increased flexibility in order to make reforms that they want to make at the local school districts, and all that it requires is an act of Congress, with the cooperation of the appropriators and the administration, to be committed to this concept of fully funding our obligation to special education needs across the country.

Not only is it the right thing to do, I think it is good policy if we really want to see the results that many of us have a passion for in the public school system. It is an issue that I personally raised with the President as they are beginning to formulate their budget proposal which will be submitted shortly to Congress for our consideration.

Just to close on a point that my friend, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER), made, there is a lot of euphoria in Washington these days in regards to the latest CBO projected budget surpluses, \$5.6 trillion, which was announced today; but I think we need to be careful because I think the greatest challenge we are going to face this year in Congress is to lose fiscal discipline. By that I mean if we look at the actual numbers and how they play out, first of all, two-thirds of even that projection does not occur until the second 5 years, which means we cannot front-load a lot of that tax cut which a lot of people want to do because of the slowdown of economic times. We do not have the money to do that.

Secondly, if we take the Social Security Trust Fund and the Medicare Trust Fund out of that equation, and hopefully we are going to have consensus on that this year, that \$5.6 trillion is suddenly reduced to \$2.6 trillion. If we are starting with a premise of a \$2 trillion-plus tax cut, that leaves very little for all the other domestic policy items which will be receiving attention, increasing defense spending, farm relief again because the farmers are suffering, the education investment that many of us would like to see; but also I think we are hopeful and hedging our bets on whether or not the economy is going to continue to perform and produce these surpluses that these tax figures are being based upon right now. So we face some challenges. I think we have a lot of area of common ground and some good common agreement in which to start from.

There are going to be some contentious issues. I think the RRR proposal that we are introducing today is very comparable, in fact, to what a lot of moderate Republicans in Congress have been advocating for some time as well. I feel a political coalition can be formed quite easily, as long as we deal up front with some of the more contentious issues and not allow that to bring down what could be a very good education year here in the United States Congress.

I commend again my friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), for the hard work that he has put in over the last couple of years in being able to put an education proposal of this nature together. There have been a lot of people involved and hopefully good things will emanate from it.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all of the help from the gentleman, and support and work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to recognize the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. McCARTHY), also a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I stand here very proudly as a cosponsor of the new Democratic Coalition on supporting the RRRs. I sit on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and for the last 4 years we certainly have been trying to bring together new initiatives on how we are going to bring the best education to all of our children, all of our children; and the RRRs program is a program that can work for all of our children across this country.

Politicians are very good a lot of times at saying, well, we are going to do this, we are going to do this, we are going to do this. I really hope this time around that we are going to have an educational policy that is going to be there for our children.

Each and every one of us comes from different districts. We all represent different parts of this country; but when it comes down to education, the American people want us to do something.

The RRRs education program, as far as I am concerned, will answer all of the problems that we are having across this Nation.

I want to just say a little thing on the side. Thank goodness the majority of our schools in this country are doing well. Please let us not forget them. We are talking about dealing with schools that need extra help. I have a school in my district, Roosevelt School District, and they were taken over by the State a couple of years ago and they are struggling. This is why I am such a strong opponent of having a voucher system. If we start losing monies that go into the Roosevelt School system, what are we going to do with all the other kids?

□ 1345

We are going to leave so many children behind. Vouchers sound wonderful. They do sound wonderful. They are not the answer. Federal dollars have to go into our public schools.

A question that I certainly hope that someone will be able to answer for me from the administration is, if it gets passed, and I am hoping that it does not, but if the \$1,500 voucher gets passed, and a child takes that into whatever school they go to, where is the accountability for that \$1,500? How do we know that that child is getting the education that they should be getting? These are some of the questions that we have to answer in the next several months.

The bottom line is, the American people want to have a good education. When we talk about 7 percent of our Federal dollars going into our schools, if we really think about that, it is not very much that goes back to our school systems. But the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) and I agree totally on IDEA. Those are the schools, unfortunately, that are getting hurt the most, because it puts that much money out to these children that learn differently. That is all it is. They learn differently. If the schools could be freed up for the monies that they have to spend to educate these children, then school districts would have more local control on educating those students that are considered "normal."

