

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, that, by the way, is about 2½ million American families which are no longer in welfare in the last 3 years.

Mr. KINGSTON. Which are very significant. That is not just measured in tax dollar savings, that is measured in people who are happy, who are independent, greater self-esteem, greater satisfaction, because they went out and found a job, and working they are working their way up the ladder.

Finally, this Congress has cut taxes for the first time in 16 years, which we believe the American people are overburdened, and they need to hold as much as their own money that they earn as possible.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for helping with the special order tonight to shine light on what has, I think, historians will record as one of the most productive Congresses in recent memory.

We have managed to balance the budget ahead of schedule. We have managed to turn the authority out of Washington and back toward the States and cut taxes for the first time in 16 years.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER SUS- PENSION OF THE RULES ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 589, I hereby give notice that the following suspensions will be considered tomorrow, Thursday, October 15, 1998:

H. Res. 597, expressing the sense of the House with respect to the Brutal killing of Mr. Matthew Shepard;

H.R. 4829, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to transfer administrative jurisdiction over land within the boundaries of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Historic Site to the Archivist of the United States;

H.R. 1467, a bill to provide for the continuance of oil and gas operations pursuant to certain existing leases in the Wayne National Forest;

H.R. 700, to remove the restriction on the distribution of certain revenues from the Mineral Springs parcel to certain members of the Agua Caliente and of Cahuilla Indians;

S. 2500, to protect the sanctity of contracts and leases entered in to by surface patent holders with respect to coalbed methane gas;

S. 2272, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site Boundary Adjustment Act;

S. 2133, to preserve the cultural resources of the Route 66 corridor and to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance;

House concurrent resolution, correction in enrollment to H.R. 3910;

H.R. 3972, to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from

charging State and local government agencies for certain uses of the sand, gravel, and shell resources of the outer Continental Shelf;

S. 1132, Bandelier National Monument Administrative Improvement and Watershed Protection Act;

And H. Res. 598, Steel Import Resolution.

CLARIFICATION OF ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here this evening to clarify some of the issues that we have been working on. I was just in my office when my good friend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER) were speaking.

I was working with my staff on some of the key educational issues, and I heard some of the comments. I thought, well, I better get down to that floor and clarify some of these issues.

Yesterday, I was in Maryland with the President of the United States, with leaders in the House and leaders in the Senate, and we had an opportunity to visit a school which has wonderful children, a great principal. We met the superintendent. We were there with the Governor of Maryland.

We talked to some of the teachers. We talked to the students. They are working so hard to give those children the very best education they could. Yet, I was shocked to see three or four trailers outside in which the children were learning.

This is the United States of America. This is not a Third World Nation. In a middle class community in Maryland, the children were forced to have classes in trailers because the community was not able to get school construction bond issues through their local communities.

I have worked on the issue of school modernization a long time and let me tell my colleagues why. A couple of years ago, I did a survey of the schools in the metropolitan New York region, and I was shocked.

I grew up in Bronx, New York. I raised my children in Queens. Now I live in Westchester County. So I am very interested in what is happening in the entire metropolitan region.

In this survey, it showed that one out of four, one out of four schools have children learning in classrooms that were meant to be locker rooms, meant to be bathrooms. This in the United States of America.

Two-thirds of these schools have boilers, have roofs, have other areas that have to be fixed. Around the country, there is \$112 billion worth of improvements that have to be made in these schools.

A couple years ago, CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN in the Senate and I introduced a

bill. We introduced it again with our good friend the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) that would do something about this problem. I do not think we should be talking about liberals, conservatives, right wing, left wing.

I am a mother. In fact, I am a grandmother. I bet Jillie is watching this program. Because we want to be sure that our youngsters, like my grandchildren, are going to go to schools that are going to give them the best education they could get.

