

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CONGRESS REGARDING EDUCATION MATTERS

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, why all the political rhetoric on education this past week? And to make sure everybody understands, the people back home understand, that is exactly what it is, political rhetoric. But why all this political rhetoric in the last week about education?

Well, I think there are probably four reasons. First of all, it is a diversionary tactic. I think no one would deny that. I suppose I can understand it, except it bothers me that children are used in this diversionary tactic.

Secondly, I imagine it has something to do with polls. All the polls say education is a sexy topic. But you want to be careful. Yes, every parent, every grandparent, wants their child to have a quality education. But when you look at those polls and they ask the question, who do you trust least to reform public education at the elementary-secondary level, the answer is almost unanimously the Federal Government. Who do you distrust second, the state government. And who do you most trust, it is local government, parents, school boards, administrators, teachers on the local level.

I guess the third reason would be this administration seems to like to micromanage elementary-secondary education from Washington, D.C., the old top-down method, which, of course, has proved totally unsuccessful.

I guess the last reason is pride of authorship. Every President I have served with seems to want to be remembered as the education President.

So in order to do that, you cannot fund existing programs that might be working well. You have to create new old programs. In other words, you take the old programs, give them a new name, and then say "This is my program." As I said at the White House just last week, who gets credit is not important; the important thing is are we doing something to help all children receive a better education.

Why do I say pride of authorship is so important? Well, obviously if the President wanted to have 100,000 new teachers for elementary grades, even though every study indicates we have 150,000 out there now who are not teaching, they are not teaching because they cannot get an elementary teaching job. In my district, depending on the school district, the waiting list is 50 to 200 applicants for every elementary teaching job. But if he wants 100,000 new teachers, then all he had to do was help me get more money for special education.

Something I have said for 20 years in the minority when there was an overwhelming Democrat majority is fund the special education mandate that you sent out there. You sent a 100 percent mandate on special education to local school districts. You promised you would send them 40 percent of the excess costs. And when I became chairman, you were sending 6 percent.

Forty percent of the excess cost. In other words, 40 percent of what it costs to educate a special ed student beyond what it costs to educate a regular student. Sometimes that is twice as expensive, sometimes ten times as expensive.

Well, let me show you what it would mean to school districts if as a matter of fact they got their 40 percent. Members representing large cities should have been on this year after year after year. The only person I could interest on the other side of the aisle over the years was the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), until about the last year or two, and I have gotten some help from the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Well, in the L.A. Unified School District, the Los Angeles Unified School district, they spend \$600 million each year, each year, to fund the Federal 100 percent mandate on special education. \$325 million of that has to come from the local tax base. We send them \$19 million. If we sent them 40 percent, they would have an additional \$60 million every year to reduce class size, to repair buildings, to do all of those things. More of this later on.

COMMENTS ON OUTPUT OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, here it is. It is the 109th workday of this Congress in Washington D.C. Thank God we were in session all weekend, although most Members of Congress have not been here. The leadership has not been evident. But that brings the Congress up to a grand total of 109 days.

Now, the average American holding only one job, and I have a lot of American families in my district holding two or three jobs trying to make ends meet, but those who are just holding down one job have worked 200 days so far this year.

No wonder the Congress' work remains undone. Congress, under the Republican leadership, has worked in Washington, D.C. 109 days. Many of those partial days, like the day that we adjourned at 4 o'clock in the afternoon on a Wednesday because the Republicans had a huge fund-raiser in New York and they had the corporate jets waiting for them out at National Airport, and they all had to jet up to New York and hold this gala event to rake in a few tens of millions of dollars from their corporate sponsors, the same corporate sponsors who wanted them to kill any attempts to curtail teenage smoking and go after the tobacco industry, and the Republican leaders delivered. There is no legislation coming out of this Congress to curtail that, and the rate of teenage smoking is sky-

rocketing with all the tragic consequences down the road.

Then the insurance industry. They provided quite a few jets that afternoon because they had a real big one they wanted to kill. Tens of millions of Americans are in what are called HMOs, health maintenance organizations. What we found out about these HMOs is that they save money by denying Americans and their families and loved ones needed care. The insurance bureaucrats will deny your doctor, will deny you a referral to a specialist, so that they can fatten their bottom line.

Tens of millions of Americans were demanding patients' rights. Even the AMA weighed in. They wanted providers' rights. The doctors are fed up with this too. They want to be able to refer their patients for needed tests. But, guess what? The insurance industry is capable of delivering tens of millions of dollars to the Republican leadership, and, behind closed doors, they decided to kill that legislation. There will be no HMO insurance industry Patients and Providers Bill of Rights in this Congress because of special interest money.

Now, the chairman of the Committee on Rules rose the other day and said it does not matter that we didn't do HMO reform or anything about teenage smoking. It does not matter that we have not passed the education package to decrease class size, to increase the number of teachers and rebuild our crumbling schools, because we did one big thing in this Congress, we passed a tax cut.

Well, let us look at the statistics for the tax cut that was passed by the Republican majority. The families earning less than \$59,000, I hope they would all look at their tax return for this year, the 1997 tax year, and compare it to the 1996 tax year and see how much the savings were. Those who got it, about one family in five earning less than \$59,000, they got \$6. \$6. Very generous of the Republican leadership.

