

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.

These are the education platform proposals the Republican party would like us to forget. The Democrats will continue to fight for our children in public schools.

WE ARE SAVING MILLIONS OF CHILDREN FROM POVERTY

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, one of the central planks of our Contract with America was real welfare reform that required work and personal responsibility. Three times we passed our plan that gave States wide latitude to reform their systems. Twice the President vetoed. Our friends on the left warned of dire consequences. Donna Shalala was, quote, visibly shaken when the President finally signed the bill. Since then welfare rolls have been cut by nearly 40 percent. Over 2 million families have moved off of welfare rolls and onto payrolls. Dependency and despair have been replaced with hope and opportunity. Billions of dollars are being saved, but, more important, we are saving millions of children from one more generation of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, what a difference a Republican Congress has made.

IS THIS WHAT WE WANT FOR OUR KIDS?

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, as we meet here today, hundreds of thousands of American children are beginning their school days in overcrowded classrooms with poor lighting, ceilings that are literally crumbling apart, lead plumbing systems and barely enough money for textbooks and basic supplies, and what we, as Democrats, want to do is to make sure those local school districts have the opportunity with federal assistance to leverage and to have their own decision-making to make a difference in those classrooms with 100,000 school teachers which they will put in classrooms. We want to make sure that in fact we end up hiring 100,000 school teachers and not spending money on things that will not reduce class size or will not improve the leaking roof over their head. Mr. Speaker, if it were up to Republicans, they just simply would not support these initiatives.

Is that what we want for our kids?

Republicans say stop throwing money at the problem. For God's sake, Mr. Speaker, it takes money to repair a roof, it takes money to buy a modern heating system, it takes money to hire new teachers, and schools like these can be found in urban, suburban and rural areas alike.

Every child deserves a good school and a good education, and that is why

we are still here fighting on a budget to make sure that happens.

DO NOT LEAVE EDUCATION UP TO THE WASHINGTON BUREAUCRATS

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, regardless of the rhetoric that is bandied about on this floor, it would be nice if everyone here learned a simple lesson when they came to the well of the House. The lesson may not be taught that often in school; it should be taught at home to tell the truth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since the debate centers around numbers, here are some important numbers our colleagues should remember:

Number of days since the last U.S.-U.N. inspection for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq: 71.

Number of days since the last fundraiser featuring the President: 2.

Number of meaningful educational initiatives passed by this common sense conservative Congress, vetoed by the President of the United States: 7.

Number of Cabinet meetings held in the White House by the President of the United States this year: 2, focusing on his personal problems.

Mr. Speaker, we need not fall for the lure of focus groups. We need to join sincerely to solve problems and not leave education up to the Washington bureaucrats.

Remember these numbers as the days continue.

SCHOOLS NEED FEDERAL ASSISTANCE, NOT FEDERAL CONTROL

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I have here in my hand a cloth filled with coal dust sent to me by a principal from a southern Ohio school saying:

Congressman, this is what our teachers must use to wipe the coal dust from our desks and the computers before our students can use them.

Ohio, Ohio ranks 50 among the States in terms of the physical condition of our school buildings, and yet in Ohio we use public tax dollars to build sports stadiums. The average school in my district is 46 years old. Students in my district go to schools that are unsafe. Ten percent do not meet local fire codes.

We need federal assistance, not federal control, but federal assistance to enable our local schools to build, repair and modernize the schools our children attend.

In Ohio prisoners could not be housed in some of our school buildings because the courts would say they were unfit for prisoners, and yet we send our students there.

□ 1030

NEA FUNDING FOR OBSCENE PLAY 'CORPUS CHRISTI'

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I was deeply disturbed this morning listening to NPR, National Public Radio, regarding a play called Corpus Christi, written by Terence McNally, playing at the Manhattan Theater Club in New York City. This play is a blasphemous, pseudo-creation by homosexuals about the life of Christ.

Now, the first thought I had was, how much money did the NEA provide?

Sure enough, in a letter on June 11, 1998, the chairman of the NEA admitted, "The theater did apply to the NEA for funding to support development of Corpus Christi." It goes on to say, "After consideration, the NEA approved an award of \$31,000 to support the development of this play based upon the information provided in the application."

The NEA now claims the money was eventually used for other purposes, but this entire situation further shows that the NEA still does not get it and uses taxpayers' money to fund questionable projects that are antithetical to our values.

I call on Bill Ivey, Chairman of the NEA, to cut off all funding, all funding, to the Manhattan Theater Club today.

WORK IN A BIPARTISAN FASHION ON IMPROVING EDUCATION

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

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, we all know that we do our best work in government when we work in a bipartisan matter and we work in partnership with each other, and that is why it is so important when we look at funding for 100,000 teachers that we do it the smart way, that we do it in partnership, making sure that the funding gets into the classroom.

I was in local government for 14 years and our school board for two years before that, and I saw a lot of money wasted under programs that were just block grants. Instead, what works best is when we set parameters, we hold hands and we work together for the well-being of our country, and nothing is more important than having enough teachers to make sure that our children get the best education available and are the best educated children in the world. Our economic future depends on it, and really the peace and hope for society depends on it.

I would urge all of us to work with our President to make sure that the funding for teachers gets to the classroom and not into the administration, as is currently being recommended and requested by the majority party.