

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, we have heard here again this morning that this Congress and the Congress before it has not appropriated money for education when in fact we have appropriated more money every year than the year before. So much of the debate about education in the Congress is about who controls the money and about whether the Federal Government is going to keep its word to local school districts.

Any time I am in the Seventh District in Missouri and ask an educator what is their biggest problem with the Federal Government, they always say, "Special education mandates." When we mandated special education, we said we would provide 40 percent of the money. At the beginning of the 104th Congress, we were providing 6 percent. Now we are providing 12 percent.

Part of the debate about teachers is whether some of those teachers could be special education teachers and help us get to what we have promised local districts we could do. But, no, that is not good enough. We have to tell local districts exactly what classes those teachers should be in and special education would not be one of them unless we prevail in this debate about education.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN ONGOING BUDGET BATTLE

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

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, public education is a local responsibility but a national concern. We have provided more police on the street to make our neighborhoods safe. Now, let us go the next step and spend it smarter by providing 100,000 new teachers to make our country stronger and hopefully not have to provide more police on the street. Let us help local public schools and parents have smaller classes to teach and mentor those children so we do not need those 100,000 new police officers in the next generation.

My Republican friends oppose the new 100,000 teachers and the smaller class sizes. In fact one of their Members was quoted a few months ago as saying that public education is a relic of communism. Well, my district does not share that. More than 90 percent of my children go to public schools.

My Republican friends brought a bill to the floor, the Labor-HHS appropriations bill about 2 weeks ago that would cut first Goals 2000, which is a block grant, 51 percent; cut School-to-Work 40 percent; cut American Reads Challenge 100 percent; cut summer youth jobs 100 percent.

Where are the priorities they have for education?

WORD TO LIBERALS: GO HOME AND DO SOME REAL WORK

(Mr. THUNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I have a suggestion to all my friends on the other side of the aisle who think that we are not spending enough time here in Washington. Do what some of the rest of us do. Go home and do some real work. Find out what is going on in your local communities and your schools. Go home and work on a Habitat for Humanity house or something like that.

I know our liberal friends think it is important that we spend more time in Washington. We do not define good government by how much time we spend here creating new bureaucracies, hiring new bureaucrats, raising taxes, or how many bills we pass. We define good government by how much power we give back to communities and to people in this country, hardworking Americans. We are doing what we can to free up Americans to make a difference in their communities. That is where the real work is getting done. I invite my liberal colleagues to go home and check it out.

DEMOCRATS KEEP REPUBLICANS IN TOWN TO FUND EDUCATION

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Day 111 of this Congress. This Congress has worked 111 days this year. The average American has worked 202 days so far this year. The Republican majority is being held against its will in Washington, D.C. They wanted to adjourn last Saturday after 108 days of work. Because so far as they were concerned, their job was done. They had served the special interests. They had killed insurance industry HMO reform, they had killed for the tobacco industry cessation of teenage smoking, and they had served Wall Street very well.

When they wanted to adjourn last Saturday, there were zero dollars for the after-school programs, zero dollars for the school-to-work program, zero dollars for new teachers. Today because the President and the Democrat minority kept them in town to work just a few more days, they might even put in 115 days this year, those programs are funded and now they want to say, "Well, it is really about how we want to spend the money, that billion dollars on the new teachers. It is about local control." That is not the point. They did not want to spend a penny on these new education programs. It is very clear. You wanted to adjourn without one cent additional for education.

REPUBLICANS DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATION DOLLARS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, the President, as the gentleman said, wants 100,000 new teachers. I am opposed to giving the Federal Government any more power over local schools. But I am willing to compromise. So I would like to say something that might surprise my Democrat colleagues. I am willing to accept the President's proposal to hire 100,000 new teachers but the President must then agree to test them for competence and he must also agree to discharge them for incompetence.

Uh-oh, I am just guessing, but suddenly the President may not be so enthusiastic about his idea for 100,000 new teachers. The special interests who currently protect incompetent teachers at all costs would go ballistic and find a way to block the proposal. Suddenly the talk about education and the children would end because a proposal with more Federal dollars that demanded accountability for those dollars would be automatically unacceptable.

So how many on the other side would be willing to take up my proposal?

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EDUCATION IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LEAVE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OUT OF IT

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot of talk these days about the education proposals that the Democrats are fighting for, and those on the other side of the aisle say it is a matter of federal control versus local control. Democrats, they say, want federal control. They made the same arguments when we tried to get 100,000 police on the streets of this country, and that is local control. It may be federal money, but it is local control, and that is what Democrats are arguing for now.

Education is simply too important in this country to leave it to someone else. We all have to participate. We all have to participate in fighting crime, and that is what we did when we asked for 100,000 new police on the streets, and we got them in every district around this country. Now what we are saying is education is too important to leave the federal government out of it. The public servants who work for this government, for the state government and the local governments have to join together.

Mr. Speaker, we need support for 100,000 new teachers in this country. That is what we are fighting for as Democrats right now, and we are not going home until we have that as part of this agenda. There has been plenty

of time in this Congress for votes on vouchers, but this issue has not come up before.