I am shocked to think that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would say only bureaucracies want to do this. Let me make it very clear what the school modernization proposal that our President is talking about and has been so forceful about, what our leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), is talking about, what TOM DASCHLE in the Senate is talking about, this is a proposal that allows local communities to make the decision. The Federal Government's role is to pay the interest on those bonds. But it is the local community that has to float the bonds.

Do my colleagues know what? My good friends on the other side of the aisle are talking about cutting taxes. What this proposal will do is help lower property taxes, because unless the Federal Government is a partner with local school districts, the local school districts will have to assume this burden.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I toured a school in my district in Westchester County. This district has about \$8 million in repairs. They cannot go out with a bond issue of \$8 million because this middle class community has so many responsibilities that it will be voted down. So they go out with bond issues of \$35,000 and \$45,000.

My colleagues and I know when we have repairs in the House, whether we are fixing a bathroom or some leaky pipes, if we go out piecemeal, we do not get as good a price as if we put it all together.

So by the Federal Government paying the interest, giving a tax credit to these bonds, and the local government going out and floating these bonds, the Federal Government is not making the decision. So all this talk about bureaucracies is kind of a joke. It is the local communities that make a difference.

My friends and all of the good people, the hardworking people who are watching us tonight have to understand that there is a real difference in views about school modernization. My colleagues, my friends on the other side of the aisle and I would love this to be a bipartisan issue, because, again, this is the United States of America. But my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not feel that the Federal Government should be a partner in modernizing our schools. The Democrats on this side of the aisle feel strongly, passionately that the Federal Government has

responsibility to help local governments in modernizing the schools.

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How can we in this Congress, Democrat or Republican? Because many of us, most of us voted for it, vote to make the Federal Government be a partner in rebuilding our roads, our highways, our bridges and yet not be a partner in rebuilding our schools and modernizing our schools? That does not make any sense.

How can we on both sides of the aisle, Democrat and Republican, vote, and I vote that way, to make the Federal Government a partner in building prisons and yet say to local taxpayers, you have to bear the burden of modernizing our schools. The Federal Government is not going to be a partner. It does not make any sense.

I want to clarify that. Local governments will have the control over the decisions of how they are going to float these bonds, which responsibilities they want to assume, but we would tell them, you will lower your local tax burden because the Federal Government is reaching out the hand to be a partner.

So let us clarify. The Republicans do not want to be a partner in modernizing our schools. The Democrats are saying, we want to help you lower your property taxes and be a partner in modernizing our schools. That is the difference.

I have visited schools, not only in Westchester County but in Queens County, in New York City where the plaster is falling down because of leaks on the roof and they have sheets of plastic holding up the ceiling, not in a third world nation, in the United States of America. Locker rooms that are damp are now places for classrooms. Bathrooms are classrooms. This in the United States of America? How can we say that school modernization is not our responsibility if we are saying that we have to prepare our youngsters for the future, that education is the key to the future? How can we say there should be a computer in every classroom, that there should be computers for every youngster when many of the schools do not have the wiring, they do not have the infrastructure to support these computers? I visited one school and it would be hard for my colleagues to believe this, where they were wiring the schools outside of the window because the school could not have the infrastructure that would support the computers. Does this make sense? No, I think the majority of families, the hardworking families who are listening to us tonight, who send their kids to local schools where there are trailers because there are too many kids for those classrooms that are existing, who send their kids to local schools where the boilers are old, where they need to refurbish, where they want their children to have computers would say, "Help us, be a partner, reach out to us," they are not

going to say, "You bureaucrats in Washington, don't help us modernize our schools." This does not make sense.

They are also saying, stop all this labeling. I am tired of people being referred to as liberal and conservative, Republican and Democrat. All of us should join hands across the aisle and help our parents, our hardworking families give their youngsters the very best education they can. That is what this proposal is all about. My colleagues are saying that there are a lot of arguments from, they said Democratic opponents. I do not think we are opponents in this effort. We should be working together. But yes, the Democrats are fighting for school modernization because we feel it is in the interest of our youngsters.

