

It did not have to be that way.

Earlier this year, the Treasury Department published a thorough and detailed analysis which showed that we could have gone much farther in reducing interest rates while still keeping the program profitable for lenders.

Unfortunately, Congress chose to largely ignore this report.

One of the problems in finding the "right" interest rate is that if Congress were to go too far in cutting rates, it would risk causing a major withdrawal of bankers from student lending, which would be very disruptive to students and parents. One would hope to be able to rely on information from the lending community in making such a determination, but instead the banks have traditionally played a game of chicken in which they have threatened to leave the student loan program each and every time Congress has sought to lower interest rates or trim unnecessary costs. Of course, they have never followed through on such threats because the reality is that student loans have been, and under this bill will continue to be, a very profitable enterprise.

I believe there are better places—Head Start, Pell Grants, TRIO, Title I—to put billions of federal education dollars other than in the coffers of already wealthy financial institutions.

President Clinton and members of Congress, particularly Congressmen ANDREWS and Senator KENNEDY, have worked hard over the years and in this reauthorization to create a fairer and more efficient system for setting interest rates. I look forward to continuing working with them on this issue.

TEACHER QUALITY PROVISIONS

This bill contains a number of provisions aimed at strengthening teacher quality, including those drawn from my bill, the "Teaching Excellence for All Children Act" (HR 2228). I appreciate the opportunity we have had to work together in a bipartisan fashion on these issues, and particularly want to thank Chairman GOODLING, Ranking member CLAY, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. MCCARTHY, and Mr. FORD, as well as Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, for all their hard work in crafting what I think is a fairly strong package.

I also want to commend the excellent policy analyses, particularly those by the Education Trust, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, and the Congressional Research Service, that have done so much to inform the work we did here.

All across the nation, states and local school districts are raising standards for what students should know and be able to do. Research clearly shows that qualified teachers are key to children's ability to succeed in school. In fact, after parental involvement, the quality of a student's teacher is the most important factor in their academic career.

We now have, for the first time, a bill that addresses, from a federal perspective, issues of teacher quality at each stage in the process: preparation, recruitment, placement, professional development, and retention.

This bill provides financial incentives to attract qualified individuals into teaching and authorizes funds for support and mentoring to help make sure that qualified teachers remain in the profession. This will also help ensure that the taxpaying public gets its money's worth, by improving the quality of teacher preparation, by providing better information to parents regarding the quality of their child's teacher, and by implementing a more rigorous system of accountability.

For the first time, federally funded teacher preparation programs nationwide will publish and disseminate information on the percentage of their graduates who pass state licensing tests. States will be required to identify low-performing teacher preparation programs. And, ultimately, federal funds will be withheld from consistently low-performing schools.

Teacher preparation is the foundation of our entire educational system. Many schools do a good job in preparing teachers, but the evidence is clear that too many others fall far short. In this bill, Congress is sending an important notice to colleges and universities: we will hold you accountable for the billions in taxpayer dollars you get each year. You owe it to students, their parents, taxpayers and to the teachers themselves to raise the bar on teacher training.

LABOR CODES OF CONDUCT FOR UNIVERSITY MERCHANDISE

I am also pleased that the House and Senate agreed to include my amendment to call on universities and colleges to adopt labor codes of conduct to prevent the use of sweatshops or child labor in the manufacture of university merchandise that they sell.

These codes of conduct are on the agenda for universities and colleges across the country and I applaud the students and administrators that are working to see that schools of higher learning do not participate in the lowest forms of exploitation.

By adopting this amendment, Congress sends an important message to schools across this country: Use the power of your purse. Tell businesses what you will accept and what you will not, and they will adhere to your demands. The market for university merchandise like sweatshirts and baseball caps is big enough to influence the way the goods are made. In fact, schools sell nearly \$2.5 billion worth of goods each year.

Without a code of conduct, schools will not know whether they are participating in labor exploitation. And without a good code, promises made about good labor conducts can be easily broken.

A quote by the provost of Harvard, made in another context, illustrates the importance of codes of conduct to schools. He said, "All members of the University and the institution as a whole benefit when its name is well used, and suffer when it is ill used."

Codes of conduct alone are not enough to assure honest wages, a safe workplace, and respect for workers, and I believe Congress should look to take additional actions against child labor and sweatshops. There are many bills pending in the House today that would help in that effort.

But simply raising the issue can make a difference. Look at the soccer ball industry. After widespread publicity and outrage over the manufacture of soccer balls by small children in Pakistan, a few of the manufacturers announced they would no longer use child labor for soccer balls.

The international economy today places great pressure on companies to compete for low wages and low standards. Consumers are the last defense for workers and children in the United States and around the world. The codes of conduct for universities and colleges are one important weapon in our arsenal against exploitation.

CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY FOR THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

As passed by the House, this legislation included language which would have abruptly ended eligibility to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau for Pell Grants, Special Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), and the College Work-Study Program.

