Mr. Robert Gibbs, and his wife Mary Catherine on the birth of their first son, Ethan Lane Gibbs. Ethan was born on Tuesday, July 8, 2003, and he weighed 10 pounds and 5 ounces. As Robert has noted, Ethan is a big boy, a trait gained from his father, and a beautiful baby, a trait passed down by his mother. My wife Faye joins me in wishing Robert and Mary Catherine great happiness during this very special time in their lives.

As a father of three, I know the immeasurable pride and rewarding challenge that children bring into your life. The birth of a child changes your perspective on life and opens the world to you in a fresh, new way. Their innocence keeps you young-at-heart. A little miracle, a new baby holds all the potential of what human beings can achieve.

With great pleasure, I welcome young Ethan into the world and wish Robert and Mary Catherine all the best as they raise him.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 2004 AND 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 15, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1950) to authorize appropriations for the Department of State for the fiscal years 2004 and 2005, to authorize appropriations under the Arms Export Control Act and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for security assistance for fiscal years 2004 and 2005, and for other purposes:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased today to speak in support of my amendment to H.R. 1950, the State Department Authorization bill, which expresses the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of State should provide adequate resources to United States Embassies and Consular Offices in order to meet the workload requirements for visa application processing.

The State Department recently issued a rule requiring nearly all visa applicants who wish to come to the United States for travel, business, or study to have personal interviews at Embassies or Consular Offices. This rule will significantly increase the amount of work and time Embassies and Consulates must give to each visa applicant. In Fiscal Year 2002, nearly 5.8 million business and tourist visas were issued and it is estimated that, in some countries, as few as 20 percent of applicants were required to be interviewed. While I support necessary security precautions, this new rule will clearly result in months of backlogs that could seriously jeopardize American business, education, and tourism unless these offices are provided with adequate resources and personnel to handle the increased workload.

Unfortunately, the Secretary of State has expressed to U.S. Embassies and Consulates that he ''expects and accepts that many posts will face processing backlogs for the indefinite future.'' Furthermore, the message from the State Department in Washington, DC, is that, while posts can request more personnel, for the most part, they ''must implement the new interview guidelines using existing resources. Posts should not, repeat not, use overtime to deal with additional workload requirements.''

Requiring our Foreign Service officers to take on a vastly increased workload without also providing the resources necessary to support that work may actually undermine our national security. It is unclear that overworked staff who are forced to conduct personal interviews with thousands of visa applicants will be able to adequately identify terrorists and other potentially harmful visitors in what are reportedly two to three minute interviews. Instead, these workers will be more likely to miss important details in visa applications as they rush to keep up with additional work requirements. Only by providing sufficient resources to meet the new interview requirements can we ensure that the steps we take to implement more stringent security protections will effectively safeguard our Nation from those who may wish to do us harm.

Furthermore, if we are to remain a respected nation and an ally to countries around the world, it is critical that people be able to travel to the United States for business and pleasure without unnecessary hurdles of burdens. It is also critical for our economy, which depends on tourism and on conducting business with foreign nationals in order to stay strong, that people be able to travel to the United States without unnecessary inconveniences. Long wait times and growing backlogs of visa applications will serve to do the opposite and discourage people from coming to the United States to spend money and conduct business.

I have heard from my constituents of people missing business meetings, important family events, and opportunities to study at American universities because it took too long for their visa application to be processed. For example, we have heard about three month waiting periods in Israel, one of our closest allies, which prevented a young Israeli from coming to the U.S. to work as a camp counselor. In another example, a group of Indian performers who were set to tour the United States will miss their performance in Chicago this weekend because they were not approved in time. And three people from Jakarta will miss their business meeting next week because their visa was not accepted in time. Finally, a young man had to postpone a wedding reception he had been planning for months because visa backlogs prevented his fiancée from getting to the United States from South Korea in time.

It is because of situations like these and countless others that we must provide our Embassies and Consulates with adequate resources to meet the needs of visa applicants. It is because of our national security interests that we must provide our Foreign Service officers the resources they need to do their jobs well. I am pleased that this amendment was accepted into the en bloc amendment, and I thank Chairman HYDE and Ranking Member LANTOS for their support.

WORKING GROUP ON WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE SPECIAL ORDER

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, President Calvin Coolidge wisely said, ''The men and women of this country who toil are the ones who bear the cost of the government. Every dollar we carelessly waste means that their life will be so much the more meager. Every dollar that we prudently save means that their life will be so much the more abundant.''

Mr. Speaker, the men and women of this country deserve fiscal responsibility and careful spending. They deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing that we are doing all we can to prudently save, and we are working to find ways to ensure life more abundant.

I believe every department of government can and must examine ways to more efficiently use taxpayer dollars to improve the lives of all Americans. Today I would like to discuss specifically just one: the Department of Education.

Citizens Against Government Waste say, ''the Department [of Education] now employs nearly 5,000 people, close to 1000 percent increase from 1979, yet ED spending for public schools accounts for less than 6 percent of total education spending. There are currently 780 education programs spread throughout 39 Federal agencies, costing taxpayers $100 billion annually . . . In addition, the average amount spent on each public school student has skyrocketed. In 1965, the average SAT score was 980 and slightly less than $3,000 was spent per student. More than 30 years later, the average SAT score is 910 and about $6,500 is spent per pupil.''

The reckless swelling of this Department is not an indication of success. Our children deserve money better spent, that is, taxpayer dollars going for what they were intended: a quality education. Pouring more money into a deficit system will not improve education. Instead, it will further weaken the kind of education that our young people deserve.

In the state of Arizona, the average cost of an hour of tutoring at the Sylvan Learning Center is $40. Ending the practice of fraudulent disability loan deferment represents what could be one billion hours of private tutoring, quality one-on-one hours that could potentially make a profound difference in the education of a child.

According to the Inspector General of the Education Department Lorraine Lewis, also in 1999, the Department of Education made a number of improper payments, including about $125 million in duplicate payments to 45 different grantees, $664,000 in duplicate payment to 51 different schools and a $6 million double payment to a single school.

These duplicate payments are unacceptable and irresponsible.

A double payment of $125 million dollars represents the opportunity for 869 Arizonans to attend four tuition-free years at Arizona State University.

Some may say figures like $6 million, or $664,000, are not even worth mentioning or tracking in a system spending hundreds of billions of dollars. I think that line of reasoning is exactly why Department of Education is so fraught with financial mismanagement. It is time we examine how to better spend millions, hundreds of thousands, and even thousands of hard-earned taxpayer dollars, and set a new standard of accountability to those who ''toil to bear the cost of government.''