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APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORY COMMISSION ON HOLOCAUST ASSETS IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Without objection and pursuant to the provisions of section 2(b)(2) of Public Law 105-186, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States:

Mr. GILMAN of New York.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania.

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN EDUCATION

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little time this afternoon to talk about some of the 25 accomplishments that this Congress has made in the area of education. We have heard a lot about education over the last week or so. The President has been a little distracted. He has not had a chance to focus on education until the last couple of weeks. He has had over 100 fund-raisers and two Cabinet meetings, so I guess in the time that he has spent between fund-raisers, being overseas and the 22 days he spent on vacation that he has not had time to sit down and talk about education until this last week. In the meantime, Congress has been working very hard on the issues of education and we do have 25 accomplishments. Some of the things that I think are most important for the accomplishments that we have had in education is getting dollars into the classroom. One of the problems that we have in our local school districts is that it is difficult to get the dollars directed into the classroom. For example, in Kansas, about 7 percent of all dollars are dollars that come from the Federal Government. Out of that 7 percent, it could be expanded to over 14 percent, but much of that money is wasted right here in Washington, D.C., where we have a large education bureaucracy that does not educate any children. The Department of Education is only a few blocks from the Capitol, itself. They have quite a few people that work there that do nothing more than demand additional paperwork from the local school districts. The average salary at the Department of Education is \$52,000 per year. Now, I would invite any of the Members to go back

and talk to their teachers and see if any of the teachers are making an average of \$52,000 in the school districts in their congressional district. My wife worked in public schools for 4 years. At that time she made significantly less than \$52,000 a year. But that is what the average amount of salary is at the Department of Education. What we have been trying to do this year is limit that amount of money that is wasted here in Washington, D.C. on education and ship those dollars out to the local school districts so that it can be spent, and our Dollars to the Classroom program would have required that 95 percent of the money gets into the classroom. The significance of that is that we could increase the amount of Federal money that is actually spent in the classroom where the rubber meets the road. That is the important thing, is that we see that our children get educated. Instead, we see a lot of it being spent right here within the District of Columbia not escaping to the local school districts. We have been working on sending dollars to the classroom to make sure that it is spent where the teachers can use that money to get the materials they need, get the books they need, make sure that the right amount of money is spent in the classroom.

Another area that we have been trying to focus on is special education. Title I money, special education money has been a requirement from the Federal Government, yet it has never yet been fully funded. That has had to have been made up by the local school districts. They have raised local taxes in order to pay for these programs. Rather than having the mandate come from the Federal Government, it ought to be paid for by the Federal Government, and the Republican Congress has spent time this Congress focusing on getting more money for special education, which is a big problem in almost every school district in south central Kansas where my district is. That is another area where we have been focusing on education.

We have also been trying to make college more affordable. We have had the lowest student loan rates in 17 years. We have had the highest ever Pell grant awards. Because we have the Balanced Budget Act, this was very clear that has come straight from Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, he said that if we would balance the Federal budget, interest rates would be lower. In fact we have balanced the Federal budget, we have a surplus this year, interest rates are lower. That directly affects student loans. My wife and I could not have gotten through college without student loans. We both had student loans. For 10 years we faithfully paid back those student loans. But it would have been nice to have a lower interest rate. It would have saved us hundreds, potentially thousands of dollars when you add that together. It is not just a fact or an accounting principle when we

talk about balancing the budget. When we talk about balancing the budget, it affects students and student loans, just as it affects people who have credit cards, car loans, home mortgages.

Another thing that we have been doing is developing a program to help get teachers into education. It is a loan forgiveness program for new teachers. Many people want to serve their local communities, serve their States, serve their country by dedicating themselves to teaching. I have to tell you, outside of the Department of Education, their salary is not very good. This program will help teachers get into education.

I just wanted the fellow Members to know that we have been working very hard on education for the last 2 years and we are glad that the President is finally focused on it.

ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that it is our responsibility as a society to ensure that our schools are not failing our children. We can frame this in a positive way. In the United States of America, we have no greater calling as a democracy than to ensure that our children, the next generation, our greatest investment, receive the very best start in life in education that we can make available to them. Through our public school system in this country, we ensure that democracy is passed from one generation to the next. This is no small task that we entrust to our public schools. Through our public school system throughout the country in every hamlet, community, rural school, inner city school, each student who enrolls is given an opportunity to succeed, to make something of themselves. It is our way of the American dream. I also believe just as strongly that as this session of Congress comes to an end, we must agree on bipartisan legislation that will truly improve the quality of education for our children. This is a job that we have here in Congress that will be enacted by another quality of our public school life that I think is central to its success, and that is local control. In each school district around this country, citizens elect members of a school board to set the policy for that school district. That is the way it should continue and that is how our support for education must filter through. As a school nurse in the Santa Barbara School District in my community for over 20 years, I have seen firsthand the damage that deteriorating schools can do to our children. Students cannot thrive academically if they are learning in overcrowded and crumbling buildings. I can imagine how hard it would be for us in Congress to work if we had to dodge falling plaster, to work in our hallways, to contend with leaky roofs. Yet this is just what is

happening now, even today, in many of our schools throughout this country.

When I was elected to Congress earlier this year, I conducted a survey of the schools in my district on the central coast of California. The results were distressing. The average high school class now holds 30 students per class. Over half of the schools conduct classes in rooms not meant to be classrooms. And over 80 percent of the schools use temporary or portable classrooms. I have personally visited and spent much time in classes being held in hallways, in teachers lounges, in utility rooms and even in janitors closets.