I want to make another point in response to my colleagues. This President, because of bold actions in 1993 and actions following up, has balanced this budget. Now my colleagues are saying that we should be giving away some of this money. Do you know what the money in the surplus really is? The money in the surplus belongs to the Social Security trust fund. These are FICA taxes that are in that trust fund. We should not be using that money other than frankly preserving Social Security and Medicare. This is what our constituents want.

I want to make a couple of other points. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle, my good friends on the other side of the aisle talked about the issues, and they talked about what they have accomplished. I want to remind our listeners that they bottled up campaign finance reform. They did not do anything about preserving Social Security and Medicare. What happened to the patient bill of rights? What happened to reforming HMOs? What happened to the environmental progress that we are trying to make that they are trying to roll back? So it is not just that they are saying no school modernization. They have not taken action to preserve Social Security and Medicare. They have not taken action on the patient bill of rights.

Now, for my constituents that are listening this evening, there is an HMO in my district that has suddenly said to the seniors, "We're not going to cover you anymore." That same HMO called me on the telephone and said, "We're not going to cover you on the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan. You are just going to have to find another provider." Why was this bottled up in the Senate? Why have we not taken action? We need campaign finance reform. We need HMO reform. We need the enforcement.

I have an interesting story which may relate to some of the personal stories of families here. I was in the office of my ophthalmologist. The ophthalmologist had a difficult decision to make. As so often when I go to the doctor, and my friend from Wisconsin is here and he may have the same experi-

ences, I often hear about what is wrong with the HMO for an hour and then maybe they examine me for 2 minutes. But on one of these occasions, the doctor said to me, Mrs. LOWEY, I had to make the most difficult decision. I felt a patient needed to have surgery immediately to save her eye. That patient had to be put in a taxi, sent back to Stamford, Connecticut, this was in New York City, because the HMO would not allow this doctor to treat her and she had to be sent back for another physician who was not as expert as this physician. So in our HMO bill, we talk about enforcement, making sure that not just the doctor can be sued when something goes wrong but the HMO has to bear responsibility.

So why has this Congress led by the Republican majority not passed HMO reform, passed campaign finance reform and passed our school modernization program? I am going to close now and turn it over to my good colleague from Wisconsin, because I think it is important that you hear what is happening all over the country. School modernization is critical. It is critical that in this negotiation that is going on, and it is not last-minute. I introduced my bill 2½ years ago. This is not last-minute. It is critical that we stand up and fight hard for the children of America. School modernization has nothing to do with bureaucrats. It has to do with the Federal Government reaching out to our local governments and to say to those local governments, "We're going to be partners with you. You can lower your property taxes because we understand that you can't do this alone." This problem around the Nation is \$112 billion.

I want to close, as I mentioned before, by saying if this Congress can have a role in rebuilding highways and roads and bridges, and I think we should, if this Congress should have a critical role in building prisons, then we have a responsibility to make education the number-one issue. We have to make sure our youngsters are going to schools that have the latest technology. We have to make sure that our teachers are given all the support they need. It is too easy to criticize our teachers when you and I know that all the problems of our community converge on the teachers in our school system. So we want to be sure those schools are modern, we want to be sure those schools are equipped with computers, we want to be sure those youngsters are safe in those schools, we want to be sure there are not roofs that are leaking, we want to be sure that the boilers are up to date and that when we drive by we do not see a coal truck as I did delivering coal to the local school. We have this responsibility.

I am very proud to be a Member of the Congress of the United States of America. As I look at the Capitol dome as I come in, it is often hard for me to believe that I was elected to be a Member of the Congress of the United States of America. And frankly it pains

me deeply to see constant attacks, constant partisan attacks. We have to work together on the priorities that our families and our communities sent us here to accomplish. It is unfortunate that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want one investigation after another. We would like to bring these investigations to closure, take appropriate action and focus on the issues that we were sent here to do.

