

the world in reading, 17th in science, and 25th in math, compared to other countries, according to the 2009 edition of the Program for International Student Assessment. Those numbers are astonishing.

As proud Americans, we will not accept the consequences of failure, of letting our children fall behind the rest of the world. Parents are demanding results in education for their children; and Washington should listen to their message, which is, simply: We know how to reform education in our States; get Washington out of the way and watch us succeed.

Education should be returned to the States, the local communities, and to parents, just where our Founding Fathers left it when they designed this great government.

This is the reality we face: Our country, the United States of America, stormed the beaches of Normandy. We raised the flag over Iwo Jima. We fought for and won the freedom of other nations all around the globe. We ventured into space and landed the human race on the Moon. We inspired the collapse of the Berlin Wall. But before all of this, we invented the lightbulb, the automobile, the television, the telephone, discovered the art and science of flying.

Our inventions, though, are not as much the reason for our greatness as they are the result of it, because at the very beginning, at our founding, we declared to the world this belief: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The truth in that Declaration reminds us that our people will succeed and prosper, and our students will learn and achieve when we preserve the liberty of every parent to choose the educational environment that's best for their children. And if we do so, imagine how our children will lead the world through another century marked by the rise of freedom and the innovation that freedom inspires.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to end by echoing the words of Mr. JONES from earlier when he said: May God bless the men and women in uniform, may God bless their families, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO THE HIGHEST OFFICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week, I came to the floor of the House to challenge the utilization of words because words matter. Candidates who are charging each other with a variety of sins decided to

call President Barack Obama, who tonight will give us the State of the Union, the "food stamp President."

For many of us who know our history, we might recall that in the 1940s and beyond, there were many who were on government cheese. In fact, many people I know today smile about that government cheese and peanut butter that they were given. They include doctors and lawyers and leaders of this Nation, teachers, people who are expanding opportunities for others.

This Nation is a great country, and we are reminded that many who start from humble beginnings can ascend to the highest office or the barons and the leadership of corporate America. So the negative connotation of "food stamp President" is to denigrate those who receive it rather than to suggest that there are opportunities in this Nation that no other country can provide.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about and look forward to the President's State of the Union as he speaks about income equality and challenges us, as a Nation, to come together, to move forward on expanding jobs, such as the President's American Jobs Act. But I raise for thought the problem of how we will come to that point.

I'm looking at an article that suggests that "Made in the USA" may be a relic of the bygone. It uses one of our most famous, one of our most imitated companies in the world, Apple, which speaks to the genius of America. I will never step away from acknowledging that we are the inventive, the innovative, the genius, the creative population because we've been given freedom by our Constitution. But when you ask the question why the iPhone is manufactured elsewhere and you hear comments about why the genius of this particular company has not been translated into a number of jobs, why decisions have been made to move manufacturing overseas, and you ask the question where is the corporate social responsibility, for example, and where is the generosity in terms of hiring American workers, well, we know that the international economy is intertwined. Companies once felt an obligation to support American workers even when it wasn't the best financial choice. We call that "American generosity." But I understand the bottom line.

So it is important that we begin to look at the items that the President is talking about, jobs skills training, and to find a way to restore the modern manufacturing that will bring more jobs to America.

Why do these companies move overseas? In this article, it suggests because of the supply chain and the way factories can be put up and put down in these foreign countries. Now, you tell me why we can't do that. I believe we can. It is all about focus and logistics. And tonight, as the President expands on his Kansas speech about how we are a great Nation, I'm looking for ways to end that income inequality, to come

together and make sure that those who make much can have the ability to share those dollars but yet still make a grand profit. I want to see us improve our supply chains and logistics. I want to see us get factories up and bring them down.

We restored the American auto industry by commitment, dedication, and sacrifice. At last I heard, General Motors now is the number one manufacturer of automobiles in the world. How did it come about? Because Democrats came together and joined around, with a bipartisan support, the idea that we can create jobs; we can manufacture jobs.

Let me just say this: I will accept the challenge tonight that the President will offer, and I will realize that a food stamp family today providing for their children are the presidents and CEOs and astronauts and inventors of tomorrow. That's the kind of Nation that we are.

I say it always, and I will say it again. "Food stamp" is a denigrating term when you say "food stamp President," as if the President does not want to create jobs. We're tired of the buzzwords and innuendo about certain groups, but I believe that we have a way of coming out of this.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time. It is an urgency of now. It is the justice and equality that Martin Luther King and many other great leaders spoke of. It is this mosaic Nation of people from all walks of life that have shown the world we're the greatest Nation in the world. I'm looking forward to pursuing that in the 21st century, building jobs and saying, "God bless America."

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ACCEPTING THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, first I would just say to the gentlelady who just spoke that I do not doubt that the President wishes to create jobs. The fact of the matter is he just doesn't know how. The record would suggest that.

When I first came to this House, the year was 1979, January. We were in the midst of what history has shown us was a failed Presidency. We had something called the misery index. We had unemployment rising. We had inflation rates around 20 percent. We had, by all gauges, a difficult time, a time that many people looked upon with despair, and many suggested that the issues were so large and the problems so great that no President could possibly deal with it, no Congress, and the American people could not.

It was just prior to that time that I met a gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Gingrich, as we were both freshman Members elected. And we began talking about the fact that our party had

not been in the majority for well over a generation, that there seemed to be a lack of a vision for the future, and that there was an acceptance of mediocrity and failure and second-class status for America.

