

can build the bridges of learning for our students to cross over this bridge to the 21st Century like we are building infrastructures, roads, and bridges in our towns and in our cities.

Yes, the President's initiative is one that we embrace, members and commissioners on the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, a think tank that speaks to education, because we want to make sure that our children do have the quality of qualified teachers, reduce class sizes where there will be more individualized training, after-school programs where they can further this training and also enhance their knowledge, and, yes, school construction.

Children must have an environment that is conducive to learning. Our children deserve no less, and our Nation has no recourse if we are to prepare our future leaders for this global workplace.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MINGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. SHAYS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. PASCRELL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. FURSE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FURSE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BROWN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ISSUES YET TO BE SOLVED IN THE DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend the hour this evening with some of my Democratic colleagues basically reiterating what we have been saying the last few days or the last few weeks; and that is that, because of the Republican leadership's inattention, if you will, to the budget and to the needs of the American people, and because of their unwillingness to reach out and deal with some of the most pressing issues that the public is really crying out for this Congress to address, we are now faced here with another day and another continuing resolution because there is no budget because the Republican leadership has not passed a budget and is basically trying to get out of town, have this Congress adjourn, without addressing some of the major concerns that we as Democrats feel should have been addressed and still could be addressed if the Republican leadership would only take them up. I just mention a few like HMO reform, education initiatives, the need to address concerns about Social Security.

I just wanted to point out that, due to excessive partisanship, we have seen the Republican leadership waste time on a very extremist agenda in this Congress and not deal with the issues that really should be dealt with.

I just wanted to mention two tonight before I introduce and yield time to some of my colleagues. One is this raid on the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for tax breaks, if you will, primarily for the wealthy, and the second is school vouchers.

What we saw just a few weeks ago was really the most alarming of the extremist proposals passed by the Republican Congress, and that was H.R. 4579, the GOP tax break bill. This raided the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for an \$80 billion election year tax break. The House Republicans passed their tax, their tax cut bill on September 26 by a vote of 229 to 195, and they said they were using the surplus for tax cuts.

But what the Republicans failed to point out was that, without the Social Security Trust Fund, there was no surplus. Indeed, 98 percent of the surplus from fiscal year 1999 through fiscal year 2008 comes from the surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund.

That is virtually all the surplus reflects, anticipated buildup in the Social Security Trust Fund to pay future Social Security benefits. To spend this Social Security surplus on tax cuts is to endanger the future benefits of Social Security recipients, our senior citizens and future senior citizens.

Democrats have proposed saving Social Security first, preserving every

penny of the surplus until the Social Security Trust Fund is strengthened through the 21st Century.

But the Republicans did not want to deal with that. They did not want to deal with Social Security. They did not care about Social Security. They just wanted to get some quick tax breaks, again primarily for the wealthy.

The second thing I wanted to mention tonight, and I know that most of my colleagues are going to talk about, the Democrats education initiative, the school modernization program, the proposal to add 100,000 teachers to bring class size down.

These are really the two issues that we insist must be addressed before this Congress adjourns. But what I wanted to point out very briefly is that, not only did the Republican leadership not address these important education initiatives, but they spent a tremendous amount of time this last year trying to take away money from public schools and give it to private schools in the form of vouchers.

I consider this one of the most extreme parts of the GOP agenda, this anti-public education agenda they have been pursuing over the last 2 years. Even the conservative Washington Times acknowledges, and I just want to quote, "that the ground breaking school voucher provision is the first step in a larger Republican effort to shift Federal aid away from public schools while making it easier for parents to send their children to private schools. School vouchers use scarce taxpayer dollars to subsidize attendance of private and religious schools rather than improving the public schools."

I am going to use a quote from one of my colleagues, a Republican, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) because some of the Republicans on the other side share the Democratic view on this, although the leadership was clearly against us.

The gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) said, and I quote, "ultimately these school vouchers will result in gutting the public school system. Because vouchers will be sending more and more of our scarce financial resources out of the public system and into the private system."

Mr. Speaker, this is just the beginning of what the far right wants to do to destroy public education. They wanted to eliminate the Department of Education, and they want to take money from the public schools and give it to the private schools.

Just an example of a couple of expressions that have been made by some of the far right proponents, if you will, who are advocates of this. This is a quote from Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian coalition. He says, "the public education movement has always been an antiChristian movement." Can you imagine suggesting that somehow public schools are antiChristian?

Another quote from Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority, and I

quote, "I hope to live to see the day when we will not have any public schools. The churches will have taken them over again, and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be."

Now I do not mean to take away from people who want to send their children to religious schools. I think it is great. I have no problem with it whatsoever. But do not make the public school system somehow the devil, if you will, in something that should be destroyed. That is what I am fearful is happening here.

So I wanted to point out tonight that it is not just a question of the fact that the Republican leadership will not take up our education initiatives but that they have an entirely different agenda. They basically want to destroy the public school system. I do not think there is anything less than that they have in mind. That is not true of all of my colleagues on the other side, but I think true of those who are in charge.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), who has been so supportive of this effort with regard to the Democrats education initiatives.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for holding this special order and sharing it with us tonight.

I would like to talk about two issues under this, what I am kind of coining as the "do-nothingness Congress." It just keeps coming up and coming up to me. One the environment, and two education.

I would like to start with education, because I keep hearing the other side of the aisle talking and talking about all they have accomplished in education in this Congress, and it makes me think that some of them, some of our Republican colleagues need to go back to school themselves, because these education initiatives passed this year, the education bills passed in this Congress simply do not add up to meet the real needs of our kids and our schools.

Our children, 25 percent of our population, 100 percent of our future, and the Republican agenda does not make the grade when you consider how important our children's education and their future and their education is to not only their future but our future.

So those of us who have done our homework know that overcrowded classrooms are one of the biggest obstacles to improving education for these important children. We have read the studies that confirm that what parents and teachers all over the country already know, and that is that smaller class sizes result in a better education experience and better education results.

In fact, even my very Republican Governor in California, Governor Wilson, has made my home State step up to smaller class sizes and made that a priority in California. But do my colleagues know what we learned right

away? We learned immediately that smaller classes mean training more educators, means hiring more teachers, and building more classrooms.

So we have a mandate in California, for grades K through three, 18 is the largest class that a school can have; and they do not have any classrooms and the teachers are not certified.

So that is why President Clinton has asked the Congress to pass legislation which will allow schools across America to hire and train 100,000 new qualified teachers. That's why President Clinton has asked the Congress to pass legislation to help communities with their unsafe schools, renovate their old schools, and build new schools.

What answers do my Republican colleagues give to the President? Their answer is education block grants and vouchers for private schools. But we all know that block grants and vouchers do not make the grade. Block grants and vouchers do not repair crumbling schools or get more teachers into the classroom.

It is really a good thing that this Congress is not on a pass-fail grading method because, so far, my Republican colleagues and this do-nothing Congress would fail.

But there is still time. We have a little bit of time with this week to do some extracurricular work in the omnibus appropriations bill to make classes smaller, to make schools safer, and to make our children our number one priority around this country.

About the environment. We are also waiting to see whether the Republicans are going to hold our precious environment hostage during these last days of this do-nothing Congress. They added many harmful riders to the interior appropriations bill that President Clinton would have vetoed, so we did not even vote on it.

Now they are working in the back rooms, and I am scared to death that they are going to add these riders to the omnibus appropriations bill. This will make the appropriations bill unpassable, adding to the do-nothingness of this Congress.

I joined many of my colleagues writing to the President, asking him to oppose such assaults on public health, public lands, and our public treasury; and I am hopeful that the majority party will do what is right.

Some of these riders range from leaving our beautiful lands unprotected to leaving our children exposed to toxic chemicals. Everyone, Republican and Democrat alike, should agree that these important policy issues should not be solved through back-door methods on appropriations bills.

□ 2100

Sometimes the Republicans actually do the environment a favor by doing nothing at all, and that was evident last week when the omnibus parks bill, which contained many harmful environmental measures, was soundly defeated, with Democrats and Republicans alike.

The reality is that the general public wants us to protect their environment. They like clean air, they like clean water, and they like the parks and forests we all treasure. The American people will not tolerate these constant attacks. They not only care about themselves, they care about their children and their children's children and all the children in the future.

Between the Republican attacks on education and our environment, perhaps a do-nothing Congress is best because it might be the best we could hope for. Unfortunately, when this Congress decided to do something, they decided to do something in the wrong direction.

We can only hope the Republicans see the light, the light of important issues such as education for our children, our number one priority, and environment for ourselves, our future and our children's future.

Hopefully on election day, the American people will show the majority party the way.

Mr. PALLONE. I just want to thank the gentlewoman again for bringing up the environmental issue and basically saying that what we have been doing in the last 2 years is essentially playing defense here. There has not been any effort on the Republican side to do anything progressive with regard to the environment. We have simply had to defend and prevent them from making things worse with these terrible environmental riders. There has never been a suggestion of reauthorizing the Clean Water Act or the Clean Air Act or the Endangered Species Act in a way that would be more protective of the earth or the environment.

The same is true with respect to education. Now we are insisting that there be some progress on education initiatives like modernizing our schools, but we basically have been playing defense against this effort to tear down public education with vouchers and other efforts to slash funding for education. I want to thank the gentlewoman for bringing that up.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina, who really is an expert on education issues.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for organizing this hour and I am proud to have an opportunity to spend a few minutes with my democratic colleagues talking about this whole issue of education.