Education, my colleagues, is number one. I started working on this not only as a mother, as a PTA president, I continue to care passionately about these issues, and I am optimistic that as these negotiations are brought to closure, we will not only increase the number of teachers by 100,000 as our President has suggested, but we will pass the appropriate legislation that will provide the partnership for school modernization that is so necessary for the future of this country. And then we can go home and make it clear to our constituents that we are here fighting for you and your concerns and be proud to be representatives in this great body, in this greatest country in the world. I thank my colleagues.

I am delighted that I am joined here by my good friend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. BARRETT), and I know that he has worked hard on these issues, and my colleague would like to share some thoughts.

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY). I also want to welcome a good colleague the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) who has been an incredible force on the issue of education as well.

As far as I am concerned, and I come, I think, to this issue from the same perspective as my good friend from New York, as a parent. I have two children who are in kindergarten right now, and so this is not a political issue, this is a real-world issue for me. As far as I am concerned, there is not an issue more important to the future of this country than education. We can talk about hundreds of other issues, we can talk about political fights back and forth between the parties, but education is our future. As we look to the future, we have to make the investment. The Republicans talk about this as if it is some sort of pork-barrel spending. I do not view this as pork-barrel spending. I view this as investing in our future. That is why I am pleased that the President has been so forceful and I am pleased that he has continued the fight that he began in January to add 100,000 teachers in our classrooms in this country. And I am pleased that we are continuing to fight for school construction.

I want to tell my colleagues a story about my children, and it is important. I think it is instructive. Both of my kids are in Milwaukee public schools. We love the school. We love the teachers. It is wonderful. But just two nights ago my wife had her first parent-teacher conference for our 4-year-old daughter

who is in 4-year-old kindergarten. I called her afterward, said how did it go, she said it went fine. Of course the teacher again, whom we think is a wonderful teacher, she taught our son last year, does not know her very well but you cannot really expect her to because she has got 25 kids in the morning and she has got 25 kids in the afternoon. So she has got 50 kids. It is just difficult to get to know the kids. It is hard. It is hard for the teacher who is doing a tremendous job to get to know these children. I think there is not a person in this Chamber who would disagree with the statement that the smaller the class size, the more personal attention an individual is going to get. This is the time when we are nurturing our children.

It is interesting to note that right now, we are basically in the second baby boom. There are more kids now in that younger stage than there have been since I was a baby boomer. So this is not an issue that is sort of a boutique issue for some people, this is a huge issue for our country. There are so many children in our country that we have to be mindful. It is more important in many ways that we pay attention to this baby boom generation than to my baby boom generation, because we are in a different economic world. Many of the jobs that were in my community, the jobs at American Motors or Pabst Brewery, Allis Chalmers, those jobs are gone and they are gone forever.

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And if you are going to have a person who is going to be able to support a family, they are going to have to have an education to do it because many of those jobs have gone overseas, and they are never coming back, and so we have to be mindful.

So I am pleased, although obviously it was a grudging acceptance from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that we have been able to move forward on the plan to put 100,000 teachers into classrooms, and the important phrase there is in classrooms because the debate we have had was whether the money should go in a fashion that would allow the Federal Government to skim off 1 percent for bureaucrats in Washington DC, whether the States should be able to then skim off 15 percent more for bureaucrats at the State level, and at the local level who knows how much would be skimmed off? We were insistent that that money go in the classrooms because we want smaller classes. We think that that is extremely important.

And I think we would not have gotten it if the President had not shown leadership on this issue in January and those of us in Congress had not kept talking about the issue when the majority party wanted to simply ignore it. It simply was not on the radar screen until we continued to work for this issue because it is important for

the parents and the children of this country.

Now we may have been successful, and I am pleased that we were successful in convincing the Republicans to help us add 100,000 teachers, but there is a second issue, and, as you have pointed out, that is the issue of school construction.

