

must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system. . . ." The document tightly yoked our economic position in the world to how well or poorly students bubbled in answer sheets on standardized tests.

And it continued in September 2000, when a national commission on math and science teaching headed by former Ohio senator John Glenn issued a report titled "Before It's Too Late." It asked, rhetorically, "In an integrated, global economy . . . will our children be able to compete?" The report's entirely predictable answer: Not if we don't improve schools "before it's too late" (emphasis in the original report).

So you might think that these Chicken Littles would be firing up their fax machines and e-mailing everywhere to report the following hot news from the World Economic Forum's "Global Competitiveness Report, 2001-2002": The United States ranks second in the organization's Current Competitiveness Index, trailing only Finland.

The CCI isn't just another survey. It is a sophisticated rating system derived from a wide variety of economic and other factors, including education data. And the World Economic Forum (or WEF) isn't some minor league player. Its annual conference draws a cross-section of the planet's most powerful political and business leaders—including some of the people so concerned about America's schools.

But the naysayers haven't trumpeted the CCI ranking. Indeed, I wouldn't be surprised if, sometime soon, a leading member of Congress or the business community declares that we must reform our educational system to maintain our competitive edge—or best those pesky Finns.

'Twas ever thus. Schools often takes the hit for bad turns of events, but somehow never get the credit for upturns. Remember 1957? The Russians launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite to orbit Earth. When people asked how we could lose the race to space, public schools were an easy target. Life magazine ran a five-part series on the "Crisis in Education." Major universities assumed the role of rescuers to develop modern, challenging textbooks. In 1969, America put a man on the moon, a destination that the Russians—with their allegedly superior scientists—never reached. Did a magazine declare an end to the "crisis" in education? Do pigs fly?

I don't mean to suggest, of course, that America's public schools are perfect. The dreary state of some urban and poor rural school systems is well documented. But I've been following the angst over our competitive capabilities since the 1983 report, and I've noticed the same pattern. In the early 1990s, as the economy tanked and a recession set in, many variations of "lousy-schools-are-producing-a-lousy-workforce-and-it's-killing-us-in-the-global-marketplace" could be heard. But these slackers somehow managed to turn things around: By early 1994, many publications featured banner headlines about the recovery that later became the longest sustained period of growth in the nation's history. "The American Economy: Back on Top" was the way that the New York Times summed up the turnabout in Feb. 1994.

Well, if the schools took the rap when the economy went south, surely they would be praised when the economy boomed, right? Hardly. A mere three months after the Times story appeared, IBM CEO Louis V. Gerstner Jr., wrote an op-ed for the Times headlined "Our Schools Are Failing." They are failing, said Gerstner, because they are not producing students who can compete with their international peers.

The bashers have kept up their drumbeat. Intel CEO Craig R. Barrett, Texas Instru-

ments CEO Thomas Engibous, State Farm Insurance CEO Edward Rust and then-Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson all took to the nation's op-ed pages in 2000 and 2001 to lament the threat that our education system poses to our competitiveness. Gerstner made an encore appearance on the Times op-ed page in March, expressing his continuing concern that our schools will "limit our competitive position in the global marketplace."

None of these fine gentlemen provided any data on the relationship between the economy's health and the performance of schools. Our long economic boom suggests there isn't one—or that our schools are better than the critics claim. But, there is a broader, more objective means of looking for any relationship. The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides test scores for 41 nations, including the United States. Thirty-eight of those countries are ranked on the World Economic Forum's CCI. It's a simple statistical matter to correlate the test scores with the CCI.

There is little correlation. The United States is 29th in mathematics, but second in competitiveness. Korea is third in mathematics, but 27th in competitiveness. And so forth. If the two lists had matched, place for place, that would produce a perfect correlation of +1.0. But because some countries are high on competitiveness and low on test scores (and vice versa), the actual correlation is +.23. In the world of statistics, this is considered quite small.

Actually, even that small correlation is misleadingly high: Seven countries are low on both variables, creating what little relationship there is. If these seven nations are removed from the calculation, the correlation between test scores and competitiveness actually becomes negative, meaning that higher test scores are slightly associated with lower competitiveness.

The education variables in the index include: the quality of schools; the TIMSS scores; the number of years of education and the proportion of the country's population attending college (these two are variables in which the United States excels); and survey rankings from executives who, the World Economic Forum claims, have "international perspectives." The WEF ranked U.S. schools 27th of the 75 nations—not exactly eye-popping, but given all of the horrible things said about American schools in the past 25 years, perhaps surprisingly high. (The United States looked particularly bad in one WEF category; the difference in quality between rich and poor schools. We finished 42nd, lower than any other developed nation. That is shameful in a country as rich as ours.)

