

tries to infringe upon the rights of American citizens to express themselves regarding God and country should be taken to task.

This country was founded upon the principles of believing in God and a supreme being, and we're now trying to take that apart one step at a time.

The Architect of the Capitol, who represents the Congress of the United States and this Capitol, has no right to tell a Scout that he can't honor his grandfather by giving him a flag and a certificate that says, "This flag was flown in honor of Marcel Laroche, my grandfather, for his dedication and love of God, country and family."

And so the President, as I understand it, appoints the Architect of the Capitol. Mr. President, if he happens to be listening, I hope he will remove this man and replace him with somebody who really loves God, country, and his fellow man.

A CRISIS FOR IRAQ'S CHILDREN

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, every parent, every parent, whether living in the United States or in Iraq, wants only the best for their children. They want their kids to feel safe and to have the very best of everything. And every parent wants their child to get a quality education.

Worldwide over 100 million children do not attend school. Unfortunately, the trends of school attendance in Iraq are very discouraging. According to recent UNICEF reports, high levels of street violence and lawlessness are keeping school attendance levels, particularly of girls, to low levels.

Often because families can no longer afford to keep their children in school, girls are pulled out to assist their families with household work and to look after younger siblings while their brothers finish school.

The large refugee crisis is another impediment to education. UNHCR estimates that 500,000 school-age Iraqi children now live in neighboring countries. This could put a severe strain on neighboring countries' schools and their school systems, that is, if children are even allowed to attend school while living as a refugee. Additionally, refugee families often do not have money for tuition, and refugee children may not speak the local language.

This summer, the United Nations launched a global appeal for \$129 million to get more Iraqi refugee children into schools. This is just a Band-Aid, Mr. Speaker, on the situation.

Until Iraq is stabilized and families can return to their homes, we're going to have a generation of children who have lived their lives on the run, without feeling safe and without an education.

In a nation with a rich legacy of education, a nation that has produced

some of the world's leading doctors, architects and artists, parents are watching their children denied an education? This is not the future we want for American children, and it is not the future we want for Iraqi children.

Iraqis of all ages deserve a safe and secure future and one that is enriched by education.

We know how to provide that future, and it's by ending the occupation and returning sovereignty to Iraq. If this administration would only listen to the Congress, or even to the Iraqi people themselves, they would see that there is overwhelming support to bring our troops home.

This does not mean that we would end our commitment to the Iraqi people. In fact, the American people have a long history of generosity and great humanitarian works. Our dedication to the children of Iraq would not end with our military presence. Iraq is only made less stable with an endless American occupation, and our very presence appears to be inspiring even more insurgents.

Let's do what is in the best interests of the United States and of Iraq. Let's renew our humanitarian commitment to the Iraqi people. Let's end this misguided occupation. Let's bring our troops and military contractors home.

□ 1545

SPUTNIK 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take the opportunity to recognize the importance to our Nation of what happened 50 years ago today.

On October 4, 1957, Russia launched Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite to successfully be placed in orbit around the Earth. On that day, Americans were shocked, and many believed that we were no longer the technological leader of the world.

On that day Americans realized that, like never before, our homeland was threatened. This was significant, because the leader of the Nation that launched Sputnik, Nikita Khrushchev, less than a year earlier had aggressively delivered to America the now-famous threat, "We will bury you."

To many Americans, Sputnik was a major step showing how the Russians were starting to make good on their promise, and it was a promise that America had to counter and nullify before it was too late. The reverberations of Sputnik and its launch were felt many years thereafter.

Thankfully, our Nation got busy after October 4, 1957, to ensure that our space program became second to none. We began an aggressive effort to educate and train a new generation of engineers and technicians, and we began

the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs and ultimately, of course, putting Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin successfully on the Moon and bringing them home safely.

Since then, of course, we have built the most versatile and complex machine ever made by man, the space shuttle. We have constructed the International Space Station.

I am proud of what we have accomplished with our space program, and now we are moving forward with the next step in human space flight, the Constellation program, which will, again, carry us back to the Moon and, with international cooperation, on to Mars. But we are, today, facing another watershed moment in the history of our space program.

By 2010, the space shuttle is scheduled to end its over quarter century of operations. While this is a sad time for many, it will also allow us to continue on into the future with the Constellation program. Unfortunately, Constellation is not set to begin space flight until 2015.

What will America's manned space flight program be doing to put men and women into space between 2010 and 2015? Quite puzzlingly, we will be asking the Russians, the country that agreed to bury us 50 years ago, to launch our astronauts into orbit.

Now, I supported President Bush's announced plan in 2004 to someday retire the space shuttle and replace it with a new, safer and less expensive system to operate that could go back to the Moon and on to Mars, but I was critical of the President at the time, with his notion that we retire the shuttle in 2010 and not launch the new system until 2015, and that we rely, of all places, on Russia to launch our astronauts into orbit. Yet, today, that is what we are planning on doing.

What is very troubling about our relationship with Russia, while we have had good cooperation with them in recent years, there have been problems, problems with proliferating weapons of mass destruction to rogue nations such as Iran. Indeed, this body passed the Iran Nonproliferation Act, and then we had to go back and amend it to allow our current cooperation with the Russians.

Then, of course, more recently, the Russians have engaged in a number of behaviors that I consider to be very ominous for our future relationship with them, placing a Russian flag on the bottom of Arctic Circle and claiming the Arctic bottoms resources for Russia.