It is interesting to me. Education really should not be a partisan issue, but unfortunately in this Congress it is. Children show up at the public schools. They do not come as Democrats or Republicans. When they start, they only know what they get, not what they need, and that is unfortunate. Many times children, depending on the income of their parents or what part of town they may come from, that is what they may wind up with in

terms of their opportunity for education, which in turn dictates to the quality of life they may have later, and certainly dictates the quality of life their family will have because education really is the one thing that levels the playing field, and I mean public education because depending on the State, in this country roughly 90 percent of the children are in public schools. In some States, in my home State, it is almost 95 percent and it varies from State to State.

That is why we need to do everything we can to support the public institution that has really made a difference in this country of providing an economic opportunity for so many people to move into the middle class in America. That has been public education.

Let me ask a question: How did we get here? How did we get to the condition we are in? Because most of the people who want to take the public school money in this Congress and turn it into vouchers and give it to private schools, to those that already have it, came through the public schools in this country. So they had an opportunity to step up to the plate and enjoy that great smorgasbord we call public education in America that many around the world would love to have the opportunity to get, who come to our shores on a daily basis and walk into the doors of our public schools. Many of them cannot speak the English language, and we need to do a better job of making sure they have that opportunity.

There are many in this Congress, of the majority party now, in this Congress, who would like to take away that opportunity.

It amazes me the challenge that we face in trying to improve the quality of education and the fights we have had this year to gain every inch of ground we have gotten.

The President has asked for funds for teachers. We just passed a higher education bill that provides for training of our teachers, the change that needs to be made. Many of us, and I was fortunate enough to be a part of the legislation that incorporated character education, really to put back in the training of our teachers, which is an important component.

I mention that only to say in the sixties when the Sputnik went up, and we had challenges in this country in math, in science, et cetera, we poured the dollars in at the higher education level to train engineers. We trained doctors. We put the dollars in and paid for it because that was part of our national defense. We saw that as a mission, something we should do.

Today that is still true in our public schools. That is the foundation that we build on, and yet there are those that would say to us, in the Republican Party, that is not a responsibility of Congress.

Why, of course it is a responsibility. Our first challenge is to defend our borders, and our national defense, and our

military. If we are going to compete in the world economy, our next challenge is to make sure our children, all of our children, no matter what their economic or ethnic background is, that they get an opportunity to get an education.

As we put those teachers out there, we need to make sure they have a quality place to go to school, and that is why we need to build buildings.

I have been into probably more school rooms than any other person in the 8 years I was superintendent of the schools of North Carolina, and we have spent a lot of money. We spent \$1.8 billion in a bond issue we passed at the State level 2 years ago, and who knows how much the locals have spent, but we are still behind. We have children in trailers, and yet there are places in this country where we have children in classrooms that a person would absolutely not operate a business. They would not operate a business because the buildings are in that kind of a condition.

How do you say to a child that education is important when they ride by a prison on the way to school that is nicer than the building they are going into to get an education? Children are not dumb. They are pretty bright. They can figure things out. They know what is important in their community. That is why it is important that we pass, before this Congress goes home, and we ought to stay no matter how long it takes, to put some money out there to supplement, only to supplement, what locals are doing; to build the buildings that need to be built; to repair the buildings that are decaying.

We have classrooms that the windows are out. We have got classrooms that are cold in winter when they ought to be heated. We have got classrooms that are in deplorable conditions across this country and it varies from community to community.

For someone to stand on this House floor and say to the children of America, that is not the role of the Federal Government, I can remember when it was not the role of the Federal Government, if I read my history, to build roads. I remember when it was not the role of the Federal Government to put money in water and sewer because we did not have water and sewer. There were so few people in this country, they had a house out behind the house they went to, but we have changed in America. In America, we have water and sewer. We have treatment plants. There are places where we do not have enough because we need to put more to clean up our water, but we have changed as a country.

Education is among the highest priorities we have in America today and, yes, we have a role in it. We can argue about how we are going to get it there.

I happen to believe that if we are going to put 100,000 teachers out there, they ought to go to the schools and we ought not to let a bunch of people decide what they are going to do with

that money. They ought to go to the classroom where the children are.

I was a superintendent and there are some mighty good people out there and I trust them. I was in business for 19 years, too. I had my books audited every year by a CPA. I trusted my people, but I did not trust them that much. I do not think this Congress is going to trust dollars to be thrown out. We ought to require that it be in the classroom where children are, because I believe it is that important to reduce class sizes.

I do not need to stand here this evening and share with my colleagues and the American people that it is important to reduce class sizes. Teachers know it is. Parents know that it is. The PTAs across this country support it.

It is amazing to me, I never cease to be amazed when I come on this floor, when people have all the answers about all the issues and yet we have professionals in our classrooms that have gone, and I assume our colleges are doing a good job, most of them, training teachers, they know what children need and yet we are going to tell them what they need. They do know. They know that their children need a good, warm, comfortable place to learn. They need a smaller class size.

It is not necessary to be a college-educated person to understand if there are 29 students in a classroom or 16, which class is going to get more attention from the teacher. The President is right. We need smaller class sizes. If it is done in kindergarten through the third grade, the data is there. It is absolutely irrefutable, that if it is put there it can be seen. It has been done in Tennessee. We are doing some of it in North Carolina; not enough. We are trying to get it in all the kindergarten through the third grades, but I can say this evening if a child cannot read by the time that child is in the third grade, they are in deep trouble. It is more likely the child will be a dropout. That child most likely will drop out of school. If they do not drop out of school, they struggle and they struggle. They will become a discipline problem and there are all kinds of problems in the schools.

Others want to say it is a school problem. It is not the school's problem. It is our problem. Those children are all our children. Whether they are our biological children or not, they are children of America, and they have a right to a good education. We have the resources. We ought to be doing it. There are a lot of things we do that are important, but nothing is more important than the dollars that this Congress ought to put in, before we go home this week, to make sure we have a decent classroom, where we can, for children to go to, and that they have a reduced class size where teachers can do the job they have been hired to do.

We talk about we want academic standards, and I happen to believe it is important to have it. We are going to get it if we reduce those class sizes and

allow teachers to do the job they were hired to do.

Last year, I served as co-chair of the Caucus on Education. We laid out a whole package of things that we thought were important for education that would strengthen our schools all across this country, first class public schools with academic excellence, and we get there by doing these and many other things. We talk about getting parents involved. Parents get involved when they are proud of the schools their children go to.

It is easy to have pride in a building that is nice. It is easy to have pride in a building where the teacher knows the children and when the principal is engaged and when computers are involved, and that will happen. Public tax dollars will improve public education if the dollars go to the schools and do not wind up in vouchers for private schools.

I said, when I was state superintendent, I would fight for the right, I still say that as a Member of Congress, for any person who wants to send their child to a parochial or private school. That is their right. But I will fight just as hard to make sure they do not take one penny of tax money to be used for that because we do not have enough money in our public schools.

The last time I checked the public schools in my State, the PTAs were having bake sales to make sure they have enough money for the schools. We do not need to be taking the hard earned tax dollars from the citizens of my State or this country, in America, and not putting them back where they are well spent, in our public schools.

There are more things I could say about it because I believe very strongly our public schools are the foundation, really it is the foundation, that our democracy is built upon. Jefferson said if we expect to remain a free and democratic society, we must be a well educated society, and I still believe that.

Mr. PALLONE. I just wanted to ask the gentleman one thing, though, because he is so knowledgeable on the subject. First, let me say that it is amazing to me, and I am glad the gentleman brought up this whole ideology that somehow the Federal Government is not supposed to get involved in public education, I do not know how our colleagues on the other side, the Republican leadership on the other side, can say on the one hand that they do not want to fund public education but then say it is okay philosophically to pay through vouchers for private education.

□ 2115

To me, it is even more extreme, if you will, to say on the one hand that you do not think we should get involved with the public sphere, but it is okay to get in the private sphere with public dollars. Ideologically that makes no sense to me.

I also wanted to mention, and maybe you could just develop this a little bit,

the gentleman talked about the need for the funds for school modernization. I think we need to point out, as the gentleman said, we are really only talking about a small amount of dollars here.

Essentially what this does, from the way I understand it, is it gives Federal tax credits to pay the interest on the bonds. And the problem you have in a lot of the public schools, including in my own district these days, is that they cannot afford to put out these bonds to build additions or renovate the schools because the costs of the interest rate is too high.

If you could give us an example, if you would briefly, about how that would help in North Carolina.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. If the gentleman will yield, you are absolutely correct, because what it would amount to is a school system, let us say, well, I will use my own state, North Carolina, let us say when it is approved by Congress, assuming it is approved this week, let us say North Carolina is allocated, as an example, \$200 million for the state, whatever that number is. That is an easy figure to work with.

Then the state would in turn allocate that to the local systems based on whatever need formula they use. Then they would in turn sell those bonds at the local level to build the schools or renovate as they needed, and the Federal Government would pick up the interest, and the people who buy it, of course, would check that off on their taxes, would be one way to do it.

But however it works out, it would mean that the local unit of government, and that is the important thing, you are passing down, we are allowing at the Federal level building that partnership that I think is so important.

We are not taking away any of the authority at the local level. We are becoming a partner. We are not the senior partner in this situation, we are the junior partner, and doing it on a one time basis.

