

and much needed ethical revival. Some of the events that have aided in my political education include TARS meeting, the advocacy workshop, Advanced Placement (AP) Government class, and AP macroeconomics class. Because of the truth that the republican principles hold I have firmly established them into my own life.

One of the most politically education functions I have ever participated in was the Advocacy workshop, which took place in our state capital Sacramento. This was a TARS function supported by the charitable Federated Republican Women of Valley Center. During this trip I not only got to meet some powerful political leaders in today's world, but was also taught some key issues that separate us as republicans. For instance, I discovered why we hold to our economic ideals through the whole scandal that involved Gray Davis, electricity and our horrendous deficit here in California. At this point I began to see that Republicans have great solutions for our state and nation's numerous problems. At the conclusion of this trip I took advantage of the opportunity to tell the whole Valley Center Federated Republican Women's group what I had learned and how it had impacted my life. This was a clear milestone in the maturing of my political life. I was acting like a Republican not only by standing up and publicly proclaiming what I had learned about the GOP, but also what I now believe.

I have earned the reputation of an accomplished scholar at VCHS by taking the hardest courses and excelling in them. AP government and AP Macroeconomics are the two current classes of mine that deal with politics. In these classes there is much debate about heated political issues, and this is another part of my life that reveals my sincerity to the republican values. I am known by my peers to thrive in this kind of environment not only because I know what I believe in as a republican, but also because I have a vehement passion to prove it right. I have revealed my opinion in class on countless issues. Some of these issues have dealt with fiscal policy, the role of our government bureaucracy, the office of the President, war and abortion. Not once has my view been contrary to that of the GOP, I am a proud member of the Republican Party!

Next year I will be attending a California University. These days Californian schools tend to be incredibly liberal. We've seen this in the news through 'war protests' and 'pro-choice rallies'. As a right-wing Republican it will be quite a task attending college. But I will persevere despite the obstacles in my path because of how deeply rooted the values are in my life."

THE SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY
FIRST ACT

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill that will correct the mistake that the House made last week when it voted to repeal the estate tax. Not only that, but the Save Social Security First Act will also restore some credibility to the commitment that both parties in this House have made to safeguarding the Social Security trust fund.

In March of 2001, Speaker Hastert said, "We are going to wall off Social Security trust funds." Two years later, our fiscal stability has eroded and we are racing towards half-trillion dollar annual deficits. Rather than protecting it, we are now dipping into the Social Security trust fund to finance another round of tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. The wealthy few in our country are benefitting at the expense of the millions of seniors who currently rely on Social Security and the millions of American workers who will rely on it in the future.

The question is a simple one, Mr. Speaker. Would you rather add an additional \$588 billion to the Social Security trust fund over the next 20 years, or give that money to families whose wealth already dwarfs the lifetime earnings of many Americans? The answer seems obvious. I believe that this House should keep its promise to protect Social Security and stop sacrificing the needs of the vast majority of Americans for the benefit of the privileged few. It is for these reasons that I have introduced the Save Social Security First Act.

The act will accelerate estate tax relief while not entirely repealing the tax. It raises the exemption amount to \$3 million per person, or \$6 million per couple, beginning in 2004, and dedicates all estate tax revenue to the Social Security trust fund. Many of those who voted to repeal the estate tax last week argued that the tax unjustly forces small business owners to sell their business in order to pay the tax rather than be able to pass the business on to the next generation. According to a Treasury Department study, however, this is very rarely the case. In only 1.6 percent of taxable estates did a family-owned business comprise at least half of the value of the estate, and that was with an exemption just one-fifth of what is proposed by the bill I have introduced. We do not need to fully repeal the tax in order to keep it from unfairly impacting small businesses.

Under the Save Social Security First Act, only the truly wealthy will remain subject to the estate tax, while 99.5 percent of families will be exempt from it. The whole country will benefit from the \$588 billion that this bill will put into Social Security over the next 20 years. Over the next 75 years, it will make up for almost one quarter of the projected shortfall in Social Security funding.

Mr. Speaker, it's about time that we got our priorities straight. This bill says that even if you feel that fully repealing the estate tax is a priority, it is not a higher priority than ensuring the solvency of Social Security. It says that we should be committed to the growing number of seniors in our country. It says that we should be committed to today's workers who are depending on Social Security for their retirement. And it says that we should be committed to our children, who should not be forced to foot the bill of our fiscal irresponsibility.

I strongly urge this House to join me in supporting the Save Social Security First Act. We have two futures to choose from: on the one hand, we can make a tiny sliver of the wealthiest people in the country even wealthier. On the other, we can help save a program that will benefit untold millions of Americans for generations to come. This should be one of the easiest choices that we have made in a long time, and I hope to see my colleagues on both sides of the aisle join me to support this important bill.