We have seen in the last decade and a half city after city build beautiful new stadiums. Many times those stadiums were built with the help of some sort of financing mechanism that was available through the Federal Government. That has dried up somewhat, but there are still very creative methods available for municipalities to build stadiums.

I think that this is great, that we have these stadiums, but I find a lot of irony in the argument that people have to have a modern facility to go sit in and watch entertainment, but we do not think it is important for our kids to be able to sit in an environment conducive to learning.

And as you have, Mrs. LOWEY, and you have, Mr. ETHERIDGE, I visit a lot of schools in my district, and just last month I visited a school, and it was a hot day, and it was an old school, and the ventilation was so bad when I visited one of the classrooms the teachers aide was going around to each student with one of these spray bottles with water in it, and was not embarrassed by doing it. The kids with obviously very hot, they were sitting there sweating, and said, "Okay, I want you to hold up one finger or two fingers or three fingers. If you hold up one finger, I'll spray you once in the face. If you hold up two fingers, I'll spray you twice in the face. If you hold up three fingers, I will spray you twice in the face and once in the back of the head." And all the kids started raising their hands, and he would go around and spray them, and it was just so hot in this classroom with poor ventilation that they were delighted to get this, and they would then get a little towel, a paper towel, and they could dry themselves off. But this is the atmosphere that they are sitting in, and we are supposed to compete with all the other countries in the world if we are asking our children to sit in this type of classroom.

It just simply boggles my mind that our friends on the other side of the aisle accept the notion that we should be partners in building highways, which we should be, that we should be partners in building prisons, which we should be, but somehow there is something wrong in investing in our children by giving them the physical tools to have an environment conducive to learning.

So I am very, very frustrated that the majority does not think that this is an important issue because it is an important issue, and again I applaud you for the work that you have done. You have been tremendous.

We are being joined by our friend the gentlewoman from California (Ms.

SANCHEZ) from California who also has been really outspoken on this issue.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to Mr. ETHERIDGE from North Carolina who brings an education background, one that I think all of us appreciate, to these chambers, and although in his first term you would think he had been here 20 years because he has done so much in pushing this issue, I think he is teaching a lot of us from his perspective on how we can improve the education system in this country. So I would like to yield to Mr. ETHERIDGE.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I thank my colleague. I was listening to what the gentleman from Wisconsin said about his child and being in school, and all of us can relate, having children. And I visited in 8 years, the State Superintendent, an awful lot of classrooms, some very good ones and some that sadden me greatly to see them. I have been in classrooms that water was in the basement, that we needed to move children out of the basement and out of harm's way, and in buildings that were fire codes that we had to move them out of.

And I was listening earlier to our friends on the other side of the aisle, and they were berating bureaucrats, et cetera, and I could not help but think that it was a partisan issue.

And 2 years ago in my State we had raised a lot of awareness on the need for school facilities, and we are not unlike any other State. North Carolina still has tremendous needs. We have grown very rapidly, and you were talking about the growth of students in the public schools, and we are now in the midst of what is being called the baby boom echo, the largest number of children showing up in the public schools over the next 10 years, and that is true today we have ever had, and North Carolina will be the fifth fastest growing State, the fifth; New York being the fourth; California being the first; Texas being second and Florida, number 3, over the next 10 years of students because of this phenomenon of growth.

But the point being that we argued with our general assembly, and I happen to believe the public is well ahead of us in Congress and many of our State legislatures; the reason being, they know what their children need. They know that they need good safe environments, they need a good education, and we finally convinced the general assembly with the help of educators and parents, PTAs and others, put a \$1.8 billion bond issue on the ballot in North Carolina. We put it on at the same time that the general election was, and many of the politicians said, Oh, we don't want that on the ballot when we're on it."