For those who want to talk like we are the big brother, in this case we are the little-bitty brother, because they are doing about 90 percent of the work at the local level, and the truth is of the Federal funds flowing to the local level, in my state it is about 7 percent, and I think it varies from state to state, but it is somewhere around 9 percent maximum of Federal dollars flowing to the local level.

Education has always, will be, and continue to be a local issue, and so are facilities. But all we are talking about is helping those who have the greatest need at a time when they are really struggling. They are trying to put as many dollars as they can into curriculum offerings and in teachers, and all we are doing is supplementing two pieces, the facility for a little while, to give them a jump start.

It is like having a car alongside the road and the battery is weak, but the engine will run. So we are going to give them a jump start until they can get

far enough to the next station to buy them a new battery.

That is all we are talking about with these funds, to renovate and get those schools running. Then when you get the vehicle running, people say it looks pretty good, I am going to loan you enough money to buy you a new battery. That is what we really are talking about with the bonds to renovate and build some new buildings.

Mr. PALLONE. I thank the gentleman, and I want to yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut who has taken the leadership on this.

Ms. DELAURO. I want to thank my colleagues for their really eloquent comments. A lot of us are here tonight, I am not going to speak very long, because there are lots of people whose voices ought to be heard. It is a critical issue. It is a values issue. It is who we are and what we define as a priority for this Nation.

I have often said education is the great equalizer in this country, and it has allowed for so many of us, whatever our gender or religious affiliation or party affiliation or socioeconomic status the ability to use our God-given talents in order to try to succeed. And it is a mystery to me that here we are at 9:20 at night, and for almost the last two years, or at least a year, have been trying to focus in on education, some very simple proposals that the President laid out last January, and that we want to try to have our children have some opportunity for some attention in schools, to reduce the class size, not just because of numbers. That is not what the issue is.

You take the class size and you reduce that number in grades one through three from sometimes 22, 24, 26, up to 32, 36 students in a classroom today, down to 18, and you allow that teacher to have some individual time with each and every child. So that I know that my youngster is going to get the benefit of some individualized attention.

That also helps the teacher to deal with a better environment for learning, better discipline opportunities, when you have got a smaller number of children, all with the express purpose of looking at increasing our standards, making both teachers and students more accountable, and, in essence, more of an opportunity to learn.

That is one of the proposals we are here talking about and struggling for, quite frankly: Increase the numbers of teachers, 100,000 teachers. We have had a wonderfully successful increase in the number of cops on the beat, community policing, because we had a COPS Program with a partnership between the Federal Government and local government to increase the number of policemen on the beat in our country.

This is a very similar type program. Let us increase the number of teachers. Better education, more safety, these are the kinds of values that the people that we represent have asked us to engage in.

Modernizing our schools, not because our kids ought to go to school in palaces and these grandiose buildings, but in fact in some places with falling roofs and paint and exposed wiring and a whole variety of poor infrastructure in our public facilities, it is to clean up that problem.

But probably more importantly than the bricks and the mortar is the opportunity. I have got lots of old buildings in my district in Connecticut. We are an old industrial city. We cannot wire these facilities up to the Internet. We cannot give our kids the kinds of adequate ability and technology that allows for them to be able to compete and to succeed. That is what modernization is about.

So, I mean, these are three kinds of areas that it seems to me are very basic. And here we are over the last year fighting for these issues, with the President leading the way, and we are at the last hour of this Congress, when we have been unable to even get a hearing on any of these critically important issues. And our hope is that we can in the next remaining days of this Congress, or even the remaining hours, we have got time. We have got time. We can do it. The majority, the Republican majority in this body, if they wanted to, in a heartbeat, in a heartbeat, could decide that that is where our goals are, that is where our priorities are.

These are what our values are about. I have just one more comment to make, because I think there is a very big difference, a very, very big difference, in the philosophy that we bring to this body.

No one here, that is here tonight, to talk about this issue, believes that government should do everything for people. That is not what this is about, because there are those on the other side of the aisle that say our colleagues want to just throw money at this problem.

That is not it at all, especially when the Federal Government contribution to education from kindergarten to 12 years is 7 percent. It is rather minimal, when we think about it.

But the fact is that I happen to believe, and I know my colleagues here tonight who are speaking on this issue believe, that in fact it is government's obligation, their obligation, to help people by crafting those tools that are necessary for people to meet the challenges in their lives.

That is what these programs are about, helping them to meet the challenges of educating their kids, making sure that their kids have the opportunity to succeed for the future. That is basic to every parent in this Nation. As my parents wanted to leave me with the opportunities to succeed, each and every one of us views it as our responsibility to help our kids have a better future, and we happen to believe that in fact government has a role in helping to that end; not to do everything, but to help in the process.

I am afraid and sad to say that not all, but particularly the leadership on the other side of the aisle, does not believe that government has any role to play in providing those opportunities for our kids, and that is a sad day. My hope is that we will turn that around in the next few days of this Congress.

I thank the gentleman and I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to share this with them tonight.

Mr. PALLONE. I just wanted to thank the gentlewoman, and before I yield to the next member, I was glad that you brought up the point about the COPS grant, because this is very much, this hiring of the additional 100,000 teachers, is very much modeled on the COPS grant.

We had someone, I think it was the Republican whip or one of the Republican leaders the other night, was suggesting that somehow the COPS grant program had not been successful. And I cannot think of any program that has been more successful.

I know in my hometown, we have had the opportunity to hire a lot of additional policemen. The crime rate has gone way down. These are community police officers. They have to be out on the street.

They also suggested that somehow there was a lot of strings attached by the Federal Government. It has not been that way at all. Basically the only requirement is that there be some local match to pay for the police officers, and that the police officers, you know, have certain benefits and that they serve in the community policing capacity. In other words, they cannot stay in the headquarters. They have to be out on the street, I think maybe in police cars or on the sidewalk, but out there with the community.

And it has been fantastic, the number of people that have been hired around the country and the impact on the crime rate. It has gone down significantly. And all the Federal Government really does is to provide the funding, and the communities are clamoring for this. So the notion that somehow that was not successful and we should not model it on the COPS grant, that is absurd. That is a perfect model.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the gentleman. I am very pleased to be with my colleagues tonight. I wanted to at this point indicate that when talking about the COPS Program, if I might just put a plug in for our colleague from Connecticut, JIM MALONEY, who has been working very hard to expand the COPS Program to include school resource officers, which is another part of our education program, working on safety in the schools, and I have been very pleased to work with Congressman MALONEY, who has been successful in placing additional dollars into the budget to expand the wonderful COPS Program to allow those same officers that are trained in mediation, prevention, working with young people, being

able to make those relationships between the neighborhood and the school to be able to bring that into the school.

I know I have colleagues here that have been waiting here to speak this evening, but I did want to mention that it is I think noteworthy that our democratic colleague, JIM MALONEY, has been working very, very hard on this issue. And, if I might also indicate that as we look to the closing days, I cannot think of a more important message to send to children in terms of our belief in them and their future, but to provide them with safe, clean, modern schools, with teachers that are prepared, with math and science labs that are of high quality, with technology, computers that they can access the Internet in a safe way. We have the opportunity in the remaining days of this session to provide our children with a very important message about our belief in them and the importance of their future.

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Mr. PALLONE. I know that the gentlewoman has been a leader in pointing out the need to upgrade, if you will, schools so that they have computers and high-tech equipment and that type of thing. Just give us a little information on how important that is and how this modernization program could be used for that, because I think most people just think we are talking about bricks and mortar. It is not just that.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, we are definitely talking about really two phases. One, you have to have buildings that are modern enough to be able to be wired. We have schools around the country where we could not begin to wire them for the Internet because the walls are falling down. They do not have the ability to be connected.

But if they do, and in my district, through volunteer efforts, because we have not been able to get the support from the government to partner with us, we have been moving ahead with private sector partnerships through Net Days, wiring schools with the private sector, and so on. We want the Federal Government to be a partner in that, as well, so we can reach out to those schools who have not been able to be successful in wiring schools.

The point of all of that is to make sure that our classrooms look like the workplace. Right now my daughter just graduated from high school last year. Her classroom in Lansing, Michigan, is an excellent school, but a school that is an urban older school, an older building. Her classroom looks much like it did when I was in school, and I will not say how long ago, rather than looking like the workplace that she will enter. We know that we want our children to be coming into a classroom that is preparing them for what they will face in the workplace, the kinds of equipment, the kinds of technology.

I want very much for my children to be able to access the Library of Congress, or to be able to learn a foreign

language, and speak to children in another part of the world in that language. How much more exciting that is. There are safe ways to provide access to the Internet for children that allow them to open up history, to study art by going to the Louvre through the Internet; wonderful opportunities to open up the world of knowledge.

That is what we have the ability to do right now. We need to make sure that not only children who can afford to have that technology at home have the world open to them, but that every child in every neighborhood school has that, as well.

So we have been working, as Democrats, to provide that structure, to make sure that that technology is there, that teachers are prepared, that they have the professional development tools, that the computers are there, that the knowledge is there, and that it is safe. We know that there are also issues of predators on the Internet, and we have also been addressing that as well to make sure that that is safe.

But in the end, we know our children will walk into the workplace where every single job they will face will involve a computer. We do them a disservice if we do not give them the ability and the sense of comfortableness of working with that equipment and working with that technology in our school buildings so they are truly prepared.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman. I think it is very important that we point out that this modernization money can be used for that type of purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, let me first congratulate all of the Members for taking out this special time to talk about the need for education.