JAMES ETTER HONORED BY THE
SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with our colleagues that Mr. James Etter has been selected by the Small Business Administration, SBA, as a Virginia Small Business and Business Advocate Award winner, and named the Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year for 2003. Mr. Etter is founder/chancellor of American Public University in Manassas, VA, and was also a winner at the regional level, receiving the Region III SBA award. SBA's Region III includes the States of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. As the Region III winner, Mr. Etter is one of only 10 Veteran's Advocate winners in the Nation.

Mr. Etter, a retired U.S. Marine Corps officer, founded the university in 1991 to find innovative ways to empower veterans and active duty military, by providing educational opportunities. The university courses are delivered exclusively through distance learning. Before distance learning was an everyday concept, James Etter developed a way for veterans and active duty military stationed abroad or locked into rigid schedules to work toward their undergraduate or master of arts degrees. From an initial enrollment of 18 students, American Public University has grown to over 10,000 registered students, of which approximately 70 percent are active and reserve duty military. The nearly 600 faculty, 76 percent of whom are veterans, provide instruction and mentoring to students from all 50 States and 30 countries. I have been told that the university maintains the most expansive military studies, strategy and history curriculum in the world. Continuing education, through the flexibility of distance learning, affords veterans and active duty military the foundation they need to become entrepreneurs.

Virginia's SBA Award winners were honored at an Awards Gala in May that also celebrated the Small Business Administration's Richmond District Office's 50th Anniversary. Mr. Etter was nominated for the award by Linda Decker, who serves as president and CEO of the Flory Small Business Center in Manassas. She also serves as the chairman of the Virginia Small Business Awards Foundation.

Other winners included: Virginia Small Business Persons of the Year—Sharon Bennett, Founder & CEO and Evan Wooton, President, Premier Pet Products, LLC, Richmond; Runners Up for Small Business Person of the Year—Maxanne Taverniti, Williamsburg Group Tour Service, Williamsburg and James Cheng, President, Computer & Hi-Tech Management, Inc., Virginia Beach; Small Business Accountant Advocate of the Year—Elizabeth Moore, Partner, Goodman & Company, LLP, Newport News; Small Business Exporter of the Year—Marti Moreninos, Universal Companies, Inc., Bristol; Financial Services Advocate of the Year—Teresa Walker, Vice President and Senior Community Development Officer, Wachovia Corporation, Roanoke; Small Business Journalist of the Year—Mary Flachsenhaar, Inside Business, Norfolk; Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year—Dr.

Donald Jones, Director, Office of Minority Procurement, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Women in Business Advocate of the Year—Claire Gastañaga, Principal, CG2 Consulting, Richmond; Young Entrepreneur of the Year—Bryce Lee Robertson, LowTechWeb.com, Mechanicsville and Entrepreneurial Success of the Year—Dennis Gilbert, President, Tesoro Corporation, Virginia Beach.

ESSAY BY DANIEL ZAJDA

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to read the essay of Daniel Zajda, a member of the Valley Center Teenage Republican Club.

"As a T.A.R.S. member, I have worked hard for the Republican Party and have accepted the Republican values. These values have affected me in many ways and believe that they will stay positive in the future. For the past three years I have been an active supporter and beneficiary of the Teen Age Republicans at Valley Center High School. I have held many positions of office, including being a main contributor in the efforts of gaining an official club charter. As a Vice president in my sophomore year, I helped moderate the agenda and served as a stand in for the President, however, I didn't know much about the difference between conservatives and liberals, but all that eventually changed when I got the privilege to attend the Republican Advocacy Workshop in our state capitol. This particular journey opened my eyes to many of the problems that our state has burdened itself with, due to the incompetence of our governing office. After experience first hand what goes on at the capitol building, I realized the power of politics and eventually realized that I would lead a moral and conservative life as a Republican Party member.

The following year I was elected as President of the T.A.R.S. club and donated much of my time to the development and expansion of our organization. I can recall spending countless hours in hope of registering voters and urging people to get out and vote.

But now our country is dealing with different issues and right now is a great time for our nation to show their support and back our President. And that's exactly what the Republican Party is doing and I am proud to be a part of it."

COMMENDING THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS OF THE CONNECTICUT INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ACADEMY

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a group of young

constituents of mine in the First Congressional District. They are the first graduating class of the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy in my hometown of East Hartford. I would also like to specifically recognize one of the graduates, Alix Prinstil, for the extraordinary speech he gave at the graduation exercises, which I also had the honor of attending. Alix's words and the sentiments he expressed are of lasting value to the school and indeed to our entire education system in Connecticut. I am proud to insert his remarks into the RECORD today and again offer my sincerest congratulations to the Class of 2003.

GRADUATION EXERCISES (Oration by Alix Prinstil)

So we've finally arrived at this day: Our High School Graduation Ceremony. Since I was in about 3rd grade, I dreamed about what it would be like at my high school graduation. This speech, as a matter of fact, was for the most part written in my mind for the past . . . let's see, 12th grade—4th grade = 8 years! I always pictured what the audience's reaction would be when I'd start off with:

"Many graduation speeches begin with, Graduation, Webster's Dictionary defines it as—the award or acceptance of an academic degree or diploma. But you won't hear such a definition in this speech."

In light of what this program has brought to our attention, however, this definition that was probably established centuries ago barely skims the threshold of what "graduation" really means, especially for this C.I.B.A. class.

Ever since we were freshmen, I don't have to remind us how we've constantly been asked by not only friends, but parents and even strangers, the question: "What is I.B.?" But how many of us, except maybe Mr. Abelon, can even now give a detailed (or even correct) answer? If, at this point though, we were asked: What does IB do for a student?, I think we could all give an appropriate response. To make a long explanation short, I'll partially quote the words of Mr. Abelon almost 4 years ago: "It's a rigorous program established to produce a well-rounded-out individual." Well when he said "rigorous" that day, not only did I not know what I was in for, but I apparently didn't know what "rigorous" really meant.

We all walked in the first day with our middle school work ethic, bags that we'd soon discover weren't big enough, and among the presence of a group of approximately 50 people, most we never seen in our lives, and probably never would have. Never did I think that someone my age from towns like Marlborough and Ellington would be in the same classroom. It was through this school that every single one of us was able to see and experience diverse personalities and people from various towns of Connecticut. This diverse group of young people is one of the things within the Academy that I'll probably remember the most. And we've all grown along the way, now looking forward to this summer so we can catch up on the sleep we've lost.

But we can't just think about what we the students went through. Let me remind you, the audience: this is the first school in New England governed by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Our teachers were just as new and in for a treat just as much as we were. Those countless hours of home-

work that we received every night was put right back into the hands of our teachers who would sometimes experience countless hours of grading, whether it be watching our Chinese characters develop as we got older, reading how students explained why a dog isn't a cat, or grading a couple of derivative and integral problems. At this point, I'd really like to give a round of applause to the teachers who have gone through this alongside their students for the first 4 years of this school's establishment, to those who we've recently had, and to those we have had and lost.

Now after all of this reminiscing, we must examine what this graduation really means for us now and what it will mean for us in the future. When we go home this evening (whatever time that may be), what will we all think about? Parents: is the first thing that occurs to you going to be what color your child's room will be painted for that office or gym you always wanted after they go to college? Graduates: will you be wondering what you're going to do for fun tomorrow . . . if we can wake up for tomorrow? With 4 years of such great education behind us, I think we should all go home and take some time to reflect on the advantages we have gained over the majority of students in this state; country; and even the world.

Now for the backbone of this delivery; what I've been trying to lead into for the past 687 words . . .

I need to refer back to the beginning of this speech when I said that graduation means more than just receiving a diploma; more than just moving a tassel from one side of our hat to the other and officially ending the part of our lives as high school students. Graduation is what you make of it. And after experiencing life under the wings of the IBO, I should be correct when I say that the lives of each and every one of us will be successful ones, no matter where we go. When we have our 5 or 10-year reunion, or whenever Allison wants to organize it, I strongly doubt that my statement will be false. After 4 years of seeing the same exact faces everyday all day, we're finally each going our separate ways. College life is going to be much different from what we have had. Let's not forget exactly where we came from. We've put up with each other for what seemed forever. But I have to say something I realized just two days ago and that I got a little emotional when typing this: friends aren't always people you talk to everyday. There are a lot of people in the world that you may call a friend and could be one of the worst individuals to be involved with. But being with you guys for 4 years has showed me that there's greatness in every single one of you, things unmentionable to the mind's recollection, and that I really have to say I love you all. There was apparently apart in my heart that was being saved to be filled by a group of people, and I realized that the 21 of you, in each of your own ways, filled that void with a better feeling that I've had in a long time. The feeling I'll have for you next year is beyond the word "miss". I just hope the person I've been will be imprinted into your hearts as well. Please remember that this isn't goodbye, it's just "see you later."

Once again, I would like to thank Mr. Abelon for being patient with this class, the Governing Committee, the East Hartford Board of Education, Mr. Jordan, especially Dr. Fallon, our Guidance Counselor Mr.