Now, families between \$59,000 and \$112,000, they did a little better. They got \$81. That is, those of them who got it. That is 20 percent of the families in that tax bracket.

But, ah ha, thank God some people really got relief under this bill. Two-thirds of the small number of families in this country earning over \$112,000 a year, those whose incomes average \$660,000 a year, well, they got a tax cut of \$7,135. Very nice. Very nice. It could help pay one year's cost for a kid to go to a state institution of higher learning.

Of course, their kids are not going to the state institutions of higher learning. But it could pay for that from one of those other families. The families earning less than \$59,000 will get \$6 to put toward that education, and those between \$59,000 and \$112,000 will get \$81.

So that is the grand accomplishment of this Congress. That is reason enough not to have done anything for education, for class size, for more teachers

for the crumbling schools. That is reason enough for the Republican leadership to have denied tens of millions of Americans patients rights when they need a referral to a specialist, when they need a test, when they need treatment. They are denied, with no appeal, and the Republicans have denied them legislation to fix that. It was within the power of this Congress, but the big money spoke louder than the millions of Americans who needed help.

Then the teenagers getting hooked on tobacco, well, too bad for them too, according to the Republican leadership. There was not time to take care of that problem.

A SOLUTION TO THE BUDGET GRIDLOCK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. LINDA SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer a solution to the gridlock between this body and the President, one that our President says he is willing to shut down the government over. I ask the President to stay in town at least one day, to cancel his trip to New York to the fund-raiser for an important friend of his, and consider this: There is a simple solution available that will satisfy both the President and Congress and avert the potential crisis that this Nation faces if he does not start paying attention. In fact, the problem could be resolved today.

First of all, both the President and Congress have promised to save Social Security. Now, in order to really put action behind that promise, neither side can spend the phantom surplus Social Security dollars, not through new spending, not through tax cuts.

Second, our focus is on education, a value that we all wholeheartedly say must be a priority. Now, let us keep these two goals in mind and consider the President's words.

One week ago, two weeks ago, about once a week for some time, the President has proclaimed that his top goal is to save Social Security. Now his goal has changed this week, but that is what he has been saying.

This week he says he is going to shut down the government, not for the goal of saving Social Security, but he is going to shut down the government if we do not agree to dig deeply into the Social Security trust fund and spend billions of dollars, new dollars, on education programs.

Now what we have is the President pitting the needs of elderly Americans against the needs of children and asking us, the American people, to choose. He says we have to choose between protecting Social Security for our elderly or shoring up education for the future of our children.

I stand here today to say this is a false choice that Congress and Ameri-

cans do not have to make. There is another way.

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The solution is simple. Common sense, something that came directly from the people, not this body, and it is to return money directly to local school districts and bypass the bureaucratic cost and the red tape of Washington, D.C., the most asked-for educational change from all the teachers throughout America.

The House of Representatives has passed a model piece of legislation, the Dollars to the Classroom Act, that provides enough money for schools and school districts to hire 110,000 teachers. It just simply does this by taking a portion of the education bureaucracy and block-granting 95 percent of these 31 Federal education programs directly to our local classrooms.

The beauty of this bill is that it allows local people the flexibility to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes; or, if their district needs it more and their class sizes are already low, buy new computers, books or supplies. Basically, they can use the money to buy whatever the children need most, not what is directed by bureaucrats 2,500 miles away.

The President threatens that if we were to do this, he would veto it, because he still believes, as many on the Hill here in Washington D.C. believe, that bureaucrats know better than parents. I think they are wrong.

This budget battle should remind Americans of how difficult it will be for politicians to leave Social Security trust funds alone, so that it is to protect our elderly neighbors that we should be standing here. It is what we should be about. But here we are, just a week away from a promise to save Social Security. Last week, the week after, the week before, and the President came back to town to posture long enough after he read the polls. He knows we care about children. He knows I think daily about my six grandchildren, but he has decided that for the sake of campaigns, that this is the right thing to do.

We need to bypass the bureaucracy. We need to get out of the political rhetoric, and we need to get into the hearts and the neighborhoods and the school districts. We need not to separate generations.

I stand here today to plead with America to call the President back to town to negotiate a fair budget.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer: You have promised, O gracious God, to be with us wherever we are, in the towering heavens to the deepest oceans, from the moments of high exultation and in tragedy and great despair. We know that we cannot flee from Your presence and Your spirit will never leave us.

This day we pray that Your spirit would encourage us when we need encouragement, that Your spirit would reconcile when we need reconciliation, and when we face anxiety, we pray that peace and hope will be Your gift to all Your people. This is our earnest prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ATTENDING FUND-RAISERS

(Mr. HAYWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I came to the well of this House, and I asked the President of the United States, Mr. Speaker, to refrain from attending two major fund-raising events, to stay here in Washington and work with the Congress to make the decisions necessary to reach accord on our budget situation. The President, indeed, decided not to go to Palm Beach, Florida, but sadly, Mr. Speaker, the President plans to go on to New York City for not one, but three fund-raising events tonight.

Those three fund-raising events will give him a total of 100 fund-raising events, Mr. Speaker, and yet the President all year long has only held two Cabinet meetings, on both occasions to discuss his personal situation.

Mr. Speaker, I would call on the President again not to attend the fund-raising meetings in New York, especially, as I pointed out yesterday, because they are to benefit a sitting