Let me say something about that. We have such an opportunity in the next few months to do probably one of the best things that we can do for this country and for the future of this country, and that is passing an educational program that is going to go to our neediest children, which our program does; it will go to the neediest children, it will give those school districts the head start that they need. We are building on the future of America. We are not only doing ourselves a favor, we are doing this whole country a favor.

So as we go forward in the months ahead, I think the RRRs educational proposal, which is something that has been out here for a couple of years; this is not new. We have been trying to

push this for a couple of years. Hopefully, we will see our program go through, and then we will be doing the right thing for the American children, and we will be doing the right thing for our country.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. It is now my pleasure to call on one of our new colleagues, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) who worked in her State on educational issues and now has the opportunity to bring that knowledge to the Federal level.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be an original cosponsor of this bill, Improving Education Through the RRRs. Increasing the excellence of our children's education must be our national priority.

This approach to funding and focusing on educational reform is a philosophical framework for how to keep our eyes on that goal.

First, it recognizes that a large increase in funding for education is not only critical and possible, but that money must be directed where it is most needed. Title I funds not only deserve the 50-percent increase called for, but also are protected from nonprogram uses. The bill requires accountability of the results of these programs.

Second, there is an emphasis on promoting the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and principals. This is fundamental to improving teaching, particularly in California where less than half of the needed new teachers are being trained in our universities. There are many successful programs to recruit new teachers and support them, and they deserve new funding. In California, we have supported a very successful mentoring program for teachers in their first 2 years. Individuals who enter teaching as a second career also need extensive mentoring and training support when they enter the classroom. These are costly programs and need additional funding which is included in this bill.

Retaining the best teachers is also important. As a member of the California legislature, I sponsored substantial one-time awards for teachers who have achieved National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification; and, as a result, the number of candidates for this demanding program which demonstrates excellence in the classroom have doubled annually. This is one example of the type of program which would be eligible for funding under this bill. It inspires excellence and rewards the best professionals. Public recognition of professionalism is another way to improve retention of our most valued teachers.

Targeting funding to recruitment of mid-career teachers is also critical. The new Troops to Teachers program can be a model for the much larger Transition to Teaching program called for in this legislation.

Third, as prudent stewards, we must insist on accountability of the programs we fund. California has initiated many of the types of accountability called for under this proposal. As a result, I am keenly aware of the care which must be taken in aligning our testing with State and locally developed curricula and of moving toward testing which evaluates many different types of student performance. I look forward to working on refining these programs so that they also are effective.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this bill establishes the appropriate framework for improving education, and I commend it to my colleagues.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, we are joined by another freshman Member, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), who has also worked on education issues on the State level and now is taking that expertise to the Federal level.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in urging support for the Public Education Reinvestment, Reinvention, and Responsibility Act. This bill invests more in education, \$35 billion over 5 years, for title I, for poor and disadvantaged communities where many young people, through no fault of their own, are getting a poor education, and are failing to meet their full potential because of our failures. It provides more for charter schools, for magnet schools and innovative public school choice programs, and also to help children unlock the door of opportunity that is the English language.

How do we make this investment? Are we simply throwing good money after bad? Are we spending more without doing more? The answer is no. This bill targets children who are most in need. Seven percent of the public school budget is provided via Federal funding. Our solution is, therefore, a 7 percent solution; and it will only be effective if it is targeted and targeted to those who are most in need. This bill does that.

The bill also provides local schools with greater flexibility to use local innovation to meet local needs. It does this by consolidating a myriad of Federal programs into five national goals. I introduced legislation not unlike this in the State legislature in California.

It was very instructive as we proceeded with that bill, consolidating 30 categorical education programs into one. Each of the special interests that had grown up around that particular categorical program came to oppose it. It became very apparent to me, as I think it has to many in this country, that some of the educational programs, albeit started for good reason and with the best of intentions, have come to exist and persist for themselves, not for the benefit of the children they were intended to teach, but to perpetuate the suppliers, the vendors, of those materials of that approach, and this has to end if we are going to

change public education for the better. This proposal consolidates those programs, develops a system based on accountability, not accountability simply that the money is spent for its intended purpose, but rather accountability that says, we will give you flexibility, you give us good results.