So, if 26 nations have better schools, how did we earn our No. 2 overall competitiveness ranking? The WEF uses dozens of variables from many sectors, and the United States rates well across the board. One important consideration is the "brain drain" factor. Our scientists and engineers stay here, earning us a top ranking in this category. No other country, not even Finland, came close on this measurement.

But what really caught my eye were the top U.S. scores on a set of variables that make up what the WEF calls "National Innovation Capacity." Innovation variables are critical to competitiveness, according to the WEF. Ten years ago, the competitive edge was gained by nations that could lower costs and raise quality. Virtually all developed countries have accomplished this, the WEF report asserts, and thus "competitive advantage must come from the ability to create and then commercialize new products and processes, shifting the technology frontier as fast as rivals can catch up."

Innovation is itself a complicated affair, but my guess is that it is not linked to test scores. If anything, too much testing discourages innovative thinking.

American schools, believe it or not, have developed a culture that encourages innovative thinking. How many other cultures do that? A 2001 op-ed in The Washington Post was titled "At Least Our Kids Ask Questions." In the essay, author Amy Biancolli described her travails in trying to get Scottish students to discuss Shakespeare. She found that they weren't used to being allowed to express their opinions or having them valued. I had the same experience when I taught college students in Hong Kong. Years later, I mentioned this to a professor in Taiwan who said that even today, "professors' questions are often met with stony silence."

We take our questioning culture so much for granted that we don't even notice it until we encounter another country that doesn't have it. A 2001 New York Times article discussed, in the words of Japanese scientists, why Americans win so many Nobel prizes while the Japanese win so few. The Japanese scientists provided a number of reasons, but the one they cited as most important was peer review. Before American scientists publish their research, they submit it to the scrutiny—questioning—of other researchers. Japanese culture discourages this kind of direct confrontation; one Japanese scientist recalled his days in the United States, when he would watch scholars—good friends—engage in furious battles, challenging and testing each other's assumptions and logic. That would never happen in Japan, he told the Times reporter.

Japan's culture of cooperation and consensus makes for a more civil society than we find here, but our combative culture leaves us with an edge in creativity. We should think more than twice before we tinker too much with an educational system that encourages questioning. We won't benefit from one that idolizes high test scores.

It could put our very competitiveness as a nation at risk.

TRIBUTES TO HARRY STEPANIAN, WALTER McNAMARA, LARRY JAKUBOWICZ, AND MARTY GANNON, CLINTON, MASSACHUSETTS FIREFIGHTERS

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Harry Stepanian, Walter McNamara, Larry Jakubowicz, and Marty Gannon, firefighters from the town of Clinton, Massachusetts who have announced their retirement after many years of dedicated service.

These men put their lives on the line every day to protect the citizens of Clinton. Because of their efforts through the years, many lives and a great deal of property have been saved, whether it was from entering a burning building or performing as an Emergency Medical Technician.

The town of Clinton is very fortunate to have an outstanding fire department. As we all know—and as the tragedies of September 11th reminded us—the job of a firefighter is not an easy one. It takes a special person to perform the duties required of firefighters. That duty involves risking their lives every day.

Through the years, these men and their colleagues have performed admirably. Their community is grateful for their work, and so am I.

It is a pleasure to recognize these outstanding men, and I know the entire House joins me in extending our best wishes to them and to their families for a happy and healthy retirement.

H.J. RES. 87

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 8, I voted to make Yucca Mountain, a remote location in the desert of Nevada, our nation's depository for high level nuclear waste. I based my support for Yucca Mountain on a \$19 billion taxpayer investment over 24 years of some of the most comprehensive scientific investigation ever conducted by our nation.

We promised the public back in 1982 in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that the Federal government would provide a single national repository for the quickly accumulating radioactive waste. This day has been a long time coming, and we can wait no longer.

Since the dawn of the nuclear age in the 1940s, nuclear waste has been accumulating, and it has been stored in temporary locations across the country—131 temporary sites in 39 states, including New Jersey.

Temporary storage of highly radioactive nuclear waste is dangerous—there's no two ways about it. We need a single, safe, secure location to contain spent nuclear fuel and our nation's dismantled nuclear arms. Quite simply, it is a matter of public health and safety, and it is in the best interests of our national security.

Yucca Mountain is located in the Nevada desert, some 1353 square miles of land, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island. It is remote, and had been used as a nuclear test site.

I have visited Yucca Mountain, since I serve on the Energy Appropriations Subcommittee which has been responsible for overseeing the funding of this critical project. During my inspection of the site, I was taken inside the mountain for almost five miles. I also learned that when nuclear waste is contained inside Yucca Mountain, it will be stored in tunnels 1000 feet below the desert floor. Yucca Mountain is so safe, scientists and engineers have determined that with its arid and geologically stable setting, even under the worst scenario, Yucca Mountain would meet EPA standards for radiation for 10,000 years! Clearly, Yucca Mountain will pay dividends, and then some, on the taxpayers' investment.