The Russians have bitterly opposed our deployment of missile defense systems to protect us against Iran in Europe. The Russian leader, President Putin, has claimed that it will lead to a new missile race, and he has, indeed, threatened to specifically target European capitals. Is Russia trying to bring back the Cold War? It has reinitiated its bomber patrols, patrolling our NATO allies.

I think if you add up all of these things and their recent abrogation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which placed restrictions on conventional forces, I think this does not bode well to our continued reliance on the Russians in the years ahead, and we need a new plan to deal with our manned space flight program in the years ahead.

THE COST OF CAMPAIGNING FOR PRESIDENT

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, what must our children think when they hear news reports about the upcoming Presidential race of 2008, and when they hear over and over and over again how much money all the candidates are raising, \$27 million, \$20 million, \$18 million, and the ante is being raised every week.

In just 6 months of campaigning, the 2008 Presidential candidates have already amassed more than \$265 million. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, some analysts predict that the eventual nominees will need to raise a half a billion dollars apiece in order to compete, a half a billion dollars apiece.

In the last 2004 Presidential election, the candidates, together, raised \$880,500,000. The 2008 Presidential election will see the first billion-dollar race in American history. That's more than the gross domestic product of 25 nations.

What must our children think about this out-of-control arms race? Don't they conclude only the rich have a chance, that the rich control, that to get ahead, you have to court the rich? What must our children think of our Nation, once founded with the high ideals of patriotism, sacrifice and rebellion against the entrenched view that has now fallen so sick, so sick. A majority of its candidates in both parties run to Wall Street and hedge funds and mega-buck donors and bundlers whose real motives often come to light as scandals.

Former Member Shirley Chisholm described herself as unbought and unbossed. Those of us who knew her knew she wasn't kidding when she said that.

It's hard to imagine a Presidential candidate staying unbought under such immense pressure to raise money. Inevitably, those candidates have to turn to the superrich or to bundlers, to special interests and unsavory characters who care only about themselves and their special interests and very little about our country.

When we start looking under the rocks, it's hard to say what we will find: foreign influence in unregulated hedge funds, foreign contributions laundered through third parties, cronyism taken to the nth degree.

Almost 100 years ago, a native son of Ohio, Warren Harding, won the White House. He ushered in a level of corruption that was unrivaled at that time. The dollar amounts being tossed around in the 2000 Presidential race make it only a matter of time before another giant scandal rocks our government and further undermines the confidence of our body politic and our very system of government. We all know what's going on is wrong, wrong, wrong.

When I am asked who I am supporting for President, I say the one who has raised the least money.

We should be asking ourselves what must our children think, before it's too late. We can act now to curb this out-of-control arms race. I have introduced a bill, H. Con. Res. 6, that reaffirms that the presence of unlimited amounts of money corrupts the political process in a fundamental manner.

If money equals free speech, then lack of money equals lack of free speech. The bill expresses the need to preserve, through our Constitution, the integrity of a republican form of government, restore public confidence in election campaigns, and ensure all citizens an equal opportunity to participate in our political process.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation and for Americans to pay attention and call this important issue to the attention of their Representatives.

America needs a new revolution to take our politics back from the money handlers and telemarketers. Let's return our Republic to the American people and, importantly, a free Republic to our children.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

□ 1600

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I have stood on this floor several times now speaking about the negative impact that NCLB, No Child Left Behind, has had on our children's education and, consequently, on our children's future as well.

Tonight I will speak continuously about that as well and the problems until NCLB are fixed. I will continue to speak out against NCLB until parents and educators are empowered to make the changes that will ensure an envi-

ronment in which schools can teach and children can learn.

More and more information is coming to light attracting more and more supporters to the belief that not only should No Child Left Behind not be reauthorized at this time, but, actually, it should be completely scrapped.

Yesterday, in the New York Times, Diane Ravitch, a professor of education at NYU and a former assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, wrote, and I quote, "the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 is fundamentally flawed," and that it should be "overhauled, not just tweaked."

She continued, "The latest national tests, released last week, show that academic gains since 2003 have been modest, less even than those posted in the years before the law was put in place. In eighth-grade reading, there have been no gains at all since 1998. The main goal of the law—that all children in the United States will be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014—is simply unattainable. The primary strategy—to test all children in those subjects in grades three through eight every year—has unleashed an unhealthy obsession with standardized testing that has reduced the time available for teaching other important subjects. Furthermore, the law completely fractures the traditional limits on federal interference in the operation of local schools."

Let me repeat that last point, because I believe that it is a missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle. NCLB "completely fractures the traditional limits on Federal interference in the operation of local schools."

Many times I have referenced the work of Neil McCluskey of Cato Institute, a scholar who shares my concerns about educational policy. He did a study in 2007 entitled, "End It, Don't Mend It," and he concluded that "NCLB has been ineffective in achieving its intended goals, has had negative, unintended consequences, is incompatible with policies that do work, is at the mercy of a political process that can only worsen its prospects, and is based on the premises that are fundamentally flawed."

Using several shocking statistics, McCluskey points out how States are lowering, not raising, their educational standards. They are creating a race to the bottom to ensure that their schools will not be denied Federal funding.

Let me give you just a couple. In 2003, the State of Texas decreased the number of questions on their test in order for it to be approved, from 24 to 20. In Michigan, when 1,500 schools were placed on the NCLB need improvement list, the State lowered the percentage of students required to pass the test in English from 75 down to 42 percent.

The State of Ohio backloaded its adequate yearly progress goals, aiming to increase proficiency by a mere 3 percent, 3.3 percent for the first 6 years, but then said they're going to do a 40