I was in my office, and just to listen to what the gentleman was saying, we would think this was a developing country where the poor were just begging for education and opportunity and access to job training. We never would think that this was the world leader in trade, or one on which all of the industrialized countries are depending. We would never think that we were the farthest out there in technology.

We would think that what we are talking about would be a part of our national security, a part of what was necessary for the health of our great Nation to continue to provide the international leadership that we do, and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Yet I was thinking, if we were talking about increasing the Federal penalties for any crime, or the death penalty, or building more prisons, we would not have to be here late at night, because we would know that these things somehow our Republican friends believe is part of government, that it is a role that we should play, even though most crimes are delegated to the

States. Yet, we find that almost every State type of crime is being federalized, until our Federal prisons are bursting at the seams.

When we first saw this Contract With America, they were saying that the Federal Government ought to get out of everything; ought to get out of health care, ought to get out of Medicare, ought to get out of social security. Of course, education was not even there, because public education they truly believe we should not be involved in, just provide incentives for the private sector to work its will.

I tell the Members this, as we look and see that this great Nation of ours has 1.5 million people locked up in jails, more than any other per capita of any Nation in history, and certainly today, and then we evaluate and get the profile of that prisoner, and see that he or she never really got an education, never had a firm foundation, never had the options for a decent job or a dream or to assimilate into society, and we take a look at the average drug addict or those kids that are getting pregnant, they are not the ones who have had the dreams and hopes that they would have an opportunity in this great Nation to become a part of the middle class system.

This number continues to grow, and the prisons continue to be built, and always at the expense of our educational institutions. If we go into any State budget, we would see the relationship between the decrease in the money for education and the increase in the money for incarceration. It just seems to me that whether we are Republican or Democrat, that we should not have to say that we have to stay here until we get more teachers, that we have to stay here until we modernize our classrooms. It seems to me that we would say it is a part of the American dream. It does not have any label on it. We are all winners when people get a better chance to be more effective, more productive, pay more taxes, and have America to maintain its leadership in the world.

If we have to stay here, how proud I am to be part of a party where we know how important it is to get elected, but we say that our kids are more important, because that is what we are here for. We are here not only to do for today, but we are here to provide a legacy.

Whether we win or lose in November, if they say, why were you in Washington so long, when you should have been back home campaigning, say, we were doing it for the kids. They deserve better than they get. I am proud to be a Member of this House where people do not have to be in the majority in order to be heard. The gentleman is doing great work.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for that speech. There he is so much on point. I do not think we can add anything. I thank the gentleman for coming and joining us. It really makes the point about the need for public education.

I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS).

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman is running out of time. I will enter into the RECORD an article that appeared in the New York Daily News on Sunday, October 11, about a school that is in my district, PS 91.

The article referred to is as follows:

[Daily News, Sun. Oct. 11, 1998]

OBSTACLE COURSE

(By Nancie L. Katz)

Public School 91 has been falling down around the 1,100 students and 50 teachers who learn and work there.

Students every day have had to navigate a treacherous path around jagged holes, falling plaster, contaminated water, exposed pipes, wires and brick, and dust and soot.

Blocking part of the playground are boiler trucks—rented since September 1997 for about \$10,000 a month to heat the school after coal-fired furnaces were deemed too dangerous to keep operating.

Children at recess in the asphalt play yard skirt a drain that has collected a small pool of dirty water that everyone suspects is backed-up sewage.

Pieces of plaster drop from the ceilings, drafts seep through exposed brick walls that are children's only barrier from the outdoors, and vermin scamper in through holes in the walls.

Students bring bottles of water to school because the drinking fountains were shut after gushing brown liquid.

Dust and soot cover the top two floors, and nobody knows if there is lead or other contaminants mixed in it.

Bubbling floor tiles in the hall go unbuffered—custodians and officials are afraid they'll stir up asbestos insulation underneath.

A fire alarm doesn't work.

In a city of aged and crumbling school buildings, to walk through PS 91 is to walk the halls of shame.

"It is abominable for children to be subjected to this . . . in the richest country in the world," said Principal Solomon Long, whose calls for help have gone unanswered for eight years. "It is just unimaginable. I have appealed gain and again. So has the principal before me. But all there has been is patchwork."

Until Thursday night, no one was paying attention to the horrendous conditions at the Wingate elementary school. But after the Daily News launched an investigation into how the building was allowed to deteriorate, it was temporarily closed, children were shipped to nearby schools and the building was flooded with workmen.

After surface patching, the school is expected to reopen Tuesday. Chancellor Rudy Crew now has promised that funds will be forthcoming for more extensive repairs.

The instant response follows years of worry by Long about the safety of the "babies" who attend PS91.

Help was supposed to be on the way over the summer. Long and District 17 Superintendent Evelyn Castro said officials promised in May that repairs would be made.

So Long canceled the summer literacy program and a federal feeding program for low-income children. Teachers cleared walls and windows and carefully packed away books and other materials.

The workers never arrived. Staff and children reported back to the same crumbling institution in September.

Yet amid all this, learning at PS 91 has gone on.

Led by Long, the school is a work in progress. Only 45% of the kindergarten

through fifth-graders are reading at grade level or above.

But that's 11 percentage points higher than two years ago. Children wear uniforms, and hallways, classrooms and the cafeteria are orderly.

Long says the school has plenty of new books and computers, dedicated staff and involved parents.

"It's the facility," he said.

The building opened in 1903. Three years later, a fourth floor was added, and another L-shaped addition came in the 1920s.

In 1971, an annex was added for the lower grades. It was meant to last 10 years, but is still in use.

It's the main building—mostly the third and fourth floors—that is most damaged. Since March, the board has spent more than \$100,000 to wrap the school with protective sidewalk bridging—in case bricks tumble down.

But there has been nothing to protect the children inside.

Every morning, the smallest children line up in a room outside the auditorium. Last winter, the upper part of a wall collapsed. Children still walk by it everyday—past a folded cafeteria table and a rope offering flimsy protection.

"How many more pieces are going to come tumbling down on our kids?" asked Dwayne Carrion, a parent activist with the first-grader. "It is ridiculous that the people who sit in these offices cannot find the time or resources to address this issue."

No children have been injured seriously, although dozens said small debris has fallen on them.

"One of the plasters fell on my head last year," volunteered Shadae Bowen, 10, holding a piece of Sheetrock about the size of two marbles to demonstrate her point. "It hurt. I cried. I had to go to the doctor to see if I was okay."

Fifteen classrooms have holes in ceilings and walls, exposing brick, wires, dust and gravel. In Norman Kravetz' third-grade class last year, students used umbrellas as protection from rain and falling plaster, teachers said.

Toilets in the kindergarten classrooms can't be used because they leak through into the cafeteria.

A fire alarm in one building section doesn't work, so staffers cannot hear drills.

Students complain of breathing problems, headaches, itchy rashes, stomachaches. Teachers speak of allergies.

And last spring there was an asbestos scare. City environmental specialists and board and School Construction Authority officials did emergency cleanup work after teachers complained of suspicious powder drifting down from rain-damaged paint.

Long said he accepted board assurances—given at a heated meeting with parents—that the building was safe.

"The parents were ready to shut the place down," Long said. "They asked me at the meeting, 'What do you think?' I can't let these people down. They trust me with their babies. If anything is ever found here, the first thing parents will say is their great leader led us right to ruin."

Adriane Riddick, the parents association president and mother of a fifth-grader, said the board's failure to shut upper-floor classrooms "means they don't care about the kids who are up there." Last week, Long invited an independent inspector hired by The News into the building. The board then refused the inspector and a reporter entry—turning down the offer to allow The News to pay for asbestos and lead tests.

Fourth-grade teacher Sharon Rose-Pooser said teachers struggle to overcome the crumbling conditions.

This year, she said, she was too disheartened to try to cover the exposed brick, pipes and wires that dominate half her classroom walls.

The classrooms' coast closet is unusable because the window in it is missing, and she is afraid leaks will ruin the children's coats. Her class phonline dangles unattached.

The window frames are so rotted she cannot hang shades. Her 30 students must keep shifting around the room to avoid the glaring sun.

"The kids look at this and they wonder about their safety . . . about whether adults are concerned for them," she said. "I try to tell my students that students in the Third World and in slavery worked no matter what the conditions."

Belanda Hobbs' fourth-graders said they didn't mind the holes in the walls. That's because Hobbs hides one 6-inch hole behind a brightly colored sign. "Classroom Library." Bookshelves covered other holes and protected small feet from a yard-long, dust-filled gutter where the floor had crumbled away from the wall.

Her portable bulletin board, listing "Key Words," camouflaged a jagged hole that could easily fit a child's head.

None of the disguises keep out the mice and other vermin.

"I thought of putting a carpet [over the gutter] but the mice would eat it up," Hobbs said.

Yards of exposed brick sprayed with asbestos encapsulant dripped down Audrey Butler's classroom walls. The wrapping around an aging pipe was slit, possibly exposing asbestos.

"I had a rash all last year," she said. "My daughter begs me not to go to work."

Lorraine Williams wipes soot every day from her fifthgraders' desks, caused by the oil-fired boiler trucks parked beneath her windows. Four students have asthma.

Children in Jeffrey Garrison's fourth-grade class showed a reporter rashes on their necks they said were irritated from dust.

