

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT WILL RETURN CONTROL TO OUR SCHOOLS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last month I met with teachers, administrators, school board members, even educators in higher education that train our next generation of teachers and some graduate students who are in that program to discuss the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, which replaces No Child Left Behind as our Nation's elementary and secondary education law.

I was honored to be appointed by Speaker RYAN to the conference committee that was tasked with settling the differences between the House and Senate versions of ESSA to assure this legislation will prepare students for life success.

The ESSA reins in the unilateral power of the United States Secretary of Education and gives it back to the States and the local education agencies. It prohibits the Secretary from adding new requirements to State education plans, being involved in the peer review process, and exceeding his or her statutory authority. It also allows school districts to disentangle themselves from Common Core without penalty.

Additionally, the ESSA eliminates the controversial adequate yearly progress provision, paving the way for States to develop their own accountability systems. While the new law keeps annual standardized testing requirements for students in grade 3 through 8 in place to monitor progress, it eliminates most of the burden of testing on teachers and students and it sets up a process to further reduce even more standardized testing in the future.

While assessments for elementary schools must be the same for all public school students statewide, States may also choose. They have flexibility to offer nationally recognized local assessments at the high school level as long as the assessments are reliable, valid, and comparable.

In other words, a local education agency could use the SATs or ACTs to evaluate high school students instead of being held solely to tests mandated by the Federal Government.

Now, this flexibility should, could, and will be extended to career- and technical-education-focused students whose trade-specific competency is appropriately measured by the NOCTI performance test.

This flexibility will benefit our students and strengthen our overall economy. High school students will have increased access to pathways leading to careers in high-skill, high-wage jobs in technological industries.

The connection between education and our students' future careers is also enhanced by a provision in this law

that encourages businesses to get involved with their local schools.

Schools will be able to apply for funds to provide apprenticeships that offer academic credit toward comprehensive career counseling.

Now, this was the result of bipartisan legislation I introduced with Congressman JIM LANGEVIN aimed at informing school counselors of local labor market conditions so that they can best guide the decisionmaking process of these students and their parents.

Not only does ESSA lift overly strict testing requirements, it also ends the Federal mandate on teacher assessments.

States will be able to enact their own evaluation system in accordance with stakeholders, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and their unions. The structure of their system will no longer be tied to Federal funding as it was in No Child Left Behind.

ESSA provides flexibility in the use of Federal funding, allowing teachers and district administrators to finance priorities set at the local level. This commonsense provision restores control to those on the front lines of educating our students and our children.

The ESSA also calls for the United States Department of Education to study how title I funds are allocated. Now, title I funds are used to offset the impact of poverty, one of the leading influences in the academic achievement of our children. I have long been concerned that the children are put at a disadvantage based upon the population of the school district rather than the concentration of poverty.

This study is the result of an amendment I introduced, which gained the support of the entire conference committee responsible for merging the House and Senate versions of the legislation.

Title I funds are vastly important to students who are low income, disadvantaged, or who have disabilities. I am hopeful this study will make a strong argument for a more equitable distribution of funds for the areas which need them most. Funding must be based on student need, not a school district's ZIP code.

The ESSA is 4-year reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Feedback from those involved in educating our students is so essential to making the right changes to our education system, and I appreciate the feedback that came in this process as we succeeded in this reform.

Now, as these changes are put into practice, I want to hear from you. If a particular provision of the ESSA is having a great effect on your student or your school district, whether it is good or whether it is bad, Congress needs to know.

As the implementation of this new law begins, I will continue to travel across Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, keeping our schools up to date on the change that was long overdue.

CLIMATE CHANGE—A TIPPING POINT

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, 2015 was a landmark year for global climate change, and that is not a good thing. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2015 was our planet's hottest year on record. Last year the global average land surface temperature was 1.33 Celsius above the 20th century average, and 10 of the last 12 months tied or broke existing records for highest monthly global temperatures.

Despite the fact that climate science and research consistently display the reality of climate change, some of my colleagues still debate its validity in this very Chamber.

What is there to debate? More than 12,000 peer-reviewed, scientific studies are in agreement that climate change is real and humans are significantly to blame. For those of you keeping track at home, there are zero peer-reviewed scientific studies that state the opposite.

One of the primary concerns of these scientific studies is that climate change might trigger events that will dramatically alter the Earth as we know it. Scientists have discovered a number of tipping points where abrupt changes in climate could create a variety of national and global effects. It is hard to predict when these events could occur; but we know that when they do, we will have very little warning.

Reaching these critical points could lead to abrupt changes in the ocean, snow cover, permafrost, and the Earth's biosphere. Alarming, many of these events are triggered by warming levels of less than 2 degrees.

We now know that, in the latter part of this century, we will find the planet's temperature pushing not 2 degrees, but 4, 5, even 6, degrees Celsius of warming.

While it may seem minor, each degree makes a significant difference. A 2-degree shift in temperatures could lead to an increased rise in sea level by 55 centimeters. Levels have already risen by about 20 centimeters over the course of the 20th century, increasing flooding along coastlines, impacting people and properties. A 3-degree increase could impact water availability and accelerate drought and extreme heat waves.

Each of these conditions would negatively impact the production of major crops, like wheat and rice, leading to global food security risks.

Anything above a 4-degree increase would cause even more drastic consequences, such as extreme ocean acidification, a decline in glaciers, a change in ocean currents, and a nearly ice-free Arctic in the summer.

While the majority of the detected shifts are distant from major population centers, the implications will be

felt over large distances, creating significant economic and humanitarian consequences.