RETINAL DEGENERATIVE DISEASES TAKING THE SIGHT OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, every day I look around me at all the beautiful things I am lucky enough to see, the faces of the people I love, the words on the pages of a book I read, and I think of the living angels who are working to help me and my sister and brother keep this most precious gift of all, our sight.

As I read the note that Ilana Lidsky sent to me, I thought of how blessed Ilana's, Carlos and Betti Lidsky, are to have such caring and brave children who in the midst of adversity see the value of all that is truly important in life. Ilana, Daria and Isaac Lidsky, three of Carlos and Betti's children are afflicted with retinal degenerative diseases, a group of diseases with no current treatment which is taking the sights of millions of Americans who, like the Lidsky children, have great hopes and dreams for their future.

While we work toward a cure, Mr. Speaker, we can learn much from the Lidskys about courage, hope and unconditional love. They exemplify loving what is truly precious about having a loving family that recognizes, as Betti Lidsky once wrote to me, that in spite of the challenges life is most beautiful. For the Lidskys and the millions of Americans who, like them, wait for a cure, let us do all we can to help them in this battle.

WE STILL HAVE TIME

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, eating and learning are two very important functions for the young people of this Nation and for my State of North Carolina, yet both of those functions are threatened because this Congress would rather focus on the President than to fight for our children.

Eating is threatened because we have not yet corrected the provision in the 1996 farm bill which are driving small farmers out of farming. Unless we allow small farmers access to credit, we are threatened with losing almost 57,000 of them. There is still time now to pass the agriculture appropriation bill of year 1999 with the corrected language. I hold out hope for that.

Learning is threatened because Congress has not come to final agreement on the problems of overcrowded classes and has not addressed the problem of crumbling schools. There is still time to pass education legislation that ad-

resses both of these problems. We still have time, Mr. Speaker, to make sure American children, we can make sure that they are fed and that they are learning, but time is rapidly falling aside.

DEMOCRATS' SILENCE ON ILLEGAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS SPEAKS VOLUMES

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, one can tell an awful lot about people by what they do not talk about. How many times have we heard Members of the other side express their shock, outrage or even curiosity about why 79 witnesses have taken the Fifth Amendment in connection with the campaign finance investigation? Again I ask is there not a single Democrat who is even curious about why 79 witnesses have taken the Fifth? Anyone? Anyone at all? In addition, 12 witnesses have fled the country, 23 foreigners have refused to be interviewed.

What does that say about the ethics of the Democrat party? Would the party of Andrew Jackson, FDR and Harry Truman have remained silent in the face of all this evidence of illegal campaign contributions from a Communist Nation? Is that what the Democratic party has become? Is there not a single statesman left in the entire party? Does not the Democratic party even want to know if foreign policy decisions were sold for campaign contributions? Their silence, Mr. Speaker, speaks volumes.

MORE TEACHERS MEANS A BETTER EDUCATION FOR OUR KIDS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today this do-nothing Congress will try to buy some time to pass a budget that they had all year long to complete. The last few days, the Republican leadership has steadfastly refused to reduce the size of our classrooms by giving local schools, local authority the funding that they need to hire 100,000 new teachers. They call it federal intrusion, but I tell my colleagues 2 years ago Republicans said that the Cops program was federal intrusion on the local police departments, but when we put 100,000 more cops on the street, we made dangerous neighborhoods safe again. We gave police departments, local police departments, targeted resources so that they could make local decisions, and it worked. Now what we need to do is to do the same thing, to help our schools in the same way.

Mr. Speaker, we need to put 100,000 teachers in America's classrooms. We need to reduce the size, give our kids the attention that they need, bring greater discipline to our classrooms

and allow our kids to succeed. Just as more cops has meant more safety for our families, more teachers means a better education for our kids.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

(Mr. BASS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago the Congress passed the Individuals with Disability Education Act, and contained therein was a mandate that the Federal Government should supply 40 percent of the funding to teach disabled children. To date we have broken the record at 12 percent.

Mr. Speaker, let me suggest to my colleagues that in the course of these negotiations Republicans and Democrats should join together and urge the budget negotiators to fulfill the unfunded mandate for special education because fulfilling that unfunded mandate will not only help teachers, but it will help school administrators, it will help principals, it will help parents, it will help taxpayers, and most importantly, it will help the children of America.

Let us get together and agree on something that Republicans and Democrats can move forward on. Let us put more money into special education because it helps the entire educational system across this country.

I urge my colleagues to call my office and join me in urging the negotiators to support special education when it really counts, and it counts today.

DEMOCRATS CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR OUR CHILDREN AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, the issue before this House is education, and the question is which party, the Republican party or Democratic party, best stands up for our Nation's public schools?

Let me remind the American people, Mr. Speaker, what the Republicans would have had in the law had it not been for Democrats. They would have eliminated the Department of Education, the agency that administers Head Start and college student loans. They would have stolen money from public schools where 90 percent of our kids are educated to subsidize private schools, wealthy private schools in America's neighborhoods. They would have eliminated title I reading programs. They would have reduced funding for Head Start. They would have cut school nutrition programs for the children of low income working families. They would like us to forget that they tried to throw out funding for summer youth jobs. They wanted to get rid of the Safe and Drug-free School Program.