

we suspected: that the people most threatened by Saddam Hussein's rule of terror were the oppressed Iraqi citizens.

The disorder and political uncertainty we are witnessing in postwar Iraq, while at one level unsettling, is to some extent a reflection of how completely Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime dominated and dictated Iraqi life. International economic sanctions against Iraq have been lifted, and the international community is beginning to get involved in the reconstruction of Iraq.

The removal of Hussein has also improved the regional security situation in the Middle East. Syria has made commitments to crack down on terrorist offices in Damascus; Iranian opponents of the clerical regime in Tehran have been emboldened; the removal of the Iraqi threat has enabled the United States to announce we will end the controversial stationing of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia; and, the release of the "road map" has re-energized the difficult but critical search for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

There are efforts in the Congress to employ a full investigation into these difficult issues to understand whether mistakes were made, and to take action to fix them, in fulfillment of Congress's important oversight responsibilities. To date, the chairmen of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence reject a broader probe of the WMD issue.

The Coalition forces in Iraq have investigated approximately 200 of 1,000 potential sites. New information continues to come to the attention of the Coalition forces as members of Hussein's regime come forward. Since we do not know the outcome of these efforts, calls for an investigation seem premature at best.

Finally, we are beginning to see evidence that America's readiness to act against Saddam may be encouraging better behavior by other rogue states like North Korea and Sudan, which may increase the chances of peaceful resolution of our disputes with them as well.

I know there are concerns about our failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq, and whether that indicates that the pre-war intelligence on Iraq's WMD was either incorrect or biased. There have been some challenges hampering the Administration's efforts to locate Iraq's WMD program, such as Hussein's 12-year practice of WMD concealment and deception, reluctance of Iraqi WMD scientists to discuss their past works and fears of reprisal, and the looting of suspected WMD sites.

I believe Congress is exercising its oversight authority and has set in place procedures to review comprehensively, and on a bipartisan basis, the intelligence surrounding Iraq prior to the outbreak of war, and to take account of any dissident views on the Iraqi threat within the intelligence community. The U.S. armed forces are still trying to pacify sectors of Iraq and to deal with daily attacks on U.S. soldiers west and north of Baghdad. People who have lived in a police state with no freedom of speech are unlikely to volunteer information until stability and security are achieved in Iraq. We must all remember, 30 years of living under a dictatorship cannot be reversed overnight.

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

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

#### SAVE HEAD START

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the distinguished gentleman from Maryland and the distinguished gentleman from California and the Chair of our Black Caucus who will be coming up in a minute for organizing this important discussion on the future of Head Start.

Later in the week, the House of Representatives will consider H.R. 2210, a bill that radically alters the Head Start program. H.R. 2210 is ill-conceived and ill-devised. It sacrifices accountability and oversight in favor of standardized testing of 4-year-olds. It teaches our children a wrong lesson on discrimination by repealing current civil rights protections and allowing programs to discriminate in their hiring practices based on religion. It gambles with our children's future by diverting already limited resources into experimental block grants that can be diverted to other Federal programs.

H.R. 2210 is a classic bait and switch bill. The major changes in and new requirements under title I are not contained in title II of the bill, which creates an experimental block grants program for Head Start in eight States. This overhaul reverses the precedent in achievement that was created by the No Child Left Behind Act.

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NCLB seeks to close the achievement gap through strong standards and stronger Federal oversight. H.R. 2210 will only damage the integrity and efficiency of the program by redirecting resources to a block grant system and neglecting Federal standards and oversight.

Indeed, changing the funding formula to block grants under Title II creates a daunting scenario for Head Start. The four eligibility requirements under Title II do not address quality or expertise. The legislation requires the bare minimum of the eight participating States. All that a State has to do is to have an existing preschool system, a basic standard for school readiness and

basic requirements for the allocation of Head Start funding.

All 50 States meet these minimum requirements, but too few provide quality service. For example, only three States currently provide all the services needed to get at-risk children ready to learn. These States provide the same set of eight comprehensive services required of Head Start through State-run pre-K programs. At present, there is simply no clear body of research demonstrating the effectiveness of State pre-kindergarten programs.

Let me also elaborate on other shortcomings of the proposal to change Head Start into a block grant program. Title II of H.R. 2210 does not specify minimum thresholds on class size, class-staff ratios or curriculum content. It calls on each State to create its own school readiness standards and own criteria for measuring achievement. With State preschool programs varying greatly in content and quality, how can we ensure that low-income children from across the Nation will receive a quality education?

H.R. 2210 also does not contain adequate evaluation and oversight requirements. Instead of annual reports and on-site evaluation by the HHS every 3 years, States under the block grant program will not be held to any minimum threshold requirements on quality or appropriateness of their State plans. This is a giant step backwards for the Head Start program.