"I feel scared because something bad might happen," said Crystal Myrie, 9. "Somebody could die in there. The ceiling is falling down. I'm afraid I'll get cancer when I grow up."

Parents charge the board has discriminated against the minority school because it lacks political clout. They are terrified for their children.

"We send our kids to PS 91, and the Board of Education will not give us any results until one leaves an angel," Carrion said.

[Daily News, Sun. Oct. 11, 1998]

CHILDREN CAUGHT IN A TANGLE OF RED TAPE

(By Nancie L. Katz)

Principal Solomon Long said he had been reporting the decrepit conditions at Public School 91 for years.

In June 1997 and June 1998, he submitted capital budget improvement plans, he said, to the school custodial service, TEMCO. Before that, he said, he filed regular reports with the staff custodian.

Under Board of Education guidelines, custodians perform moderate repairs, but major needs are reported to the Division of School Facilities.

Chief Executive Patricia Zedalis decides whether to do the work inhouse or assign it to the School Construction Authority or the city's Design and Construction Department.

In March—after 17-year-old Zhen Zhao was killed by a falling brick from a Brooklyn school—Zedalis and board officials visited PS 91. She then authorized the SCA to develop a design plan, board spokeswoman Karen Crowe said.

But Zedalis had to wait until funds were released from the city's budget for fiscal year '99, which began July 1.

In April, parents reported white dust and demanded an environmental inspection. Asbestos was found.

Workers stripped the walls of plaster and sprayed encapsulant, and tests showed the building was safe, authority spokesman Fred Winters said. He said the SCA had no funding to do further work "because it is pointless to replace plaster or Sheetrock" if the outer bricks and roof still leak.

SCA and board officials met May 5 with enraged parents, who told of children's health problems, including stomachaches, headaches, nausea and itching from dust.

Parents, teacher Jeffrey Garrison and Long said Bernie Orlan, the board's director of environmental health and safety, told them repairs would be done during the summer.

The only work performed at PS 91 was done Aug. 26, when the board tested for asbestos and lead, Crowe said. No asbestos was found, but lead was. Workers repainted kindergarten room 103, she said.

Crowe said the "external modernization"—the cost calculated at \$3.5 million—would go ahead, although no money was set aside for it.

Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew was investigating the entire situation, she said.

Mr. Speaker, this article is about a school in New York City with horrendous conditions, but it is not atypical. Washington, D.C. had to have its whole system close down in the fall of 1997 because it had these kinds of horrible conditions in their schools, so other urban centers have similar problems. I am certain that many rural areas have similar problems. It is not atypical to have a situation like this.

As we come to the close of the 105th session of Congress, I am pleased that at least we have forced the entire Congress, the majority party as well as our party, to focus on education. The public opinion polls show this is number one with people. At least we are in sync with the people. The people say this is the number one priority. The majority party has had to recognize it.

The kinds of conditions that are indicated here at PS 91 are the kinds of conditions we do not want to see exist in any school. It has a coal-burning furnace that was built in 1903. The walls are crumbling. In one class, four children have asthma. The custodians are afraid to clean the floors because of asbestos underneath the tiles. Every imaginable danger is there. It is not a school that we want to send children to in America.

I hope that this article should be in the RECORD as part of what we are saying in these closing days of the 105th Congress.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman. He is here almost every night relaying a message, and it is often on education. I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS).

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BLAGOJEVICH).

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. Let me piggyback on what has been said about education. I happen to be a product of the public education system. I am very lucky to be, of course, a Member of Congress.

I want to repeat exactly what has been said about schools, but it is clear that a lot of local initiatives across the country in terms of school reform are working: smaller class sizes, connecting classrooms to the Internet, of course, which has so much to do with rebuilding crumbling school buildings; other issues that relate; even grade inflation. In my own experience, I can tell the Members that the D I got in algebra was a classic example of grade inflation.

There are a lot of things that are being tried at the local level, and what is lacking to complete the job is the help from the Federal level in providing those necessary resources. If we can, here in Congress, on the eve of our adjournment, do something about getting the necessary Federal dollars to rebuild our schools, I think this session will not be as much of a do-nothing Congress as it might otherwise turn out to be.

This Congress will soon adjourn, as we know. We are at the 11th hour. Absent a change of direction, we will not do anything about national priorities like rebuilding our Nation's crumbling schools, or reforming our health care system, or seizing the historic opportunity that we have, which is the first time since 1969 having a Federal surplus that we can use to help stabilize social security.

In addition to those major issues, there are other neglected national priorities that I think this Congress has failed to work on, important initiatives that relate to our fight against guns and crime. That will not see action this year.

I know that the Committee on the Judiciary has been busy lately, very busy, but I would like to raise an issue that has yet to be addressed by that committee or by this Congress. That is the issue of the growing black market, where criminals are purchasing firearms with impunity. That is at gun shows.

There are approximately 5,200 gun shows held every year across the United States. Literally hundreds of thousands of weapons change hands at these events. While most gun show participants are law-abiding citizens, enthusiasts, and collectors, law enforcement agencies are seeing an alarming number of cases where violent crimes have been committed with guns that were initially obtained by criminals at gun shows.

For example, according to a recent study by the Illinois State police, 25 percent of illegally trafficked firearms they seized were originally purchased at gun shows.

Let me give an illustration. Last May in Florida ex-convict Hank Earl Carr used a weapon he bought at a gun show to kill 4 people in a shooting spree that ultimately left two police officers and a State trooper dead. If that same Hank Earl Carr tried to buy that same weapon at a gun store, a criminal background check would have

revealed his felony record, and he would have been prevented from buying a gun.

Mr. Speaker, criminals are increasingly buying guns from gun shows because, unlike retail gun stores or sporting goods stores, there are no requirements to provide identification, no requirements to perform background checks, and no requirements to impose waiting periods. In all too many cases, Mr. Speaker, criminals can buy any number of guns with no questions asked.

This Congress could have extended the same safeguards and recordkeeping requirements to gun shows that we already require of everyone else, but this Congress treated this issue like so many other issues, and this Congress on this issue did nothing.

Mr. Speaker, 40,000 Americans die every year of gun violence in the United States. Our Nation's children are 12 times more likely to die as a result of gun violence than are children in any other industrialized Nation. It is probably too late now, on the eve of our adjournment, to address this issue, but I hope that in the next Congress, whether it is the Democrats or the Republicans who control this process, we can focus our efforts on matters like these that affect people in our neighborhoods and in our communities.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman. I know that one of the biggest concerns with regard to guns now is guns in the schools, so it relates back to our concern about keeping the schools safe, as well.

There are many things that the Republican leadership has failed to address. I think the gentleman brings up one of them. The main thing that I think we are trying to say tonight, and maybe I can conclude with this, is that even though there are only a few days, perhaps, left in this Congress, there is enough time to provide funding for the school modernization, and also for the 100,000 teachers to reduce class size.

The effect of that is to basically create schools that are better, more disciplined, with a safer environment, a smarter environment. We are just saying, as Democrats, that we do not want to go home until this is addressed.

No one can tell us that there is not the opportunity, because as the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) said, the Republican leadership could pass this legislation and get this budget and appropriation bill signed into law with the money for the school modernization program, with the funds for the 100,000 extra teachers. They cannot tell us that there is not time left to do that.

If that is all we accomplish in the next few days, we will have accomplished a great deal. Even though we have had this 2 years of a do-nothing failed Congress, at least we have something that we can go back to our constituents and say, look, we accomplished this. As the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) said, it really

is our future that we care about. Everyone here tonight is expressing the concern for children and for kids and for the future of this country, and the equal opportunity that we so cherish.

I just want to thank everyone again for being here this evening.

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Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret that I ask our colleagues to join in wishing a fond farewell to a good friend, an outstanding Member of Congress, our colleague, BILL PAXON from the 27th District of New York on his retirement from office at the end of this session.

First elected in 1988, BILL PAXON has certainly left his mark, not only on this body but upon all of us for whom he has been an outstanding friend. Congressman PAXON is departing this year after his fifth term, but his legacy will be with us for many years to come.

BILL PAXON attended Akron Central Elementary and Junior High Schools, Saint Joseph's Collegiate Institute and Canisius College, from which he graduated in 1977. Friends and family members say he had an interest in politics and public service from the an early age. But he wasted no time in seeking office upon his return home from college. At the age of 23, BILL PAXON was elected the youngest county legislator in the history of Erie County, New York.

He easily won an open State Assembly seat in 1982, and was a logical choice to succeed Congressman Jack Kemp, when Jack Kemp left this body in 1988.

On the Committee on Commerce, BILL PAXON earned a reputation for his interest in the concerns of his district, in western New York, and of American industry. On the Subcommittee on Energy and Power and the Subcommittee on Finance and Hazardous Materials, BILL PAXON has been a champion on behalf of the health and well-being of all of us.

BILL PAXON made his greatest impact as chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee from 1993 to 1996. In that capacity, BILL PAXON worked hard to recruit outstanding candidates for our party throughout the Nation and to steer them towards adequate funding.

BILL will always be remembered for bringing romance to this chamber, having proposed to our colleague, Representative Susan Molinari of Staten Island on the very floor of this chamber. And while we miss Susan greatly, we fondly remember her good contributions to the Congress.

Now that BILL and Susan have chosen to pursue careers in the private sector, we wish them and their children the best of luck in all of their future endeavors and remind them that our hearts will always be with them.