Well, I happen to have disagreed with them. I thought it was the proper time to have it. And guess who got the most votes in the general election? It was not any candidate running for statewide office, from the Governor all the way down to our judges and all the counsel of State. It was that vote on the ballot that parents and grand-

parents and aunts and uncles could go to the ballot box and vote for the next generation of young people who were going to run this country, who were going to sit in these halls of Congress and the legislatures and teach our children and be our doctors and nurses and all the professions. It got over 60 percent of the vote, the largest bond issue in the history of our State by the largest margin ever of any statewide bond issue passing.

That tells me that the people in my State, and I think that is reflective of America, will say to this Congress, you are not keeping up with the times when you refuse to say we are going to pay, we are going to allow you to sell bonds, and we are going to pay the interest on it so you can repair those run down buildings, so you can build a new building for growing population of young people who will be coming in so that the prisons are not better than the place we send our children.

As I said the other night, children are not stupid either. You know, we tell them how important education is, we want you to get a good education, we want you to do better. And at a young age is, as you talked about your four year old a few minutes ago, every parent feels that way whether they are a United States Congressman or Congresswoman or whether they work in a sweat shop in Anywhere U.S.A. They want their child to have the very best. They want them to have a opportunity to burgeon out in them, whatever they have, they can be the best they can be. That is what they want.

If that is true, and I happen to believe it is, then we ought not to say we cannot do it because we can if we have the will.

There was a time when we did not provide water and sewer to our cities and our rural areas, and we are still doing it, as we should. You mentioned it earlier. The reason we did not do it, there was not a great need. This country was very rural.

I grew up in rural North Carolina. I remember before we had running water. We had a well and an outhouse. Well, today that is not acceptable. It is only acceptable to have running water and the other things. And we invested. The Federal Government did not become the major partner. We became a little partner and provided leadership, and what we are talking about, the Democratic alternative here that we cannot get on the floor, and right now does not look like we are going to get it in a package, and we ought to have, and the President is fighting for it with us.

I introduced a bill and join Representative LOWEY on her bill because I think it is important in all across this country to have facilities. I also signed a bill for reducing class sizes. I know from personal experience what that will do. We have done that in North Carolina.

Children are coming to school today different than the children were 20-25

years ago. They come from back-grounds and homes where they have great needs. They do not get that love and nurturing they should have, not because parents do not want to, that is not the issue. They really want their child to have the best. Many do not know how and cannot, and for some others, they are working two jobs just to keep their lives a float, and they do not have the time, they come home worn out. And that small a class size allows that teacher to teach that child to read and do math before they get to the third grade, and if a child learns to read by the third grade, and these statistics are true all across America and around the world, if a child reads by the third grade, they are going to make it, they will not be a dropout. And we cannot afford dropouts. Dropouts cost all of us.

Eighty percent of the people— well, it is 85 percent now, 85 percent of the people who are incarcerated in American prisons today by and large are dropouts. The drug culture goes with dropouts. Cannot afford it, absolutely cannot afford it, and I am very proud of the job that my colleagues on the Democratic side are working so hard to help bring this issue of education to the forefront so that we can be a partner with the States, with the local jurisdictions and with parents and business community, as we have done in our State and you have done in your state.

And I am proud to join with you this hour to talk about two issues that are so important, and there are a lot of others. We cannot solve them all, but these are two we can do something about before we go home, and we should.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California who had worked so hard and been such a champion for children in this session of the Congress as a freshman.

Ms. SANCHEZ. I thank my colleague.

You know, you were talking earlier about the fact that right here in this room we represent some of the States that have the largest increase in student enrollment, and it is amazing when you see those figures because your State is one of those, mine is, yours is also NITA. But the fact of the matter is that the people that I represent, the children that I represent in California and Anaheim, my own hometown, Santa Ana and Garden Grove, when we look at the rate of enrollment in these school districts, it is twice that of the five fastest growing States in enrollment across the United States. In fact, I get to go back to my elementary school, an elementary school that probably was about 550 students when I attended, maybe built for about 600, maybe 700 at the most. These schools have 1100—a thousand children at them, and when you have a school district that grows at a thousand children, additional students a year, that is really a new school you need to be building.