I am therefore particularly pleased that the conferees were able to agree to continue these programs and thereby honor our commitment to these Pacific islands to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. Under the conference report students will continue to benefit from these important programs through 2004, by which time the Compacts of Free Association with these nations will have been renegotiated.

CAUTION ON TRADE AND PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

Trade and proprietary schools play an integral role in educating and training our nation's workforce and we should do whatever we can to ensure that students have access to the high quality training that they provide.

But, unfortunately, this bill contains new loopholes that will weaken monitoring and enforcement of current laws that address trade school abuses of federal student aid programs.

In the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress tightened oversight of proprietary and trade schools in response to widespread instances of fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. Since 1990, more than 1,500 trade schools have been kicked out of federal student aid programs, saving taxpayers millions of dollars and protecting thousands of students from being ripped off.

The Department of Education's Inspector General recommended this year that we tighten program requirements even further. But instead the Congress, under heavy pressure from trade school owners, has decided to retreat in the battle against fraud and abuse.

I fear that once again we will see a spate of press accounts of schemes to bilk students and taxpayers. I fear that once again, a few bad apples will be allowed to tarnish the reputations of schools that are doing an effective job of training and educating students.

I intend to monitor the implementation of these new provisions closely and hope that if and when problems do arise, Congress will act swiftly and responsibly to protect students and taxpayers.

EDUCATION CAN AND SHOULD BE A BIPARTISAN ENDEAVOR

On balance, however, this is a good bill with many important provisions that will benefit America's students and workers. It is an example of what can be accomplished when partisan differences are set aside and members work together to find common ground on issues of great importance to our nation. It is an example I hope we continue to follow on education legislation.

HONORING THE IMANI SCHOOL

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 2, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Imani School of Houston as it

celebrates 10 years of excellence at a Gala on November 13, 1998 at The Power Center.

The Imani School is a private, Christian co-educational school serving children from pre-school through eighth grade. Founded in 1988 by Windsor Village United Methodist Church, it began with 25 three- and four-year-olds. Today, the enrollment for 1998-99 includes 450 students, with a waiting list of more than 100 applicants each year. The school is accredited by the National Private Schools Accreditation Alliance, and admission is open to all students on a first come, first serve basis.

The Imani School has earned a national and international reputation for academic excellence and service to the community. The School has been featured on numerous television programs, including on CBS television as a "Cool School" for its outstanding community service, on NBC Today Weekend, and on a British Broadcasting Company program broadcast around the globe. Its success has attracted many dignitaries, including First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Texas Governor George W. Bush, former Governor Ann Richards, and Houston Mayor (and former director of the U.S. Office of Drug Control Policy) Lee Brown, who hailed Imani as "one of the finest schools in the nation".

The Imani School's record certainly backs up these claims. Ninety percent of all former Imani students who enter area public schools for the first time place in classes for the academically gifted. SAT scores for the school surpass the national average in both reading and math at every grade level. Students in fifth through eighth grades won a gold medal for "Best of Show", as well as first and second place awards, at the Regional Association of Christian Schools International Science Fair. In addition, Imani students received seven out of ten of the first awards given at the 1997 NTA Regional Science fair sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Imani students also were awarded first and second place in the primary division and first in the intermediate division in the area Juneteenth Black History Essay contest.

The Imani School is also involved in positive school/community partnership efforts including a collaboration with the Garden Terrace Retirement Home, where students in the third to eighth grades make weekly trips to do crafts, entertain, or just visit with elderly residents. Also, middle school students join preschoolers and parents to repair and paint homes and provide food, clothing, and toys to needy families. Each summer, the Imani School provides summer camp programs to residents of the Patrice House, a shelter for abused and neglected children. Imani students also speak before corporations including Exxon and Chevron and at educational events throughout the community.

The Imani School has also achieved athletic success. At the end of Imani's first season in the Private School Basketball League, two students were chosen All Tournament Players.

To the students, their families, and faculty of the Imani School, I say congratulations. Your hard work and dedication is paying off. To the Windsor Village United Methodist Church, I say thank you for having the wisdom to start the Imani School and the fortitude to keep it strong. Your efforts have produced a school that is an example of the educational success that can be achieved with a supportive community, dedicated parents and teachers, and a commitment to innovation and excellence.

IN MEMORY OF A HERO AND A PASTOR, REV. EDWARD CONNORS

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 2, 1998

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it has been nearly thirteen years since the Rev. Edward T. Connors, retired pastor of Immaculate Conception parish and chaplain of the 9th "Yankee" Infantry Division during World War II, passed away on January 28, 1986, but his memory and spiritual inspiration still remain strong in Central Massachusetts.

Father Connors received many awards and honors throughout his lifetime, including the Silver Star, one of our nation's highest honors for heroism, for rescuing a soldier from "no man's land" through a mine field that was considered suicidal to cross. He was also honored frequently for his life's work in the Worcester region, including the Fourth Degree Patriotism Award from Bishop O'Reilly Assembly, Knights of Columbus, in 1980, and the Crusader of the Year award from Holy Cross College in 1981. In 1985, he was honored by 1,600 at a testimonial at Worcester Auditorium.