Under the current law, there is no accountability. That has to change if we are going to improve the quality of a public school system. We have to demand more of our teachers, of our parents, of ourselves, and this bill goes a long way to doing exactly that.

Why all the focus on education in the last few years? We have a proud heritage in this country of public education. It has always been the great equalizer providing opportunity to the poorest among us, tapping the human potential of every child, and giving them a chance to succeed, a chance to enjoy the American dream. We are losing that heritage to schools that underperform, with children who fail or drop out or perhaps, saddest of all, who graduate and cannot read, who get a diploma and cannot write. Jefferson once said that "A nation that expects to live both ignorant and free expects what never was and never will be." Today's bill does honor to the father of public education, and restores our commitment to public education and civic education.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the work of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER), and others; and I urge the support of my colleagues.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on one of the points that the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) mentioned about the accountability provisions and how they are currently in the Federal law and what we would like to do to change them to. Ironically, right now, there is no accountability in terms of the Federal money spent. That means that the Federal Government does not periodically do audits of school districts, but when they go in, what they look at is, did you spend the money the way we told you to, and did you fill out the paperwork that proves that. The one thing that those Federal audits do not care about is whether or not the children are succeeding, whether or not the school is working. That is a ridiculous situation, putting process over results.

What we try to do here is we change that. We will give them the flexibility to spend the money to succeed, but we are also going to keep track of whether or not you are succeeding and if you are not, we are going to figure out a way to help all schools succeed. It is much better than the paperwork approach used right now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to a new Member of Congress, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN).

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address one of the most pressing issues facing the Nation and my district, and that is education. Having just been elected to Congress in November, I have spent many months traveling across the second district of Washington State meeting with parents and teachers and local school officials from Everett to Blaine, from Concrete to Coupeville and up in the San Juan Islands as well, and the message from them is clear: they want local control of education. Again and again I hear that people are greatly concerned about public education. They are concerned about the quality of education and preparing our kids today to compete in the job market of tomorrow. They want accountability. If taxpayers support education, they simply want their money to be spent more wisely.

Today, therefore, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of the RRRs bill, the Reinvestment, Reinvention, and Responsibility Act of 2001. This bill is a new approach to Federal education policy, one that refocuses our resources and our resolve on raising academic achievement. The RRRs streamlines the more than 50 Federal education programs into five performance-based grants. It increases the Federal investment in education, but better targets those funds. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it increases the accountability for results with Federal tax dollars, focusing these monies on our local school district.

The approach of the RRRs plan that we introduced today is simple: invest in reform and insist on results. We want to give States and local school districts the resources that they need to help every student learn at a high level.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, does not promote vouchers, but the targeting of Federal dollars to the communities across this Nation and my district that need them the most. In fact, I believe that vouchers are the wrong answer to the right question: What are we going to do to improve our public schools? The RRRs bill, in my opinion, is a key step in improving our public schools.

In the new economy, it is a time to take an approach to education in a new way, so I join with my fellow Democrats and colleagues in supporting the RRRs legislation; and I look forward to working in a bipartisan fashion here on the floor of the House with Republicans and with the administration in passing the RRRs here in Congress.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, that concludes our presentation. I am going to conclude with a few remarks of my own, but I want to thank my colleagues who joined me here today to introduce our proposal on Federal education policy, the RRRs proposal that was introduced today as a bill. I particularly want to thank the new Democrats and the work that they have done to forge this middle ground on education, to stop the either/or partisan rhetoric that has been going on

and focus on something that will really work and will give us the results that we want.

We have a great challenge over the course of the next few months. Our President has made education his top priority and that gives us a tremendous opportunity to make some long-needed changes in Federal education policy. But the devil is always in the details and the difficulty is not in talking about it, but in getting it done. So I hope that we will work hard to make sure that we get there and do what we need to do on education.

We need to make an investment, but in order to make that investment, we need to show the taxpayers that they are going to get results for their dollars. That is sort of the battle I think that has been going on in this country, and a lot of skepticism about the ability of government to get anything done. There are those who believe that government should just sort of get out of the way of everything, and we are not going to change their minds. However, I think there is a larger group of people out there who recognize that particularly in an area like education, government can have a real positive impact on improving the quality of our lives in this country.

