

English language training programs will now face a freeze in funding even though 300,000 students with limited English will enroll in school next year.

The Bush budget cuts English language training funding by almost 10 percent per child, but still requires testing of these students to determine how to bring students up to new standards.

We should be helping school districts like those in my Congressional district, which are struggling to make good on their promise to hire more bilingual teachers to help the growing number of Spanish-speaking children.

Instead, the Bush budget cuts funding for bilingual education and teacher training.

The Bush administration's budget cuts special education programs by so much that the goals set by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) cannot be met for at least 12 more years.

Special Education is underfunded by \$500 million. The "No Child Left Behind" Act requires that IDEA be met in 7 years, not 12.

The funds for the Teacher Quality State Grant program, which is the primary Federal program for training teachers in core academic subjects, have come to a halt.

92,000 fewer teachers will be trained than the Program currently supports. The Bush Administration's budget is \$404 million below the amount promised in the "No Child Left Behind" for teacher training.

The Republican budget also freezes child care funding and includes only a slight increase for Head Start. This will reduce the number of children already eligible and leave millions empty-handed.

The Administration fails to fund its vital education program that claims to leave no child behind. It seems that Republicans think that simply by naming the education bill "No Child Left Behind," they are keeping their promise to the American people. Americans know better! Americans deserve better!

I urge both the Administration and the Members of Congress to fully fund the "No Child Left Behind" Act for the sake of our children.

CHALLENGES FACING OUR FIRE DEPARTMENTS

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, as a supporter of the bill of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) and the effort of this Congress to be more aggressive in support of our firefighters, I very much encourage the consideration and ultimate passage of legislation that will accomplish that.

This morning we held a hearing in the Committee on Science to examine just how the Federal Government can help ensure that our Nation's fire departments are adequately equipped and staffed to perform the jobs they have been asked to do. The hearing shed light on the challenges facing our fire departments. I would like to talk about a couple of those challenges.

First, the need of the firefighting community to work together on these efforts. Our challenge and our goal is

to increase support for firefighters in this country. After 9/11 of last year, I think all of America recognized that we depend a great deal on our first responders. The firefighters in New York set an example for people all over the world that it takes cooperation if we are going to protect the liberty and freedom that we have.

One concern I have is the contest that has been developing between volunteers and full-time firefighters. I think we need to do everything we can so all of our first responders, firefighters and medics work together to accomplish the goals that we need to accomplish at the Federal level.

In my home State of Michigan, the Professional Firefighters Union has been pressuring their members not to volunteer in their home communities because they might displace potential union members. The events of September 11 generated a renewed appreciation and respect for firefighters.

Two years ago, Members of the House started a program of helping fire departments around the country with equipment and with training. I think we should remind ourselves that many of these first responders are in small communities that cannot depend on a fire department that is 100 miles away. The only way a lot of these communities can survive is to have volunteers that can work in those departments. Where else do we have volunteers that are willing to go out and risk their lives to protect our property and our lives?

The grant program that we established provided direct support to fire departments around the country for basic firefighting needs. In its initial year, the program proved to be very popular with both fire services and Members of Congress. Additionally, the U.S. Fire Administration received extensive praise for an exceptional job of developing and implementing the program efficiently under challenging time constraints.

In my mind, the need-based peer-reviewed grant program is an excellent example of how the Federal Government can assist the first responders, both paid full-time people and volunteers, with the basic training and equipment they need to answer our calls.

If we lose volunteers in those very small communities, it will be a tremendous financial burden to maintain the kind of protection that we have now. This has got to be a situation where we work together.

Those of us in the Fire Caucus, while supportive of a grant program to increase terrorism preparedness, quickly recognized that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program was intended to provide fundamental firefighting support to departments, and should be kept separate and distinct from the FEMA counterterrorism funds that the President proposed.

Further complicating this problem has been language in the proposed

Homeland Security legislation that gives the FEMA Administrator and the Secretary of the new department authority to shift funds among programs. There is a real concern now that this authority, while understandable for administrative flexibility, could eliminate the basic program that several of us thought was very important that we implement in this country.

In conclusion, let me say that firefighters around this country are there when there is a community project. In many places they hold baked good sales to make sure that they can buy the equipment to protect us in those local communities. We need local support for these firefighters, we need more State support for these firefighters, and we need more Federal support for these firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the United States Fire Administration that my science research subcommittee oversees for their hard work and commitment in bringing the goals of this program to fruition. Administrator David Paulison and grants director Bryan Cowan have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

DEMOCRATS ARE WORKING TO GET OUR ECONOMY BACK ON TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on a separate point from what I wish to discuss this evening, let me acknowledge that I had an opportunity to meet with one of my firefighters from Houston, Texas, and I do want to emphasize the important role that firefighters play in homeland security and as first responders.

I hope that we will be able to address their concerns, particularly as it relates to one legislative initiative that I am supporting dealing with H.R. 3992 which addresses the question of providing the added resources and personnel to ensure that both fire trucks and fire stations are well equipped with the necessary personnel. I believe however we resolve these matters dealing with volunteer firefighters as well as our full-time firefighters, we do realize that they are, in fact, very viable and vital first responders, and we should address their concerns.

It is my sense and position to move and hope that we will move H.R. 3992 as expeditiously as we can. We had a hearing in the Committee on Science, and I hope that we will be able to do that on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a lot that we can do on behalf of the American people, and as I have watched the base of the economy crumble beneath us, if we really went back home and asked who is hurting or what needed to be improved or corrected, most would say that they would ask that we get the economy back on track.

It is important that the voice of those Democrats who are seeking to do so be heard. I am somewhat disturbed that the House majority has failed to address the real serious questions of the economy. In the backdrop of a very high and moral decision of whether or not this Nation goes to war, we have lost all sight of those who are hurting.