To BILL, we bid a fond farewell and I thank you for bringing idealism to this body, and a special thanks for making this chamber a better place in which to work for the good of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to our distinguished majority whip, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I really appreciate the Dean of the New York delegation for taking out this special order for what is truly a trend setter and a person who has really turned this place into a dynamic institution. I appreciate the New York delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who I think is one of the most energetic, the most enthusiastic, and the most effective Members Congress, my good friend BILL PAXON of the great State of New York. And for a gentleman from Texas to say that takes a lot to bring a New Yorker and a Texan together and to become as close friends as we are.

BILL, as we all know, is retiring from Congress at the end of this year, and he is going to pursue some private sector opportunities. We wish him the best. BILL's departure, quite frankly, is a great loss to this institution. But it is also a great gain for his family and for the private sector, because BILL PAXON did more to reform this Congress than any other person in this House.

He was the principal architect of the strategy to change control of this House, which had been in one party's hands for over 40 years. Once we were able to gain a majority, we were able to reform this Congress in so many significant ways. We were able to balance the budget for the first time in a generation. We cut the size of government. We made Members of Congress even follow the laws of the land.

We reformed welfare. We cut taxes for the first time in 16 years and we reformed this Congress in ways that have improved its popularity with the people to its highest ratings in history. And this all happened because of the hard work of BILL PAXON.

As we all know, BILL was first elected to Congress in 1988. And having accomplished all of this, one would think that he had been here forever. But we all know him as our own personal political junkie, because at the age of 23, he started his political career. Mr. Speaker, 23 years old is when he started in the Erie County legislature. He later went to the New York State Assembly before starting his distinguished career in the U.S. House.

But BILL PAXON is a visionary. He sees America as a Nation of opportunity, a Nation with boundless optimism and a can-do spirit. And it was this can-do spirit that BILL PAXON took over to the National Republican Congressional Committee with the express goal of achieving the first Republican Majority in the House in 40 years.

Nobody, other than probably NEWT GINGRICH, thought it could be done. Nobody thought that PAXON was serious in his efforts. And he took an NRCC that was pretty much broke, heavily in debt, demoralized, and pulled it together, showing his administrative skills as well as his political skills.

BILL PAXON proved all the doubters wrong by using his energy to help Republicans win that majority.

Now BILL PAXON has decided to leave the House and pursue other opportunities. Spending as much time as I have with BILL, I think I know his true motivation. It is to spend more time with his wife and our former colleague, Susan Molinari, and their fantastically beautiful Susan Ruby Paxon. We call her "Suby," and who could blame him.

BILL, let me just say we will miss your optimism and your spirit and your vision of the House of Representatives. As a matter of fact, we already miss them. We wish you the best of luck in the future in your future endeavors. But let me just say that those people that are about to meet BILL PAXON in the private sector, there is, when you develop a relationship with BILL PAXON, when you develop a friendship with BILL PAXON, you will have on your side one of the most loyal individuals I have ever run into. One of the closest friends that I have ever had. A person that will stand by you through the worst of times as well as the best of times. A man of incredible honor and integrity and character. A man that young people should look up to as a role model, as most of us have.

We are going to miss you so much in this chamber, BILL. And we hope that you will continue to give us the counsel and the friendship we need, no matter where you go. I greatly appreciate your friendship and will cherish it forever.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) for yielding to me.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his eloquent remarks and we certainly join with him in wishing BILL PAXON good luck in the days ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) the distinguished chairman of our Republican Policy Committee.

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) for yielding to me.

I am particularly pleased that Congressman PAXON is here with us tonight in the chamber. It is something of a tradition as Members retire and we have an opportunity allowed them on the floor of the House, that they are forced to sit here and listen to us talk about them. But it is especially nice for those of us paying tribute to be able to look you in the eye tonight and tell you from the heart how sincerely we are going to miss you here and how much we have appreciated the opportunity over the last many years to work shoulder to shoulder with you.

It was 10 years ago that BILL PAXON and I, and 16 others, were elected as part of the same freshman class. And 10 years goes by rather quickly. We did not know at the time when we set out to exercise in our own way what degree of influence we might over the Congress that one of us would become the

leader of our National Congressional Campaign Committee and spearhead an effort to change the management of Congress for the first time in two generations.

But that was BILL PAXON's fate at the time, and certainly now in retrospect we know how much that means to our country. It certainly meant a lot to each of us to participate with him in that venture.

I have been in politics only 12 years; 10 here and 2 downtown working with Ronald Reagan in the White House. That makes me a piker compared to BILL PAXON, because he has been an elected official for more than a generation, representing Erie County in the legislature as its youngest member at age 23. He then went on to the New York State Assembly where he was elected in 1982, 6 years before we were seated together in Congress.

So by the time BILL PAXON started out in the United States House of Representatives 10 years ago, he was already an accomplished legislator and an accomplished legislative leader.

It is not surprising, therefore, that he was tapped to run the National Republican Congressional Committee, although infusing the NRCC with new management at that point might have been viewed as much as a desperation pass as a sure thing at the time, because it was \$4.5 million in debt. Fortunately, we had strong leadership at the helm at the Republican National Committee where Haley Barbour was in charge, and Haley and BILL PAXON working together were an amazing team to behold.

In particular, I think because of BILL's energy and his dynamism, Haley was taken in and became a big supporter of what was going on there. I served on BILL's Executive Committee and watched as he pared down what had, over many, many years become a rather large staff that we could not afford, into a real lean organization that went out and got the job done for our candidates across the country and for the American people.

The result, of course, was not only the first Republican Majority in the U.S. House of Representatives in 40 years, and the first back-to-back majorities in 68 years, but the first balanced budget since 1969. It is just an extraordinary thing to think one can take an organization as big as the Federal Government, not just the NRCC but the Federal Government, and turn it around from hundreds of billions in projected deficits to surpluses now as far as the eye can see. But that has been the consequence of BILL PAXON's leadership in the United States Congress.

Probably the most important moment for BILL PAXON in the House of Representatives was not the passage of the Telecommunications Act, which he shepherded through the Committee on Commerce where we served together; not the passage of the first tax cuts in 16 years, which he like his predecessor

in Congress, Jack Kemp, so strongly championed; but, almost certainly, it was when he proposed on the House Floor here to Susan Molinari, another one of our classmates, and naturally she was as impressed with him as the rest of us. Unlike the rest of us, however, she joined with him in a very special partnership which a year later resulted in an extraordinary marriage and an extraordinary union between two people that are as close to us in congressional family as anyone can possibly be.

But seeing them married together just makes us all thrilled every time we think about it. And as has been mentioned earlier, we are now coming to know your daughter, Suby, Susan Ruby, almost as well as our own kids because we get a chance to see her around the House of Representatives.

I think of that time in San Diego when you were out in California, when all of us were out in California on the Republican side, for the National Convention, the Republican National Convention, and your wife was the keynote speaker to the country at that National Convention.

□ 2200

And all the attention was focused on her, she thought. But the cameras moved to you feeding Susan Ruby with a bottle and, as a dad myself, I know exactly what that is like. We have a new one at home, just a month old, and 5-year-old and a 4-year-old. I am sure as our kids grow up they will get to know each other, I hope as well as our moms and dads know each other.

BILL PAXON is unlike anyone in this Chamber, unlike anyone in the Congress that I know for one simple reason. Despite all of the responsibility that he has taken, despite all of the energy and effort that he has put into it, despite the superhuman effort and results that he has achieved, he is always equanimous. It is hard to find an example of BILL PAXON being anything other than upbeat and telling us that we can do it. We can get the job done. And think back over a decade, that is just extraordinary.

There is not a day that goes by here when there are not 6 good reasons to be down in the mouth because somebody said something that they should not have said, a reporter printed something that she or he ought not to have, that we lost a close vote somewhere, that somebody was speaking behind our backs. That is what politics unfortunately entails every day.

Yet every day, as Ronald Reagan used to say, when he told the story about the boy who was told to clean up all the manure in the stable, and the boy says, there must be a pony in here somewhere, there is always something good if you are willing to find it.

BILL PAXON has found day in and day out all of the good that we can find in ourselves and all of the good that Congress can produce, and the result truly is extraordinary. I think as we, as Bill

Clinton is fond of saying, cross this bridge to the 21st century with surpluses now in hand, with tax relief now a real prospect because we do have the government's fiscal house increasingly in order, with jobs increasing, with the United States as a rock of economic stability in a world that is having a lot of economic troubles, we can say that some of this is historically inevitable, that America is just so strong that these things are bound to happen, but those of us who work in government and in the legislature and the executive branch know that it ultimately boils down to a few people. It matters what each of us does when we get up in the morning. It matters whether we succeed instead of fail. It matters if we can motivate our colleagues and our countrymen to join in an effort to make America a better place. And I know that even though, BILL, you are retiring, that you are only retiring from this particular aspect of your very public commitment to public service. And whatever you do in the future and whatever your remarkable family does in the future, I know that America is going to benefit from it.

We have all personally benefited from knowing you, and I am very, very proud to have served with you and even more proud to know that we will be friends in the years ahead.

Thank you very much for brightening our lives and bettering the country as you have done. We look forward to hearing even more and better things from you in the years ahead.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his eloquent remarks.

I yield to the gentleman from Staten Island, New York (Mr. FOSSELLA), another member of our New York delegation.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from New York for yielding to me.