Our belief was, at that time, that we could come together with a number of other Members and try and at least give voice to a new idea, a new vision, a more positive vision for America. We worked together with other Members and formed what was called the Conservative Opportunity Society because we thought that that was a positive vision for the future of America, consistent with Republican principles and, more importantly, consistent with and expressive of American principles. We thought it was an antidote to what we saw leading us at that time as the liberal welfare state. I think history has shown that, with the election of Ronald Reagan and the embracing of the Conservative Opportunity Society vision of America, that America could turn around.

We are confronted with what I believe to be a failed Presidency at the present time. We are confronted with questions and some great despair in families around America for the failure of an opportunity for jobs. And I would suggest that, at this point in time, it is appropriate for those who have visions, those who are ready to challenge the conventional wisdom, those who believe that America's best days are ahead, not behind, to come to the fore.

There are those who look at the faults of Newt Gingrich. I'd like to suggest that he was the one person that I know that had a vision in this House of how this House could be changed, how we, working as an institution, could work with a President to make changes and, ultimately, how this side of the aisle could, for the first time in a generation, actually be the majority.

Following his ascendancy to Speaker of the House, we actually had balanced budgets. We actually had some bringing down of some of the size of the Federal Government. We actually had some progress around the country. So I would say, for those who look at the faults of others, let's look at their accomplishments.

This is a time when it seems to me we ought to be serious about the future of America. We ought to be bold about the future of America. We ought to have some confidence in the greatness of America, the greatness of its people, not necessarily the greatness of its government. We need to have a good governmental structure that allows the greatness of the American people.

There are some on the Presidential debate scene today who are willing to challenge us with bold ideas. That has been done in the past and has proven successful. It seems to me we should not shrink from the future; we should embrace the future. We should, in fact, be leaders of the future.

I am not one elected to this House to be satisfied that the future of America

for my children and my grandchildren is any less than what it was for me as a child growing up. I will not stand here and allow us to act in vain so that the sacrifices of my parents, some call the Greatest Generation, I say one of the greatest generations, will have been in vain. They worked hard. They accepted the challenges of the future with an innate confidence in the goodness of the American people, the capabilities of the American people, and, yes, the common sense of the American people.

My hope is that as we go forward in this year, those of us who seek office for both the House, the Senate, and Presidency will accept that mantle of leadership that has been cast upon us from those in the past.

PENALIZING UNEMPLOYED AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern that Republicans are attempting to penalize unemployed American citizens who do not have a high school diploma. Last month, House Republicans included a provision in the payroll tax cut bill, which is presently in conference, to establish an educational requirement for recipients of benefits.

The provision, Mr. Speaker, would require recipients of unemployment benefits to have at least a high school diploma or a GED or be enrolled in classes to obtain such a degree. This requirement, Mr. Speaker, would affect an estimated 248,000 workers in the first 3 months of enactment, and disproportionately affect older workers, forcing certain unemployment recipients to either enroll in adult education programs or forego the benefits they need to support their families. This is a disgrace.

In 2010, half a million workers age 50 or over who received unemployment insurance lacked a high school diploma. For most of these individuals who have worked more than 30 long years, returning to high school makes very little sense. They are the bricklayers and the carpenters and sanitation workers and housekeepers in our communities.

In the case of workers under the age of 50, adult education might be useful, but is largely unattainable. Currently, State and local adult education programs do not have the capacity—we know that—do not have the capacity to meet this demand. Waiting lists for these programs are proliferating and certain to worsen due to a 20 percent decline over the past decade in Federal funding for adult education programs and \$1 billion in cuts to job-training programs in fiscal year 2011.

Creating an educational mandate as a condition of eligibility to receive unemployment insurance benefits, Mr. Speaker, is punitive. It's misguided.

It's egregious, even by current Republican standards.

While there are certainly benefits to receiving at least a high school education, establishing a blanket policy that denies unemployment benefits to low-skill workers who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own, without ensuring they have unrestricted access to educational opportunities, sets up hundreds of thousands of Americans to fail.

It seems incredibly cynical to require participation in adult education and job training as a condition of receiving unemployment benefits while simultaneously eliminating meaningful Federal support for these programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable to put additional strings on this crucial relief that do nothing, nothing to address the real causes of the current unemployment crisis. It is a difficult time to be unemployed in America. It is a difficult time to be unemployed in America, but House Republicans seem determined to make it even more difficult.

I urge my colleagues to join me and stand up against this education mandate and fight for policies that can actually help bring the unemployment crisis to resolve.

RECOGNITION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, starting January 29 of this year, Catholic schools across the country will initiate their annual observance of Catholic Schools Week. The theme for this year is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Academics. Service."

The 2012 theme emphasizes the principles of Catholic school education, which families in my district and across the country highly value. The theme focuses on three priorities that are distinct to Catholic schools. Children are taught faith, not just the basics of Christianity, but how to have a relationship with their God; academics, in which Catholic schools are held to very high standards.

Earlier this year I was proud to recognize the Nativity of our Lord Catholic School in Warminster, Pennsylvania, for receiving the 2011 National Blue Ribbon of Excellence Award.

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Finally, the third principle in the 2012 theme is service, the giving of one's time and effort to help others. It is taught both as an expression of faith but also of good citizenship.

Schools typically celebrate Catholic Schools Week with mass, open houses, and activities for students, families, parishioners, and the community at large. In addition to this year's list of activities, some schools in my district will host events welcoming families