

Start children enter the program at the 21st percentile of school readiness. They leave the program at the 24th percentile of school readiness. So after 2 years, \$6,500-per-year education, they are improving roughly 3 percent. Certainly that can be improved. That is essentially one thing that will be addressed in this reauthorization.

Reauthorization does this: it certainly strengthens the present Head Start programs and increases funding by \$202 million to \$6.9 billion. So there is a funding increase. It improves teacher qualification requirements. It does not weaken the teacher qualification in any way. It keeps Head Start under Health and Human Services. There has been a misperception that it is being moved to another Department. That is not true. It preserves the current health and nutrition programs. It does not change them at all. And provides extra funding for underachieving programs. These are all things that have been similar in the past.

There are three significant changes that I think are worthy of note: number one, the reauthorization strengthens the academic components of curriculum and improves school readiness, so such things as vocabulary, early reading, learning letters, learning numbers will be ramped up; and we hope that instead of ending up at the 24th percentile of school readiness, they might end up at the 35th or the 40th or the 45th percentile. This definitely needs to be improved and it will be.

Secondly, this reauthorization provides an optional eight-State pilot program, so 42 States will remain the same and only eight States who choose to do so will enter into this pilot program. What this does, it provides a seamless program that coordinates State standards for early childhood education with Head Start so we do not have two programs on the same track existing side by side which is very expensive and furthermore causes a lot of children to fall through the cracks. We will serve more kids.

Then lastly, it encourages parental involvement to transition from Head Start to elementary school. One of the great things about Head Start right now is that parents are involved with children in Head Start. Traditionally and typically when kids go on to elementary school, the parents drop out of the picture. And so in the reauthorization, we are trying to make sure that parents stay involved with their children from Head Start on into elementary school, and this certainly is one of the things that can tremendously benefit children in this program.

We encourage our colleagues to vote "yes" on this reauthorization. This is an important program. I believe that the reauthorization strengthens the Head Start program. We urge a "yes" vote.

REGARDING THE U.S.-CHILE AND U.S.-SINGAPORE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

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

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to urge my colleagues to oppose the U.S.-negotiated free trade agreements between our country, Chile, and Singapore. Both of these agreements in my opinion represent a substantial backwards step from existing trade policies in terms of labor and environmental protections and set, to me, a dangerous precedent for future free trade agreements, especially as we look to the future and what we are going to be doing with Central American countries.

Do not get me wrong. I am not opposed to trade. But I would like to see fair and equitable trade. Trade between countries can yield enormous benefits for businesses and economies and working families of all countries if it is done fairly. Two years ago, I voted on this floor to support the Jordan Free Trade Agreement, an agreement passed unanimously by this Congress. That agreement included fundamental labor and environmental standards that made it an exceptional model for future trade policy.

Unfortunately, the U.S.-Chile and U.S.-Singapore free trade agreements negotiated by this administration fail to include many of the provisions that were included in the Jordan agreement that could have been used as a model. In fact, the agreements' enforcement standards are, in many respects, weaker than those in NAFTA, an agreement that has resulted, as Members know, in the loss of thousands of jobs and a larger trade deficit. Rather than backtrack on trade policy, we should be building upon trade policy established in the Jordan Free Trade Agreement.

The Jordan Free Trade Agreement required that Jordan not only meet internationally recognized labor standards on child labor and the right to unionize but to enforce them as well. The agreements with Chile and Singapore fail to do this, allowing even the most rampant violations of core labor standards to go undisputed. The one commitment that can be enforced under the agreements, the commitment to abide by the country's own domestic labor laws, is merely subject to limited fines, a lot of good that is going to do, a much weaker penalty than the trade sanctions available for commercial disputes.

The agreements are also troubling because they create an entirely new visa category which would allow employers to bring thousands of temporary workers into the U.S. at the expense of American jobs. The result would be a vast influx of foreign professionals from many low-wage nations competing with American citizens for higher paying jobs. They would fill virtually any service sector job in indus-

tries such as finance, engineering, medicine, and law. Though the administration made improvements upon its original draft implementing legislation of these new visa programs, the implementing legislation for the new visa programs still falls short of existing H1-B programs. It omits important safeguards for ensuring that employers do not abuse temporary workers to undermine the domestic labor market.

Whether you support free trade or not, we can all agree that we should not be allowing for the entry of thousands of temporary workers at the expense of jobs that can be filled by American workers, especially in a time of unemployment when we are at a 9-year high. In my own district, I repeatedly let people know that our unemployment rate is above 7 to 10 percent in some of the cities that I represent.

I also urge my colleagues to oppose these agreements because they will not promote a cleaner and healthier global environment. While the Chile and Singapore free trade agreements include environmental provisions, so they say, the language used in many cases is ambiguous and provides little assurance that the environmental promises of the agreements will be fulfilled. The agreements fail, in my opinion, to include a process that would allow citizens of the countries involved to even file complaints about possible environmental violations. Such a process, as you know, is even included in the NAFTA agreements.

Further, I am concerned that the ambiguous definition of environmental laws in the Chile free trade agreement leaves open the strong possibility that natural resources representing over 40 percent of Chile's exports will not be covered by the agreement's environmental rules. At a time when the Bush administration is negotiating trade agreements with countries in regions with abysmal labor and environmental records, we should not be approving trade agreements that fail to ensure protections for workers.

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The administration has clearly stated that the Chile and Singapore free trade agreements will serve as a model for the Central American Free Trade Agreement known as CAFTA.

The weak workers' rights provisions in the Chile and Singapore agreements will be disastrous if applied to future trade agreements with countries and regions where abuse of workers' rights has been egregious. A vote for them would send a signal that the weak labor and environmental standards in them are not acceptable. Strong labor provisions must be included if workers are to become real partners in economic progress and help develop the expanded middle class.