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These taxpayers just want their money's worth. They do not want us to simply say we are going to throw more money at the problem. They want to know that they are going to be accountable for results that comes with that money. If we can push the three Rs bill that focuses on local control, flexibility and results, I think we can get the public support we need to spend the dollars we need, but that is going to be a real challenge.

It is a challenge as new Democrats that we put down for the President to work with us, certainly to get the accountability and the results-oriented focus. But once we have done that, make the investment that is necessary to get it done, I mean, I wish we could improve the quality of education without spending any more money on it, that would make all of our lives more easy. We would not have to find the dollars and make the more choices when you look at the crushing needs out there, particularly in impoverished communities, rural communities, some urban communities, areas that do not have the dollars to get the basics of what they need, you know that they need help in the resources department.

They need some money from the Federal Government to help meet the needs of their children. And if the philosophy is leave no child behind, you better be prepared to step up to that commitment.

We will give them the accountability and the results, but let us make sure that we go out there and make the investments necessary to educate our population to the degree that they deserve.

I am joined by the person who has done more work on this than anybody, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), the gentleman and I actually introduced this bill last session of Congress. It did not go anywhere then, but it is moving now.

There is some change here and I think we have a real opportunity to move forward on that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY) to conclude our discussion today.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) for yielding to me, and I am just delighted to be here in support of our three Rs proposal.

As Democrats, we recognize that we have to make reforms in the way that the Federal Government is participating as a partner with our local school districts, and what we are doing with this proposal is understanding that it is incumbent upon us to invest more in our public schools and investing those dollars in a way which we are sure are going to benefit those students that are facing the greatest challenges.

I represent a district in the central valley of California. It is one of the lowest income districts in the State. There is a lot of farm worker families that are struggling to make ends meet.

Our school districts are struggling financially, and what this proposal will ensure is that those children of farm workers are not going to be left behind, that the Federal Government is going to be there in order to provide them with the resources that those schools need to ensure that they are going to have the opportunity to excel academically.

But basically as a covenant that we are creating here with our local school districts, by providing these additional dollars, we are going to be demanding more. We are going to be demanding that those schools be held accountable for improving the academic performance of these students. We are going to require that we see improvement on an annual basis of these children and their performance in their classes.

We also are convinced that while we are providing these additional resources, we are providing for greater accountability that we have to have confidence in our local school districts, to do what they think is best in order to provide for this quality academic environment. Thus, we are giving those school districts greater flexibility.

We have consolidated over 45 programs down into five revenue streams, giving those school districts the ability to develop those programs that are going to meet some of their unique challenges. So in return for that investment of additional dollars, in return for giving those school districts greater flexibility, we are going to demand the greater accountability, because we believe, as President Bush does, that we cannot leave any child behind.

We disagree with President Bush on a number of his proposals, but where

there is a lot of in common, there are some significant differences is that with our proposal, when we have a school that is not meeting the academic performance that we believe is appropriate, is that we provide them with additional resources, both in personnel and dollars initially to help see improvement there. But if they continue to fail, we then provide for the option of those school children to go into other public schools.

We provide for public school choice. We also allow that school district to convert that school to a charter school so they can try different and more innovative approaches to improving the academic environment there.

President Bush takes a little bit different approach, and basically he would abandon those schools after 3 years and give that child a \$1,500 voucher that could be used at another public school or a private school. Many of us think that is a false promise, because a \$1,500 voucher to a farm worker child in my district that does not have a private school option, or the private school option they have is much more expensive than that, it is really a false promise.

We are hopeful as we move forward here with this debate on education that we can narrow or find the common ground that is between President Bush's proposal and what we are offering today, because we think, we are not that far apart, with the exception of the utilization and embracement of vouchers by President Bush. Our 3 R's proposal is one which I am convinced will provide the flexibility and resources that our local schools need, will ensure that our children will have a higher quality education, and will ensure that those children that are in some of the most struggling economic areas of our country will have the resources that they need to ensure that they will have the academic opportunities that are going to be so important in terms of their future success.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), I really appreciate all the work the gentleman has done there and all the cosponsors of this legislation.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), who is the prime sponsor actually of the 3 R's proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank all of my colleagues once again for their broad support. I think we have the opportunity in the next several months to make some very positive changes in Federal education policy, and I think this bill is an excellent place to start.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working on that with all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is