I am proud to join my colleagues, Mr. COX and Mr. DELAY and Mr. GILMAN, in saying a fond farewell to BILL PAXON, although as CHRIS COX just stated, I do not think BILL is going far.

Those of us who know BILL, both on a professional level, can appreciate his energy, his optimism, his ability to always get things done, but more important to get them done right. But there are those of us who are fortunate enough to know him on a personal level. And in business, like any other business across the country, if you can somehow appreciate someone as a professional and appreciate someone as an individual on a personal level, you have gotten to know the best of that person. And I do not think there is a Member in this House that cannot look to BILL PAXON and see a man of honor, a man of integrity and a man of character.

In a business, particularly politics here, where a handshake does not often mean a lot, but I think in the rest of America a handshake still means a lot, it is nice to know that we have a guy in BILL PAXON where the handshake

still means something. That goes to the root I think of what BILL is all about.

You look at BILL, you see a sense of someone who is principled and someone who really loves life. But more importantly, I think it has been said already, and it will be said many times tonight, that he loves his wife, Susan Molinari. Susan and I are friends, and I could not think of a better person that she can share her life with than BILL PAXON. And each of them together truly adore and love their daughter Susan Ruby, who is so affectionately called "Suby."

Susan Ruby will have another daughter, another sister to play along with, and I can understand, as someone who is a father of two boys, how much BILL desires to spend more time with his wife and his daughter, and soon to be two.

We have a mutual friend in his father-in-law, Guy Molinari, his mother-in-law, Marguerite, who are back on Staten Island right now. Guy served in the House before Susan. And in a way, if it was not for Guy leaving this House to run for local office, the chances are that you would never have met Susan. So in a way Guy running for borough president allowed you to marry the love of your life.

I am sure they are all going to see this or hear of this one day and really come to learn and come to know how much BILL PAXON has made a difference in this country. Not too long ago, I have only been in this House a year as you know, BILL. I probably would not be here if it was not for you. You helped a great deal in my campaign for Congress to replace Susan here. And indeed the people of Brooklyn and Staten Island have given me a great honor and privilege to serve them. But I would not be here if it was not for you.

I think there are a lot of Members of this body who would not be here given the chance to serve this great country. A few years ago there were people who were giving up hope in this country. The ship of government was clearly heading in the wrong direction. The notion that government had all the solutions, that taxes were too low and government needed to impose more taxes and the welfare state, well, let us make it bigger and our military, well, that can wait, we have other priorities. It is easy to sit back and do nothing.

But what separates the truly successful, the people who really love this country and want to improve this country and speak to the next generation, we hear a lot of rhetoric about those who really care about the next generation, but it was BILL PAXON, along with the Speaker, not the Speaker at all, but NEWT GINGRICH and all the members of the Republican Party who said, ideas matter, ideas matter. This country should not be lost. The American people have given too much to give this country down to that notion that government has all the problems.

But he went out and he recruited candidates, and he worked his tail off day in and day out, year after year to bring a Republican majority to this House. People thought it was impossible, probably a few weeks before the election people thought it was impossible. But he proved them wrong. And he went out there with his idea that this country is the greatest in the history of the world. And frankly, as far as I am concerned, there is nobody like BILL PAXON. Most of all, I am proud that he is my friend.

And I can only wish him the very, very best. I know we are all lucky in our own little way to have known him for this brief period of time, but we are also lucky to know that we will continue to endure a friendship that will last hopefully forever.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) for his eloquent remarks and for his insight on the family of BILL PAXON. I thank him for mentioning your father-in-law Guy Molinari, who has helped to rear this great family and to be supportive of BILL and as the years go by and of course to raise Susan who we sorely miss.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

Mr. HAYWORTH. I thank my good friend from New York State and, Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember and to celebrate the contributions of my other colleague from New York State.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. FOSSELLA spoke of it a second ago, the realization of what transpires here in the people's House before we are accorded the great honor of the doors opening and our hand being raised in taking the oath of office to join the 434 others as Members of this people's House. And I can recall following the 1992 elections, when many of our philosophy despaired a great deal, there was a ray of hope, not only as that adversity engendered determination, but also because here in this Federal capital there was one who was willing to step forward, to take on considerable political challenges, to shoulder considerable challenges of romance. And I can recall reading the press accounts, Mr. Speaker, when our good friend, Mr. PAXON, was courting Susan and made history proposing to her on this floor.

Now, according to the press accounts, Mr. Speaker, a Member from the other side of the aisle congratulated the couple and uttered what I believe will be proven to be a very forlorn wish because he hoped that their progeny would all be little Democrats. And I do not believe that our friend has yet to school Ruby in all the intricacies of civics, given her tender age, but somehow I doubt even through those years of rebellion that will strike inevitably in adolescence that she will embrace another partisan philosophy.

But I mention that because, Mr. Speaker, we rise in celebration of our friend who made history here in so many different ways, not only with the

tip of the rhetorical cap to cupid but also in the way this institution operates.

I can recall the visit to Arizona, two visits in fact, but the second one stands out in my mind of our colleague and his bride, and it was at a time when our youngest was still in the playpen and would be in our campaign headquarters. I can remember introducing them to so many folks who walked the precincts, so many folks who made the phone calls, so many folks who, Mr. Speaker, we cannot help but describe as a miracle, people of both political parties find these incredible folks who are willing to give of themselves and their time to volunteer in campaigns. And so it was that day.

I can remember pulling out the playpen saying that my colleagues from New York would soon need it. But before they added Susan Ruby to their household, they added a class of 73 new Members to this institution. And in so doing changed the balance of power within this the people's House in a very healthy way, I would submit, Mr. Speaker, in a historic way, in a way in which many now are just coming to appreciate.

□ 2015

Mr. Speaker, I sit and wonder when I think about those who have gone before in this American parade, those who have made history.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is a very human equation at work where preparation meets circumstance to make history. So it has been for our colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. PAXON), rising to the challenge at a time when our political party was out of power, both in this institution, as has been well documented and referred to seemingly an infinite number of times.

At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, he stepped forward in the midst of that adversity because he was well-trained by his dear late father who instilled in him a commitment to public service.

But also, Mr. Speaker, to the machination so vital to public service, and I use that term machination not in a pejorative sense, but just in simply the list of logistics and how we get from point A to point B and how we put to work those miraculous individuals who become volunteers in our campaigns and how we are able through that framework to influence public opinion and win friends and gain public office as he did at a comparatively tender age, as it should be noted.

The years have been none the worse for wear to our friend who chooses to leave the people's House at still a relatively youthful age; and yet, Mr. Speaker, he will always be remembered in this institution among Members of both parties as our majority maker. Because while others engendered the vision, perhaps, he put his shoulder to the wheel. He encouraged candidates. He was willing to travel across this

country. He was willing to summon and marshal the resources.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we remember him for his contribution to history, not only in helping to make our majority, but in helping us preserve it. Yet, as my newest colleague from New York State noted, despite those considerable achievements that will be recognized by historians and political scientists and those who share our allegiance both to the country and to the party we represent, there is a very real personal quality and unique spirit and bearing that we will miss in this Chamber, but that we will always champion no matter his future endeavors in the public arena or in private business.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is in that spirit tonight that we come to honor BILL PAXON, our friend from New York, who succeeded Jack Kemp in this people's House and who will, for years to come, cast a long shadow and offer a standard that will be difficult to meet, much less exceed.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for his very eloquent remarks in support of this special order.

I would like to note that the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), the distinguished chairman of our Committee on Rules, wanted to be present tonight, but regretted that, due to illness, he had to return home at an early hour and is submitting remarks for the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from New York, Mr. PAXON.

Mr. PAXON. Mr. Speaker, I am very deeply appreciative of my colleagues, my dear friend and our senior Member of our delegation, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), my very good friend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority whip, and the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), my classmate from the class of 1988.

I was hoping I was going to get through this week without the requiem mass here. I have served in three legislative bodies, and I have avoided in the other two having to go through this. And I really do, this is not false humility in any way, shape, or form.

I love being a legislator because we are part of a team and it is fun and it is exciting and we get to know a lot of folks and we get to work with a lot of folks, but we move right on.

When we move right on, someone else comes in right behind us. There is seamless transition in these bodies. We are gone and forgotten very quickly. So I appreciate the fact that my colleagues are doing this. But also I tried to avoid this because I really do believe that we need to look to the next person coming in; certainly celebrate the good times we have had and the enjoyable times and things we have been able to do, but to look down the road to the next folks.

That is what I have enjoyed about this body a lot, is the next group and the next group coming in to regenerate the institution.

I want to thank my colleagues for doing this. I want to particularly say, if I could take a minute or two, what a great honor it is to serve in this greatest legislative body in the history of the world. I do not think there is any question that the people's House of Representatives of the United States of America is more than just the legislative body for this country. It is the legislative body of the world.

I know that my colleagues that are sitting here would agree with me. Walk out into the adjoining areas, the Statuary Hall and the Rotunda of this Capitol. Every single day, people from all over the world are walking around and looking at this as literally a citadel.

It is a holy place in so many ways in terms of the ideas and the traditions that we have been able to take to the world. To have a chance to occupy a seat out of 435 in this body for a short period of time is an honor the likes of which I could never, ever wish for.

I can tell you that I dreamed about it as a young kid. The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) referred to my dad. My dad Leon Paxon was a public official long before I was born, served as a local town supervisor, and that is a judge in our county.