Finally, the bill allows the States to use Head Start funds to supplement other Federal programs. Governors may be able to use this money to cover budget deficits in their States. My home State of California receives over \$800 million in Federal moneys for Head Start. California is now suffering from a budget deficit in excess of \$38 billion. With the block grant proposal, my State could divert TANF and Title I preschool funds to offset the State's budget deficit, then use the Head Start block grant to fund TANF and Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This loophole allows States to reduce Head Start funding legally, which severely shortchanges our low-income children.

Mr. Speaker, this is the wrong way to go.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### DO NOT BLOCK GRANT HEAD START

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, once again, the needs of children and families do not make a priority in this House. They have left our children out in the cold on the number one issue of our community and that is education. Their proposal to block grant Head Start which provides money without guidelines for States and local implementation diverts attention from the critical needs of this program.

What happened to the issue of local control when it comes to Head Start? What happened to the fact that Head Start has been working well as it is now? Why now send that money to the States?

The only reason we decided to establish Head Start was because the States were unwilling, Mr. Speaker, unwilling to come up and respond to the needs of these children, unwilling to prepare them.

The State of Texas, for example, is still a State that only funds kindergarten half a day. The local community taxpayers have to come up with the rest of the money in order to pay for half day kindergarten, not to mention that they do not provide anything for early childhood. So Head Start is a critical program that has been there, and there actually has been a Head Start for a lot of the Hispanic community. Where 50 percent of our youngsters are still dropping out, Head Start has been there for them to make sure and the statistics show that kids that go to Head Start are less likely to drop out or more likely to finish when they should and go beyond.

Head Start has been a proven program, so why try to mess with it? Why try to destroy Head Start the way we know it now?

One of the top educational priorities of the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus is to ensure that Hispanic children enter school ready to learn. Hispanic children represent the fastest-growing school age population in the Nation. Unfortunately, they are the least likely to have the participation in preschool programs, opening an achievement gap before the first day of school begins.

Soon Congress will again decide funding levels for Head Start, the premier level, early childhood education program that presents us with an opportunity to close that gap for Hispanic and African American children and low-income children.

For over 35 years, the Head Start program has proven itself. It has enjoyed great success in meeting the comprehensive development needs of low-income children. Head Start programs achieve school readiness for these children through the holistic approach and intense parent involvement, and that includes working with the parents. It includes reaching out, making sure that they understand how important education is, which is critical for those youngsters staying in school.

The range and intensity of service is assured because of the national pro-

gram standards that it has. If we rely on the States for full implementation, it would fatally undermine these national standards, jeopardizing access to comprehensive services as well as making Head Start ineffective in serving low-income children and their families. Yet that is just what the Bush administration has proposed and the Republican Congress intends to do and that is to begin to destroy Head Start the way we know it now, put it into the form of a block grant.

Instead of looking for ways to remove themselves of their responsibility for Head Start, the administration and the Congress should put Head Start on the path for full funding. Currently, Head Start serves about 60 percent of their eligible children. They need additional resources to make sure we cover the other kids that are not covered by the existing program.

Migrant and seasonal Head Start programs only reach 19 percent of the eligible children. The State educational agencies are not equipped to reach out to these youngsters that are out in the field a lot of times. As a Nation, we must do better. For migrant and seasonal farm work families, access to Head Start is a public health and safety issue.

In 1992, the General Accounting Office found that at least one-third of all migrant children as young as 10 work in the fields. This is in 1992, where there are still kids working in fields with their families and either contribute to their family income or because no child care was available. Children in the field are at risk from injuries from farm equipment, overexposure to the elements, as well as pesticide poisoning and, of course, long-term health risks associated with exposure to chemicals. In many cases, if slots are not available to migrant seasonal Head Start programs, no programs exist in the area, there is no alternatives but to take the children to the fields and perhaps leave them unattended at the labor camps.

The administration's proposal to block grant Head Start would do nothing to strengthen the growing numbers of limited English proficiency children in communities across this Nation; and we now see them in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas and a lot of the States where we had not seen them before. As we have seen, with the implementation of the President's No Child Left Behind Act, States look to the Federal Government for assistance and guidance in providing services to these populations.

The recent phenomena of emerging Hispanic communities poses a challenge to Head Start providers and participants. As children move into the areas of the U.S. where there have been Head Start programs operating but without experience in servicing, it is important that we continue to provide these resources.

In addition, let me just close by saying it is important that we keep Head

Start. It is important that we remain on track. It is important that this program also remain within the Department of Health and not be moved to the Department of Education.

I also want to congratulate the Congressional Black Caucus on their efforts under the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), and I thank him for being here tonight.

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

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DOGGETT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. WAXMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### FUTURE OF HEAD START

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus have come together tonight to address issues that confront our children, and when I say our children, I mean all children who unfortunately may not have the funds to get off to a good start before they start school officially in the kindergarten.

I will have a lot to say about this subject as we go through this hour, Mr. Speaker, but I want to yield first of all to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), who has been at the forefront of addressing issues with regard to Head Start and faith-based issues and constitutional issues that confront us and has made it his business and has vigilantly stood guard with regard to making sure that programs that are put forth are ones that do not discriminate against people with our own tax dollars.