Let me just give some points that are worth noting. Household income is down for the first time since 1991. This is not household income of those who can afford to throw away a few dollars, cut out one more midwinter trip away to the islands or to some European attractive vacation spot. This is the household income of those who are trying to make ends meet, trying to send young people to college, pay their mortgages, or, like in the State of Texas, trying to scurry around to find substitute insurance to the Farmers Insurance Company that has shut down in Texas, causing 700,000 families not to have home insurance. This is real. Mr. Speaker, I have sent a letter to the Attorney General of the United States, and I am waiting for a response, for him to determine how he can be of assistance to those 700,000 families in Texas.

Poverty is up for the first time since 1993, affecting 1.3 million more families than last year; 1.8 million jobs have been lost, and unemployment is up 5.7 percent. Health care costs are soaring; and again we say to the senior citizens in our community, prescription drugs prices are five times the rate of inflation, but yet this body has not been able to pass a guaranteed Medicare prescription drug benefit. People are hurting.

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The stock market has lost \$4.5 trillion of its value, more than was lost in the Hoover administration in that collapse. All of the history books will point to the stock market crash of 1928. We have surpassed that. The market just ended its worst quarter since the crash of 1987.

Thousands of employees have seen their retirement savings evaporate. 401(k) and other defined contribution plans lost \$210 billion. The index of leading economic indicators fell .2 percent this month, double the decline experts had expected. And a \$5.6 trillion surplus has become a \$2 trillion deficit.

We have work to do, Mr. Speaker, and we are not doing it. Thousands and thousands, I am exaggerating, of course, hundreds and hundreds, tens of tens of suspension bills going nowhere; but yet we are failing to address the pain and the hurt of those who are suffering from this economy. We have got to strengthen pensions by giving employees the same protections that executives get. We have got to allow those who are living with companies that are bankrupt, Mr. Speaker, to go into the bankruptcy court, pass a prescription drug benefit, protect Social Security, and provide jobs. I simply ask for this Congress to do its work.

GUAM'S POSITION IN LIGHT OF IRAQI SITUATION

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, today as we look upon the world situation and we are confronting the possibility of a renewed struggle in the Middle East and trying to deal with all the challenges that we face as a result of the activities and actions of Saddam Hussein, it is important for me as the representative of Guam to inform the House about what the impact all of this may have on communities around the country, and particularly Guam.

We are on the precipice of a new struggle, and we will have some time to review and debate that particular resolution which may authorize military activities in that part of the world next week; but the military challenges that we face and the strategic challenges that we face, even though they affect the entire Nation, they do not affect all the communities around the country in the same way; and certainly we the people of Guam will feel the effects of this in many disproportionate ways.

Guam is known primarily as a strategic area, as a place from which we can triangulate armed conflict. It is a military base for the Navy and for the Air Force. There has been recent discussion about the placement of bomber squadrons there at Anderson Air Force Base, and new submarines are going to be home-ported in Guam. All of that is welcomed by the people of Guam because, indeed, we are patriotic Americans.

In fact, today I just got an e-mail from an Air Force captain asking me for some remarks in order that he might swear in an airman. Both of them are in Kabul. The airman is going to be reenlisted there in Afghanistan. Our people are disproportionately in high numbers in armed services. We support the military. But as we look upon what the effects of this struggle might be and even though it may lead to a bump-up in military activities in Guam, we are directly economically challenged by this because our economy is based primarily on tourism and 80 percent of our visitors come from Japan and nothing is more disconcerting to Japanese tourists than the prospect of war and conflict. If the situation which occurred in Guam immediately after the Gulf War crisis or immediately after September 11 last year again exists as a result of this armed conflict, we will see a dramatic downturn in tourism. A downturn in tourism is already in effect as a result of 9-11 and is already in effect simply because of the economic malaise that continues to obtain in Japan. But more so than that, if this armed conflict comes about, even the discussion of it will lead to a reduction in numbers.

Guam will stand ready to do its part. It did its part even in the evacuation of

the Kurdish refugees in 1996 under Operation Pacific Haven. They were sent to Guam. When there was no overflight authority granted to conduct bombing raids on Iraq at a couple of times in the past few years, those bombers were prepositioned in Guam and then taken directly to Iraq.

But I point this out not because the people of Guam will not be in support, but because really the people of Guam deserve additional consideration should this series of economic downturns occur as a result of any conflict or even the discussion of conflict. Immediately after the 9-11 situation, there were a couple of proposals offered for economic recovery. In that effort, the House was not receptive to inclusion of the territories in that economic recovery package. While in the other body the economic recovery package was more receptive to the inclusion of Guam and other territories, that economic package never was successful.

Indeed, at the end of the day, the economic assistance that was given directly to the territories was minimal at best. But we have a new situation that we are confronted with and the people of Guam because of their long contributions to the strategic posture of the United States and because of their contributions not only in terms of their support for the military in Guam but their own participation in Guam I think should be treated with some regard. I think the people of Guam deserve to be treated according to their contribution to national security and national defense and simply not be utilized on the basis of its value from time to time.

And so as we take a look at the world situation today and as we will go over the details of the resolution, we must be mindful that this effect, the economic effects on communities will be disproportionate around the country, and we should be mindful of those so that when we construct some initiatives that we give each community its due.

FISCAL REVERSAL

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

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight along with my colleagues to address an issue of great importance which is receiving hardly any attention at all. It is about our fiscal reversal, about the tide of red ink that has overtaken our budget, about the resurgence of deficits that we thought after long, long years of trying we had finally laid to rest. Lost in the clutter, drowned by the drums of war, the deficit sinks deeper and deeper and deeper; and there is no apparent plan by this administration or this Congress to deal with the problem.

You can look at this chart here which shows graphically the deficit and