As with any abrupt change in the Earth's system, a cascade of other transformations will likely follow, each building upon and exacerbating the others. We could see a shift in ecosystems, the collapse of permafrost in the Arctic, and an extensive species loss. Each of these changes would trigger massive implications for the natural systems and society as a whole.

So what does all this mean? It means we must act now. As President Obama said in his State of the Union address: If you want to debate the science of climate change, feel free to do so, but you will be pretty lonely.

Today America's business leaders, the Pentagon, the majority of Americans, the scientific community, and nations around the world recognize that we cannot wait to act.

We saw evidence of this last year when more than 40,000 negotiators from 196 countries descended on the French capital for the Paris Climate Summit. The Summit provided the world with an effective global framework for addressing climate change, but our work is far from over.

It is time to recognize that the consequences of inaction are far too great. If my colleagues are willing to put political ideologies aside and recognize that acting on climate change is not just in our planet's interest, but in the interest of humanity, we may still have a fighting chance.

Albert Einstein once said: "The world, as we have created it, is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

Now is the time for Congress to change our thinking and address the reality of climate change.

ARMY SERGEANT RODDIE EDMONDS OF KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, the word hero is used way too lightly these days, but an extraordinary man from my district was a true hero of legendary proportions.

During World War II, Army Sergeant Roddie Edmonds of Knoxville, Tennessee, was captured at the Battle of the Bulge by the Nazis and sent to a POW camp. When the war was nearing an end, the camp's commander ordered all of the Jewish prisoners to report for what they knew was certain death.

As the highest ranking American in the camp, Sergeant Edmonds called on all 1,000 servicemen imprisoned there to step forward.

The German commander explained: They cannot all be Jews.

Sergeant Edmonds responded, with a pistol at his head: We are all Jews here.

The German commander backed down.

Sergeant Edmonds has now been designated Righteous Among the Nations, Israel's highest award for non-Jews. He is the first American serviceman to receive this honor.

Much has been written about the Greatest Generation, Mr. Speaker. It is because of people like Sergeant Edmonds. His son was given this great award on behalf of his father at the Israeli Embassy last week.

I am introducing a bill requesting that Sergeant Edmonds be awarded a Medal of Honor posthumously.

Director Steven Spielberg has purchased the rights to Sergeant Edmonds' story, and I hope a movie about his life will come out in the near future. The story of his valor should be made known to all Americans.

FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I want to go in a different direction at this point and mention another topic.

A couple of months ago, in interviews both by National Public Radio and CBS News, I described the air marshal program as possibly the most needless, useless, wasteful program in the entire Federal Government.

Shortly thereafter, the Los Angeles Times published an editorial entitled "It's Time to Ground America's Air Marshals" and said, "Duncan has a point."

The editorial pointed out that there is no data showing marshals successfully put down in-flight threats and added: "In fact, passengers are apparently more likely to stop troublemakers on board than armed marshals." The Times said that air marshals are a placebo the country should stop taking.

I became concerned a few years ago about this when I read in USA Today that more air marshals had been arrested than arrests by air marshals. At that point, the Service was costing \$200 million per arrest.

I was able to get the Appropriations Committee to start reducing their funding from a high of \$966 million, after they had been given big increases each year, to \$790 million this fiscal year.

Having airport screeners and simply locking aircraft doors have done much more good than the many, many billions we have spent just so air marshals can fly back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, usually in first class. This money is money that could and should be spent on much more cost-effective security measures.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, The Wall Street Journal, a few months after 9/11, when they noticed that almost every department and agency in the Federal Government was sending up requests for more money based on security, said a wise legislative policy to follow would be that, from now on, if any legislation came to the Congress with the word "security" attached, it should be given twice the scrutiny and four times the weight.

Unfortunately, we have wasted many, many billions on different programs in this country just because they had the word security attached. We need to take the advice of The Wall Street Journal and give those bills much more scrutiny.

□ 1030

CANCER IMMUNOTHERAPY

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

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, last month President Obama came to this Chamber to speak, *inter alia*, of a moonshot to cure cancer under the leadership of Vice President BIDEN. This week the President announced specific plans to invest \$1 billion to fund that moonshot.

As a scientist and as the manager of large scientific projects, I am naturally inclined to be skeptical of such bold claims from politicians. President Nixon famously launched the same war on cancer in 1971. Tragically, we continue to wage that war today.

More recently, Andrew von Eschenbach, the director of the National Cancer Institute under President Bush, set the goal of eliminating suffering and death from cancer by 2015. We all know, unfortunately, that that goal was never met.

So why is this cancer moonshot any different? Is this a moment like 1961 when President Kennedy stood before a joint session of Congress and announced his goal of sending a man to the Moon by the end of the decade and succeeded? Or is this a moment like 1971 when President Nixon declared war on cancer and failed?

I believe that President Obama's cancer initiative will succeed, and the reason that it will succeed is brutally simple: Science, basic science and technology that exists today and did not exist 45 years ago; technology that was generated by decades of curiosity-driven federally funded research paid for by the United States taxpayer.

There are many decades of federally supported basic scientific advances that will allow the Obama-Biden cancer moonshot to succeed: The ability to fully genome sequence individual cancers, the ability to manipulate the genome and produce animal models to study and to test the basic mechanisms of cancer, and immunotherapy treatment, which was named Science magazine's breakthrough of the year in 2013 and has been capturing so many headlines around the world.

Immunotherapy is an ingenious and revolutionary treatment that uses the body's own immune system to fight cancer. Since time immemorial, there have been stories of miraculous remissions of cancer when patients with apparently incurable cancers have experienced spontaneous and often complete remissions. These were often attributed to an act of God or perhaps the moral character of the patient.