Many families and veterans, clergy and faculty, from the cities and towns of Worcester, Northbridge, Grafton, North Grafton and Whitinsville still remember his courage, humor, intelligence and dedication as a pastor, community leader, and humanitarian.

In his memory, and on behalf of all whose lives were touched by this pastor and gentleman of distinction, I would like to enter into this RECORD the January 30, 1986 article in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette describing his deeds and his contributions to our nation.

[From the Worcester Telegram and Gazette Thursday, Jan. 30, 1986]

REV. EDWARD CONNORS, RETIRED IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PASTOR

The Rev. Edward T. Connors, 80, retired pastor of Immaculate Conception parish and chaplain of the 9th "Yankee" Infantry Division during World II, died Tuesday in St. Francis Home, 37 Thorne St.

He lived at 87-5 Park Ave.

Father Connors was chaplain of the 9th Infantry Division during the invasions of Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium and Germany—invasions which cost the division 4,581 lives during the war.

After he was discharged from service in 1945, Father Connors returned as a curate at St. Peter's Church.

In 1950 he was named pastor of St. Phillip's Church in Grafton. He was also pastor at St. Mary's parish in North Grafton before becoming pastor of Immaculate Conception parish in Worcester in 1952. During his pastorate at Immaculate Conception, the parish built a new church in 1957. He retired in 1980.

Born in Whitinsville, he was a son of Bartholomew J. and Mary (Haggerty) Connors.

He graduated from Northbridge High School and from Holy Cross College in 1927. He studied at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore from 1927 to 1931, and was ordained in Springfield in 1931 by Bishop Thomas J. O'Leary.

He was assigned as curate of St. Peter's church and athletic director of St. Peter's High School in 1931, when the football team then won the state championship. Lester "Buster" Sheary, who was coaching three sports at St. Peter's when the new curate ar-

rived, recalled, "If anyone ever revived St. Peter's athletics, it was Father Ed."

And Joseph Walsh, St. Peter's basketball standout during Father Connors' second tour there after World War II, recalled his spirit: "He had a special enthusiasm for the athletes and the teams."

Two years after his arrival at St. Peter's, Father Connors joined Father James M. McCarron in forming the Catholic League for Worcester and County high school basketball teams.

In 1935, Father Connors was transferred to Sacred Heart Academy and a year later to St. Bernard's High School in Fitchburg, where he was athletic director until he entered the Army in 1942.

"CONNOR'S COFFEE SHOP"

Partly because of his pleading with military and church authorities, he was allowed to follow "his boys" into the front lines.

The legend of the chaplain's "coffee shop," his friendly mingling with enlisted men, his disregard for rank, his intense interest in "his boys" regardless of their religion, and his heroism long outlived the war.

In particular, "Connors' Coffee Shop" was a tradition among the troops of the 9th during any respite from battle. Brewed in a big aluminum pitcher and heated on a ration-can stove with kerosene, the coffee was simply boiled and served. When the coffee ran low, Father Connors just added more grounds and water.

"We never dared get all the way down to the bottom of the pot," he mused. "We were afraid of what we might find in it. There was a quarter-inch cake of coffee on the sides of it to add to the flavor, and there were days when the men claimed they had to chew it—it was too strong to drink."

Father Connors was awarded the Silver Star for rescuing a soldier from "No Man's Land" through a mine field that was considered suicidal to cross.

One veteran of the 9th, of the Greek Orthodox faith, recalled Father Connors as "a great chaplain . . . he was right down in front when it all counted. He was one of the troops."

In recalling the growth of the ecumenical movement, he once said of the soldiers of the 9th, "We didn't talk it; we've lived it . . . It was no big deal for us. This was the way we lived those years: Dedicated to our own faith, praying together in a common purpose." He told of a Jewish chaplain who was shelled and dying in a battlefield in France.

"He asked for my blessing before dying. Not absolution," he added. "He died a strong, dedicated Jew, but wanted my blessing. We all must have a faith. We must believe in it. Stand up for it. But—we can all pray together."

During the war, he became a close friend of Gen. William C. Westmoreland, later Army chief of staff.

When he returned to Worcester after the war, Father Connors yearned for a reunion with his 9th Division comrades. So he launched a yearly tradition in his home parish, then St. Peter's parish. The reunion and memorial Mass were conceived, he said, to celebrate the living and honor the dead of the 9th.

HONORED MANY TIMES

Father Connors received numerous awards, including the Fourth Degree Patriotism Award from Bishop O'Reilly Assembly, Knights of Columbus, in 1980, Crusader of the Year award from Holy Cross College in 1981.

Of his parishioners, Father Connors said, "I hope I have inspired them as much as they inspired me."

In March 1985, he was honored by 1,600 at a testimonial at Worcester auditorium.

Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan then called Father Connors "a good friend and an example of a dedicated and zealous priest."