This year brings the 10th anniversary of the NAFTA agreement. The result: Our combined trade deficit with Mexico and Canada has grown from \$9 billion to \$87 billion, and more than half

of the million U.S. workers have lost their jobs.

I urge my colleagues to vote down these two agreements.

AVOIDING ENTANGLING ALLIANCES AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS

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

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, the truth about whether or not Saddam Hussein was trying to buy uranium from Niger has dominated the news for the past several weeks. Many of those challenging the administration on this issue are motivated more by politics than by policy. Some doing the challenging were strongly in favor of going to war against Iraq when it appeared politically popular to do so, but are now chagrined that the war is not going as smoothly as was hoped.

I am sure once the alleged attempt to buy uranium is thoroughly debunked, the other excuses for going to war will be examined with a great deal of scrutiny as well. It is obvious that the evidence used to justify going to war is now less than convincing.

The charge that Saddam Hussein had aluminum tubes used in manufacturing nuclear weapons was in error.

A fleet of unmanned aerial vehicles capable of dispensing chemical and biological weapons did not exist.

The 63,000 liters of anthrax and botulism have not been found, nor have any of the mobile germ labs. There are no signs of the 1 million pounds of sarin, mustard and VX gasses.

No evidence has been revealed to indicate Iraq was a threat to anyone's security, let alone ours.

The charge that Saddam Hussein was connected to the al Qaeda was wrong. Saddam Hussein's flaunting of the UN resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction remains unproven.

How could so many errors have occurred? Some say it was ineptness while others claim outright deception and lies. There are some who say it was selective use of intelligence to promote a particular policy already decided upon. This debate, I am sure, will rage on for a long time, and since motivations are subjective and hard to prove, resolving the controversy will be difficult. However, this should not diminish the importance of sorting out the truth from the fiction, the errors from the malice.

One question, though, I hope gets asked is why should we use intelligence cited by a foreign government as a justification for going to war? One would think that with the billions we spend, we could fully rely on our own intelligence-gathering agencies.

Another point of interest, lacking a coherent foreign policy, we have support for war coming from different groups depending on circumstances unrelated to national defense. For in-

stance, those who strenuously objected to Kosovo promoted war in Iraq. And those who objected to Iraq are now anxious to send troops to Liberia. For some, U.N. permission is important and necessary. For others, the U.N. is helpful as long as it endorses the war they want.

Only a few correctly look to the Constitution and to the Congress to sort out the pros and cons of each conflict and decide whether or not a declaration of war is warranted.

The sad fact is that we have lost our way. A threat to national security is no longer a litmus test for sending troops hither and yon, and the American people no longer require Congress to declare the wars we fight. Hopefully, some day that will be changed.

The raging debate over whether or not Saddam Hussein tried to buy uranium, as important as it is, distracts from the much more important strategic issue of what is the proper foreign policy in a republic.

Hopefully, we will soon seriously consider the policy of noninterventionism in the affairs of others. Avoiding entangling alliances and staying out of the internal affairs of other nations is a policy most conducive to peace and prosperity and one the Founders endorsed. Policing the world and nation building are not part of a constitutional republic.

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

(Mr. GRIJALVA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the special order time of the gentleman from Arizona.

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

There was no objection.

IN SUPPORT OF INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE DISTORTION OF EVIDENCE OF IRAQ'S WMD PROGRAMS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I first thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) for his intellectual honesty and consistency and his clear vision on so many foreign policy issues.

A hundred sixty-five years ago, Madam Speaker, the United States Congress, amazingly enough, the House of Representatives, passed a rule prohibiting its Members from debating the great issue of slavery, the greatest

blemish on American history. In those days, John Quincy Adams, former President, then elected to the House of Representatives, came down to the well of the House week after week reading letters from his constituents, reading what he called petitions from groups in his State of Massachusetts, many of them written by women in women's clubs, women who actually could not in those days, as we all know, vote in American elections. He read these letters protesting this rule prohibiting the discussion of slavery and protesting the institution of slavery itself.

Today, we find ourselves in a Congress where this Congress has refused to discuss and investigate what exactly the President did and said about weapons of mass destruction. As the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) said earlier in the evening, an organization called MoveOn.org, an organization of 1½ million Americans, tens of thousands in my State of Ohio, asked its members to sign an on-line petition saying that we believe Congress should support an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's distortion of evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program.

Tens of thousands of those members, in addition to signing the petitions, wrote letters to Members of Congress. And similar to John Quincy Adams's coming to the House floor to expose the Congress' inability and unwillingness to discuss issues of national import, many of us have come to the House floor every night to share the concerns, not just our concerns, Members of Congress, but to share the concerns of people in my district in my State. And I would like to share a handful of those letters.

Dennis Gadel of Akron, Ohio wrote: "What makes this tragedy especially difficult for freedom-loving people to come to terms with is that, unlike September 11, this tragedy was self-inflicted. In order to have a strong democracy, we must hold leaders accountable for their deception."

Ms. Barbara Hanselman from Wadsworth wrote: "I consider it my patriotic duty to give my informed support to those who represent our people. When I cannot trust my government to speak the truth," Ms. Hanselman wrote, "our very basic freedoms are eroded. To lead a country to war, when many U.S. citizens and millions of people around the world were against this act of aggression without clear evidence, by calculated misrepresentation of the facts, is so beneath what my country stands for."

Jim Miraldi of Lorain, Ohio, my hometown, writes: "Our leaders must respect democracy. If our leaders lie or mislead their own people to support military action to make an immense change in foreign policy, then this greatly undermines our country" ". . . Saddam Hussein was" ". . . "evil," certainly. "Maybe we should have gone