My mother and my father met just as my wife and I met. My mother was a clerk to the board of supervisors in Erie County, where she met my dad. My wife and I met in this legislative Chamber.

I am going to keep my daughter away from the kids of the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA), or else we are going to continue this tradition forever. It has got to stop. Somebody has to get an honest job in this operation.

But I am very proud of the fact, at a time when many people call into question public service, the fact that I am a third generation public servant. My grandmother Ruby Paxon, who my daughter is partly named after, a real focus of my life on my dear grandmother, who passed away at 107 a couple years ago. She, after the women gained the right to vote, became the first woman to run for public office in Erie County, New York, as a Democrat. I am embarrassed to say. She switched parties down the road. But I am very proud of her. She ran at a very difficult time, back in the 1920s, then served as librarian, a public servant.

My mother and dad, of course. As the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) pointed out, on my wife's side, her grandfather was an elected official, her father. Now to be able to follow along is, I think, very important for me. It also says that we do believe in public service. We have been very honored and blessed by it in our families.

I just want to make one other general comment and a couple words of

thanks. I have dreamed of being here for as long as I can remember. In the 1960s, 1968, when I was a freshman at St. Joseph Collegiate Institute in Buffalo, New York, a freshman in high school, it was not a time where most kids had Nixon posters in their locker or read the National Review.

I did. I was a little odd, no, I was a lot odd at take time. Out of 130 guys in our Catholic boys high school, 128 registered to vote that year. About 120 registered Democrat, and it was myself and another guy, I think.

I believed then in the principles that were so beautifully espoused during his tenure by Ronald Reagan, the greatest hero I have ever had in terms of political life. The beauty of this country, our standing as a beacon of hope, freedom and democracy, opportunity, and liberty in the world. That is what I think this is all about.

We stand in this Chamber, and sometimes to the viewing audience around the country and around the world, it looks like we are very contentious. Most of the times, it is a battle of ideas. It has nothing to do with personalities. That is what our Founding Fathers wanted. I believe that that is what is important to the future of this country.

Back when I was in my teens, that is what I watched and followed in the Congress of the United States, because I do believe that, if we stand up and talk fairly and freely, openly and honestly about different views and different ideas, we can make an impact.

In our case, it took us a long time, from the days of Barry Goldwater in the 1960s, to reach that moment when Ronald Reagan won and then this whole revolution came full circle in 1994, when the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and so many others of our colleagues were elected in that important year.

My friends and my colleagues, this is not anything disparaging on our colleagues across the aisle, Democrats, many of whom I consider to be dear friends. This was about, in 1994, trying a new set of ideas in this country. I am proud of the work that our Republican majority has done and that this Congress has done many times across the aisle in moving those ideas that many of us fought for for decades and decades now into the center of the American political arena.

We have so much more to do. There are so many more important tasks before of this country that I look forward to watching the Congress doing in years to come. I look forward to doing something I have never done. Twenty-one years that I have been in office, I have never been able to call up elected officials and tell them what I think they should do. Starting in January, I intend to do that. But I intend to do it with a smile on my face, because I believe that this Congress is in the hands of men and women who care so deeply about the future of this country and

are going to do great things to make these things happen. I do leave with a great sense of pride in our accomplishments and a great sense of hope in the future.

I would also be remiss if I did not say a few thank yous. In addition to my friends who are doing this wonderful special order and who have been so kind to me over the past few weeks and months, I want to say thank you to the wonderful staffs that have served the 27th District of New York for my 10 years in Congress, headed by Maria Cina, Michael Hook, and David Marventano, my chiefs of staff.

These are folks who work tirelessly for those folks back in Western New York and the Finger Lakes. I also want to thank those people. In 1977, there was a 22-, at first when I was running, and then 23-year-old kid who was campaigning, and they had the misfortune I guess in some cases to vote for me, and some did not vote for me and never have, but they have been friends in spite of that, folks from the county days, the State legislative days, and now the hundred cities and towns I represent in the Congress.

It is the most beautiful part of America. I have had the chance to be in every, almost all, I think 48 of the 50 States, and about 300 some congressional districts. I have never, and with all pride, I know we have pride in our districts, I just think that Western New York and Finger Lakes is about the most beautiful spot in the world.

The friends that I had back at home will always be friends. Those are people, as I have said, some who have never voted for me, who come to my town meetings and browbeat me every month, and yet we have a wonderful relationship all these years.

I also want to thank my family and my friends who have indulged me all these years that I have been in public office, particularly my mom back in Western New York, my in-laws, Marguerite and Guy Molinari and all of my various friends and relatives down through the years.

I have been a pain when it comes to politics in government because I believe so strongly in this cause. I hope they will forgive me for the many times I crossed the line, but I did it out of the sense that this is an important responsibility. I really do believe that and mean that.

I also thank very much the Speaker of this House. NEWT GINGRICH, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) said earlier, believed in us before we believed in us. He saw opportunities to take the feelings of the American people and to translate it into political activism in winning this majority.

I had the chance to be campaign chair, and it was and will always stand as the most unique and important political moment nonfamily moment in my life to be the chairman of the campaign. That is the vocal and also the figure head of the organization. It was NEWT GINGRICH whose vision it was

that we can win this majority. Every single day when we did not believe, he kept pushing us to make the changes that we needed in ourselves to make this come about and make this happen.

There are many, many others. I will not go through them all today. Many have been alluded to, Jack Kemp and Barber Conable, my predecessors in Western New York, dear friends, great leaders. Tom Reynolds who is my first campaign chair who followed me to the assembly and seeking my seat in Congress today. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY) who has been chairman of the Committee on Congress which I have had the honor to serve these past 6 years, and just a remarkable gentleman in every sense of the word.

□ 2230

I would just leave with this thought. People wonder, why do you leave? Why does anybody leave? Members say this all the time. This is the greatest institution. It is the greatest fraternity. It is exciting. There are great challenges every day and there is a great future for this country that we can help shape.

I am leaving basically for four reasons. First, I think what I have said today, I am absolutely confident we are on the right track; that this body and this country are moving in sync for a change in the right direction. I leave confident knowing the next century is going to be another great American century because of what the American people want to happen translate into action by this Congress.

I leave, frankly, because I believe in term limits. When I was elected, I did not. I have come to believe in them. I think there is a time to move on. It is better to leave close to or at the top of your game then to sort of waste yourself out here. In my case, I felt that this has been the top of my game; that period in the leadership, that period that I had a chance to help work on those campaigns, and now I wish to step aside before I have overstayed my stay in my mind.

The third reason, of course, is we love to talk about being in the private sector, particularly as Republicans. However, many of us do not want to go out into the private sector, and I have not for 21 years. It is time to do that, to live under the laws we passed.

Last, but first and most importantly, I leave with something that overarches everything, that sense of family. It was noted that just over here in the corner where some of our Florida Members sit is where one afternoon I called my dear friend at the time, a woman who, we had been dating for a number of years, Susan Molinari, the love of my life, and I said I have to talk to you about something. A defense bill was on the floor. I said, "Come here I have to talk to you."

We got in the corner and we started talking, and I proposed to her. Every time I turn on C-SPAN and watch this

Chamber, I will remember that moment. I will remember it even more because she said, yes. I cannot believe she did.

I waited until later in life to start a family. We have that beautiful daughter of ours, Susan Ruby, who is just the most magnificent little girl in the world. I have the most beautiful wife one would ever want or could ever ask for, the most perfect spouse, and we are going to have another child in February.

It is time to put family first for us, and the way we lead our lives it would not work staying in this body. It would not be fair. My wife left last year. I am going to follow her out. We are going to enjoy being in the private sector. Most importantly, we are going to enjoy the time we can spend as our little kids grow up. These are precious moments and ones that I do not wish to miss.

I, again, just want to say to all of my friends and colleagues, thank you for indulging me here, to have this chance to speak. I have not often spoken. When I was in the county and state legislature, I could not shut up on the floor. Here I have tried to stay away. My focus has been elsewhere in this body.

I want to say thank you to my colleagues for taking this time out, for giving me the chance to say a few words because I was not going to speak. I would just wish you Godspeed as you continue your duties on behalf of this greatest country in the history of the world.

Mr. GILMAN. BILL, we wish you success and happiness and to all the Paxons, including little Ruby, who we watched grow up in the last few years, we wish you good health and happiness in the years ahead.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order on behalf of the gentleman from New York (Mr. PAXON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. SCARBOROUGH (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today, on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts)

to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. SKAGGS, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. DELAURO, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. BECERRA, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. CARSON, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mrs. CLAYTON, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. ROEMER, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. SANCHEZ, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. DOGGETT, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. MINGE, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. PASCARELL, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. STABENOW, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. FURSE, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. SHAYS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. REGULA, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. MILLER of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. RIGGS, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. TIAHRT, for 5 minutes each day, on today and October 14.
 Mr. GOSS, for 5 minutes each day, on today and October 14.
 Mr. WELLER, for 5 minutes each day, on today and October 14.
 Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. PITTS, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. BASS, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. PAXON, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. FOSSELLA, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. BARTON of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, on October 14.
 Mr. DAVIS of Virginia, for 5 minutes, on October 14.
 Mr. EHLERS, for 5 minutes, on October 14.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHAYS, for 5 minutes each day, on today and October 14.

Mr. THUNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KINGSTON, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. KINGSTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NEUMANN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to: