In Philadelphia, my home, in the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the 45 contiguous school districts to the city of Philadelphia spent, on average, $70,000 more per year per classroom than the city district. Now, how can we have a circumstance in which these young people are going to be able to compete when in the suburban districts class sizes are at 18 and 19 and in the city it is above 30? How can we have a situation where in the Council Rock School District, right near my home outside of Philadelphia, they can spend $90,000 a year on a teacher and inside the city they can only afford to pay $30,000 a year for a teacher. How are they going to attract and retain quality teachers?

Then let us talk about curriculum, because the Federal Government has no role in curriculum; States have that responsibility. Our Department of Education says in a study on this matter that only 15 percent of low-income students ever get the opportunity to take algebra, geometry, and the higher-order math. And so, Mr. Speaker, I come today to compliment the other body, to issue a concern about our work here on education reform, and hope we too will have an opportunity in conference to add our voice on this matter.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The Chair is constrained by the traditions and rules of the House to remind all Members that remarks in debate in the House may not include characterizations of the work of the Senate.

## SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President's Social Security commission met for the first time. Last night I stayed up quite late listening to, 10 or 12 of those commission members talk and speak about what they saw as their challenge to try to fix the Social Security problem. I was disappointed, number one, that some of the commissioners apparently were not in attendance; number two, I was disappointed that some of the commissioners appeared not to understand the complexity of the problem facing Social Security and, therefore, facing America.

Social Security is probably one of our most successful programs to help retirees. We are faced with the challenge of keeping Social Security solvent. What I would like to stress is what I displayed on this first chart, and that is the biggest risk is doing nothing at all. Some of the commissioners I heard suggested the dangers of investing and do not risk Social Security. The problem is that if we do not do something, then we are going to end up increasing payroll taxes and probably also reducing benefits.

The challenge is ahead of us. Social Security has a total unfunded liability of over $9 trillion. That means we would have to put $9 trillion today in an investment account, earning at least 2.7 percent interest to accommodate future payments in Social Security. The Social Security Trust Fund contains nothing but IOUs. This is an issue often overlooked when people suggest, look, the problem is not really going to confront us until 2035 or 2036 or 2037 because the trust fund owes Social Security some of that money. The problem is where are we going to come up with those funds 15 years from now, maybe as soon as 12 years from now when there is less Federal payroll tax revenues coming in for Social Security than is needed to pay the promised benefits? That is the challenge.

And that is the point; if we continue to put off this decision, on what I consider the largest financial challenge of this country, we are going to end up with doing a disservice not only to workers by increasing the payroll tax that they pay but also for retirees as future Congresses look to reduce those particular benefits. This will be a huge burden on our kids and our grandkids that this Congress should not abide.

I compliment the President for moving ahead to develop a solution. One of the challenges of the Social Security commission is going to be to inform the American people of the seriousness of this current problem and the fact that the longer we put off a solution the more drastic that solution must be. To keep paying promised Social Security benefits, the payroll tax will have to be increased by nearly 50 percent or benefits will have to be cut by 30 percent.

This chart depicts a little temporary surplus, because we have increased social security taxes so much, by waiting too long for the last Social Security commission in 1983 we have a temporary blip of more money coming in from the Social Security tax than is required to pay benefits. That surplus is going to be depleted someplace between 2011 and 2016, and then we go into deficit spending.

I mentioned $9 trillion that we need today to put in an investment account to keep Social Security solvent, if you use tomorrow's dollars, what we will need in future dollars over the next 75 years is $120 trillion to pay benefits, $120 trillion more than is going to be raised by the current Social Security tax. A serious problem.

I urge these commissioners to attend the meetings. I urge these commissioners not to send staff, but to understand what the Social Security problem is and to give it their all to come up with a reasonable solution.

Personal retirement accounts; a quick comment as I conclude. They do not come out of Social Security. They become part of the Social Security retirement benefits. A worker will own his or her own retirement account, and it is limited to safe investments that will earn more than the 1.7, percent that is going to be paid by Social Security as a return in the form of benefits on the taxes that the employer and the employee paid in.

And just a final comment. Seventy-five percent of American workers today pay more into Social Security tax than they do into income tax. Again raising taxes should not be an option.

## H.R. 1699, COAST GUARD REAUTHORIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to a bill that has already passed this House, H.R. 1699, by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN). It had to do with the reauthorization of the Coast Guard budget.

I just returned as a U.S. ambassador from the Federated States of Micronesia; 607 islands stretching across a million miles of ocean. Without the United States Coast Guard, we would have lost many citizens and many visitors.

We found a package of white substance being handled by a group of children on the beach of Yap. We found it to be cocaine. It was the Coast Guard that moved in. Right after that, we found a headless, armless, legless body. A torso. It was the Coast Guard that my embassy called to contact the FBI and DEA to investigate.

We had many, many occasions to call on the Coast Guard for search and rescue. Many of the native boats would go out, and in these shabby craft would end up missing. The motor broke down, the boat came apart, there were high waves. Without the Coast Guard being called in for search and rescue, we would have lost many of our countrymen there in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Boat safety training was something that was done often on the request of the embassy, and we went to the Islands of Chuuk, where we trained 19 young people to go back to their respective islands and to train others to do boat safety.

There were so many occasions on which I had to request the services of the United States Coast Guard. Their services were done courageously, bravely, and effectively, saving the lives and crafts of many, many people, many islanders, but most of all serving our country well and with distinction.

I am very pleased and proud to have my first vote recorded on this particular bill, H.R. 1699. I commend the

authors, and I also commend the House for their support of the reauthorization and for supplementing the budget of the United States Coast Guard.

## AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ON NORTH KOREA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, there was a range of interesting reactions to the Bush administration's statements last week that they were willing to resume talks with the government of North Korea, the DPRK, some suggesting this was a reversal of policy, perhaps a return to the North Korean foreign policy of the Clinton administration. Rather, the last 4- to 5-month period should be recognized as an appropriate pause in our intensive contacts with North Korea to reexamine the goals, tactics, achievements, and failures of American policy toward North Korea.

During the last few years, there have been substantial and growing congressional concerns, especially among Republicans, over the Clinton administration's North Korea policy. North Korea is arguably the most dangerous and erratic nation in Asia, perhaps the world, with a ruling clique that is intent on surviving even at any cost to its people. Indeed, their policies have killed huge numbers of their people through starvation. I believe it remains the place where there is the greatest chance of U.S. troops becoming militarily engaged in a terrible conflict. The DPRK continues to forward-deploy a 1.2 million-man army.

While finally agreeing to an indefinitely defined moratorium on missile flight tests, North Korea continues to develop and produce ballistic missiles, some of which are now capable of reaching the United States. In addition, there are certain indications that the DPRK may be maintaining a covert nuclear program.

Economically and socially, the ''Hermit Kingdom'' has come to the crossroads and must decide whether it continues on its path towards oblivion or whether it wants to dramatically reform its conduct and join the community of responsible nations. Logically, the United States should be in a position to significantly influence the DPRK's behavior. Instead, however, we find ourselves in a position where over the last few years North Korea has consistently been rewarded for outrageous behavior or for threatening such conduct.

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North Korean behavior resembles that of the 18th century Barbary pirates, demanding ever-increasing levels of tribute from America, and some of its neighbors, in return for marginally tolerable behavior.

Overall, the preceding administration seemed too willing to tolerate North Korean misbehavior and demands for tribute. The United States has provided heavy fuel oil and humanitarian food aid in increasing quantities. Quietly, escaping the notice of the American people, North Korea became the largest recipient of foreign aid in Asia, although humanitarian aid was given through indirect means. Despite that level of assistance, we are prevented now from adequately monitoring the distribution of that assistance, even though there is a very high probability of aid diversions to the North Korean military.

Mr. Speaker, as the Bush administration stands poised and ready to reengage North Korea in discussions, if there is any sign such talks would be productive, it needs to be mindful of the need to let the North Koreans know in no uncertain terms that the cycle of extortion for their good behavior is over. Pay tribute or extortion is an outrageous violation of the American heritage, and we will not continue it. We will not pay, directly or indirectly, for what the North Koreans should do to improve their own plight: live on the Korean Peninsula peacefully with their neighbors to the south; end its tactics of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and blackmail; sign a peace treaty to finally end the Korean War; and give evidence that it wants to build a positive relationship with the United States and the international community.

Finally, Bush administration contacts with North Korea should be much more careful than the Clinton administration to closely involve the South Koreans, the Republic of Korea, in those talks directly or as closely as possible. We must not succumb to the old North Korean strategy to drive a wedge between the United States and South Korea or to denigrate the legitimacy of the government of South Korea.

Mr. Speaker, that is my advice, gratuitous though it is, to the Bush administration. We need to change our policy.

## HOUSE NEEDS A TRUTH METER

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, over the last several weeks this Chamber, and, in fact, the President of the United States, has been under withering criticism from the Democratic Party over a few issues that are important to me and to our Nation.

They have launched attacks first on oil drilling off the coast of Florida, a proposal that they say is the hallmark of the President's oil strategy. They have also taken great pains to describe the Kyoto Treaty as a very important tool in helping the issue of global warming, and they have criticized the President of the United States for his reluctance to agree to this treaty. Let me take up the first issue.

Recently in Florida, the President came to the Florida Everglades, a very important national park, a very important part of Florida, one we in the Florida delegation are proud of and have been aggressively working to support. Two of our Senators arrived with the President on this very ambitious occasion of announcing his commitment to the Everglades.

Their immediate attack after the press conference on the positive nature of the Everglades was to single the President out with withering criticism of his decision, they say, to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico, potentially destroying thousands of miles of pristine shoreline. Now interestingly enough, when I woke up this morning to The Palm Beach Post, my hometown newspaper, the headlines read, ''Democratic Control of Senate May Not Help Stop Florida Drilling. Democratic control of the U.S. Senate has turned out to be no windfall for Florida politicians trying to block oil and natural gas drilling off the State's shores.

''The change from Republican control made a drilling advocate, Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senator BINGAMAN is sponsoring a broad energy bill that would permit leasing 5.9 million acres for drilling in the Gulf of Mexico about 100 miles south of the Florida Panhandle.''

Well, let me suggest to the Democrats, since they seem to be preoccupied with blaming us, that they ought to look to the new chairman of their own committee for advocating this very same policy. We in Florida, in the congressional delegation, the Governor of our State, Jeb Bush, strongly oppose oil drilling off our coast; and we remain steadfast in opposition.

But for the Democrats to attack the President as the only one advocating this position is wrong; it is false; and it should cease. Certainly they want to take advantage of a political opportunity to cast this President as an anti-environmentalist. And I say shame on you for that attack when one of your own members is the prime sponsor moving to, in fact, drill off the coast of Florida.

Before you launch these attacks and these negative air attacks on TV buys and radio buys, look first in the mirror before aspersions are cast. The new Senate chairman, evidenced by his own bill, is interested in this proposal and wants to foist it on the people of Florida.

The second issue I will present was in USA Today. It appeared in this morning's paper. ''Ex-Clinton Aides Admit Kyoto Treaty is Flawed.''

''Economists from the Clinton White House now concede that complying with Kyoto's mandatory reductions in greenhouse gases would be difficult and more expensive to American consumers than they thought when they were in charge.''