Nuclear energy has been proven to be an effective, safe, clean energy source. In fact, in New Jersey where there are two nuclear sites, nearly half of our state's electricity is produced by nuclear power. Nationwide, it is now the second largest source of electricity.

While nuclear energy continues to have its supporters and its critics, the fact is it is here to stay. As such, we need to deal with it, most especially radioactive waste. Yucca Mountain is the answer.

161 million Americans live within 75 miles of radioactive nuclear waste. Do we leave radio-

active waste to decay in temporary storage units at hundreds of locations across the country? Do we wait for highly radioactive toxins to possibly seep into our groundwater? Do we put our national security at risk by leaving spent nuclear fuel in temporary containers?

No, we side with science. Yucca Mountain, from the standpoint of protecting the nation's health as well as our security, represents the best, most comprehensive option for containing America's nuclear waste.

We can no longer afford to wait.

SAVING AMERICA'S STEEL INDUSTRY

SPEECH OF

HON. FRANK MASCARA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 2002

Providing for disposition of H.J. Res. 84, Disapproving the action taken by the President under Section 203 of the Trade Act of 1974 transmitted to the Congress on March 5, 2002.

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and, more importantly, in support of our steel industry that was on the brink of collapse.

I want to use my time to address one of the most vital issues facing the industry today: legacy costs. As scores of companies have been forced to declare Chapter 11 bankruptcy since the flood of steel imports began hitting our shores in 1997, retirement promises these companies made, in many cases, have been broken. These broken promises have left many steel retirees, through no fault of their own, without the health and other benefits they had been counting on their entire working lives.

That is why I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 4646, the Steel Industry Legacy Relief Act. This groundbreaking legislation will ensure that the promises made to the thousands of steel retirees are kept.

Under this legislation, the Federal Government will create and support a program of health insurance for the retirees of steel, iron ore, and coke companies. Similar to the way the Federal Government bolstered the health care safety net for retired mine-workers, it is time for the government to step up to the plate and help steel workers.

The Administration has taken a very important first step. By imposing temporary tariffs on a broad range of steel products for up to 3 years, the Administration has given the industry an extraordinary opportunity to get back on its feet.

While the actions by the Administration were unprecedented, by themselves, they are insufficient to fully help the industry recover. We must enact H.R. 4646 into law and put the industry on a sound financial footing once and for all.

Finally, let me say, I recognize that we live in a global economy and that the United States must be economically engaged with the rest of the world. However, we must not let the ideology of free trade trump all other values and blind us to the inequities that trade imposes on many sectors of our economy.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the rule.

RECOGNIZING THE INVALUABLE PUBLIC SERVICE OF MR. JIM CROW

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of my dear friend Jim Crow, whose hard work has proven invaluable, not only to the people of Shelby County and Tennessee's 8th District, but also to the state of Tennessee and indeed the nation. I have had the pleasure of working alongside Jim since before I came to Washington back in 1989. His public service stretches back even farther than that.

Jim was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1934. His father being in construction, the family moved where the work was—from Memphis to Ohio, then to Michigan. After also living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Jim moved back to Shelby County in 1959 and married Shirley Roberts the following year. They bought a house in Frayser, where their family saw the addition of two children, Elizabeth—now Elizabeth Vaughn—and James. The family relocated to Millington, Tennessee, in 1975.

Jim is retired from International Harvester, where he worked for 26 years and served as a union steward for the United Auto Workers. It was during this time that he became active in politics and the Shelby County Democratic Party.

In 1969, Jim was instrumental in helping bring my predecessor, Mr. Ed Jones, to this House of Representatives. Jim helped establish the first Congressional office in Shelby County for the 8th District and operated the office on a voluntary basis. Five years later, Mr. Jones hired Jim Crow as a field representative for Memphis and Shelby County. When I came to Washington 15 years after that, I was lucky to have Jim stay on board as a field representative, the position from which he is now retiring.

Jim has always been very active in the community, serving in such organizations as the Millington Industrial Development Board, the Millington Airport Authority, the Frayser Exchange Club, the Navy League and the Millington Chamber of Commerce, which once named him Man of the Year.

Millington was formerly home of the Navy Air Technical Training Center, but during the base restructuring in the early 1990s, that function was moved elsewhere. Jim, with his involvement in the community and on the base, followed the base's transition as it became known as Naval Support Activity Mid-South, currently housing the Navy Bureau of Personnel. As field representative, Jim was active in the communication involved with the change.

Later this month, he will retire his position as a field representative for the 8th Congressional District. He will spend more time with his family, including his grandchildren, Kali and Nicholas, and I am certain he will continue to stay active in our community.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask that you and our colleagues recognize the outstanding, selfless public service Jim has offered over the years. All the best wishes are with my friend Jim Crow as he begins an exciting new chapter in his life.