Mr. Speaker, let me highlight the Santa Maria Bonita School District, which is in desperate need of funds for school construction. This district was built to House 6,700 students but the current enrollment is 10,500 students. To accommodate growth, 12 of the district's 14 schools have converted to a four-track, year-round schedule and 175 portable buildings have been added. To add more would mean taking away all the playgrounds that now exist. The children, teachers and parents of this community are stretched to the limit. They are calling out for some help from Congress so that they can build better facilities. I believe that we must answer that call.

If our students are to have any chance of competing in tomorrow's economy, we must not shortchange them today. Even a small investment in school construction, bonds, in the ability of school districts to borrow money without having to pay interest, a small investment like this in our body this week will pay enormous dividends for our Nation in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I implore us to put politics aside and think of our children. Let us stop these partisan fights and put our resources into the most important challenge of all, the education of our children.

HONORING JOAN ZIMMERMAN FOR A QUARTER CENTURY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of a valued employee, Joan Zimmerman.

I feel fortunate to have had Joan on my staff since I was first elected to Congress back in 1987. But her time on the Hill did not start with me. She worked for my predecessor, the Honorable Stewart B. McKinney, as well as Stan Parris from Virginia and Robin Beard from Tennessee.

Joan has worked for the United States Congress for a quarter century. She is a witness to many major changes in this institution and has seen many things: from Watergate to the Iran hostage crisis, to the end of the Cold War and seemingly never-end-

ing budget deficits to an eventual surplus this year.

Joan is not just a friend and colleague in our office but throughout the buildings of the Capitol. She talks to her loading dock buddies about possible dates of adjournment and counts many of the Capitol Police force as dear friends.

When the tragic shooting of officers John Gibson and J.J. Chestnut at the Capitol occurred earlier this year, Joan offered her advice, guidance and sympathies to the many friends she has on the force who were deeply shaken by the death of these two American heroes. I know they appreciated her support as we appreciate her years of dedication.

Joan, our office sage, after years of dedicated service is retiring this December and so many in our Capitol community will miss her.

She always approached her job with a calm and consistent demeanor, steadfastly getting the work done in an often hectic environment. Her perspective and wisdom about this House has soothed the jagged nerves of a generation of young staffers.

We will remember her for her sweetness of manner and her quiet determination, and a wonderful love and devotion to her two cats. We know our office will never be able to properly replace her.

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MAJOR WORK REMAINS UNDONE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, what a difference a week makes. Last week the Republican leadership was cruising toward an early adjournment after the Congress had worked only 107 days despite the fact the Congress' work was not yet done. They had hoped to roll it all into one giant bill that none of us would have been allowed to read or understand under a special rule, and vote on it, and leave town, and go home and spend their special interest money to get reelected.

Well, things have changed. Here we are, Day 111. Pretty heavy lifting for this Republican led Congress. We have now worked 111 days in Congress with our \$137,000 salary. Of course the average American working for \$40,000 or so has worked 202 days so far this year, and they have had to finish their job day in, day out, every day of the year before they go home to their families. But this Congress has not.

But there is a change of heart in the Republican leadership. Maybe? No, not really. They have not decided to address the major work left undone, not at all. They are held here against their will.

They still refuse to address health maintenance organization insurance industry reform, patient provider

rights so people can have a right of appeal when they are denied tests they need to restore their health, and when their doctors order tests to restore their health and is denied by the insurance industry. They will not touch that with a 10-foot pole because of the tens of millions of dollars flowing in from that industry to help their reelections.

Teen tobacco prevention? That has dropped off the charts, too, because the tobacco industry is providing one heck of a lot of money for their reelections. Social Security? The only time they addressed Social Security was to attack the trust fund to attempt to give it away by calling it a surplus and spend it as tax cuts.

Now, held in D.C. against their will, they have discovered something. The people of America would like to see an investment in the public education, in the investment of their kids, in the education of their kids.

Let me say the Speaker earlier, the President has just come recently to this; he just discovered education. The President proposed back in January smaller class size, 100,000 new teachers and a major reconstruction program for the one-third of our schools that are falling apart and the other one-third that are obsolescent. They are the ones who did not discover it until this week, until they had to discover it. There has not been a single hearing held by the Republican led Congress on the issue of 100,000 new teachers, smaller class size or the crumbling state of our schools and federal assistance for them. They had ample time. We took three votes, three votes in this Chamber on school vouchers, taking our tax dollars and transferring them to private religious institutions. That is their agenda: do not help the public schools, help the private schools, help the religious schools despite what the Constitution might say.

They have spent a lot of time trying to eliminate the Department of Education that administers the Head Start program and the student loan programs. They have attempted to cut, and we blocked, school lunches for small children. They have enacted or tried to enact tax cuts for wealthy taxpayers to send their kids to private schools, again abandoning the public system, eliminating the summer jobs program for kids, eliminating the school to work opportunities for high school students, eliminating the in-school interest subsidy for student loans, and I heard someone over here wax eloquent about what they have done to lower the interest rate on loans. Yes, a tiny, tiny, tiny bit, but you were really drug kicking and screaming to that, too, because the banks did not want to give up anything on these loans where they never lose a penny that are guaranteed by the Federal Government. They cannot even be discharged in bankruptcy. They still want outrageous rates of interest. So finally the Republicans paid them off. The banks are still going to get the