Now you know I have heard my colleagues on the other side say this is a very local issue. Well, normally I would say, yes, school construction should be as local as it gets. After all, it goes in your neighborhood, you care what it looks like, it affects the value of your home, and more importantly it affects the value of the future of your child. So it is a local issue.

But you know in the State of California we decided awhile ago that building would be done at the State level, and we funded at the State level. In the last few years we have not funded it at all, which has created an incredible backlog not only of schools that need modernization, but new schools for the children and the enrollment that we have, and that is why we need to step in and say this is a national crisis, this is about our national security because our children are the future when we deploy them as troops, when we have problems of software engineers, when we need these high tech jobs that we are counting for the future. They are about our children being educated.

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It is about the security of the United States for the future, so we need to be involved.

I will tell you another reason we need to be involved. You were talking about a \$1.8 billion school construction bond in your state. On November 3rd, we have a \$9.2 billion bond issue that we are going to ask the voters in California to approve for school construction, the first one in a long time. The largest bond we have ever had.

Why? Because we are so far behind. And yet that is not going to take care of the rest of the problems that we have, the rest of the money that is needed for school construction and renovation.

In fact, if we pass that \$9.2 billion at the state level, the only way for a school district like Anaheim City school district to get part of that money to help them build their schools is to match it 50-50, which means you have to locally find part of the solution.

So when my colleagues on the other side say, "This is a local issue," you are right, it is a local issue. And the initiative that the President has, I know it very well, and you described it very well earlier, is about the Federal Government helping local people make the right decision; helping local people decide, yes, I am going to invest in my local school district, I am going to build that school we need. When they do that, they will have in partnership, for example in Anaheim, the State of California with a little bit and the interest from the United States Government.

This is not about taking your money in taxes and bringing it to Washington and then maybe sending it back to the school district. It is a tax cut. It is saying you get a one for one dollar write-off when you file your income tax re-

turn. So this is a tax cut. It is saying do not send your money; keep it in Anaheim and build the schools that you need for our children. That is what our initiative is about.

So when people say we do not want locals to take responsibility, they must take the responsibility that, yes, they are going to build the school. We just need to help them.

There is another reason why I believe we should be involved. As you both know, I was in the financial markets. I helped schools districts to build schools. What I did was finance them for them. So I know all the innovative financing techniques and how schools raise the money and how you can build it. And let me tell you, when the Federal Government is a part of the equation that builds schools, the money, the cost, the interest cost, goes significantly down.

So we are giving them our stamp of approval to go ahead and build. They must raise local monies to do so and state monies to do so, and then they get a lower interest rate anyway, so the amount of money they need to spend on schools is even lower. It is a win-win-win for everyone.

I know that the Democrats have fought for this, because I sit on the Committee on Education and Workforce. I have seen and I know because I put forward a bill that would do that. This is patterned after something we already have, the quality zone bonds that we passed last year, and it is working in California.

I had a school district from Fresno, California, come in and tell me we needed to build an elementary school, that it was going to cost us \$12 million. We saved our money, we had a little bit over \$3 million saved in our pot, and by using the program that we put into play in August, their cost, because of the lower interest costs, because of the government security, will be about \$4 million for the same school. It was amazing when they showed me the program they have to build this school.

We need to help. Even if we pass bonds at the state level, a school district like Anaheim needs the Federal Government to make itself a partner with the local area.

I think my colleague wanted to address an issue there.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I think the point you made earlier is so true. I could not help but think as you were talking about schools and how things have changed, I think unless you have been there a lot, you forget. I think of the community I grew up in that I happen to represent in Congress now. The school I was in was a very small union school that you stayed in. I went there for 12 years. That same community today has built schools, and they are running behind. I went there last year and they had 30 trailers outside of a new school, it is growing so rapidly.

I talked with one of the financial people, a banker in that community today, Johnston County down in North

Carolina, and he said, "You know, we have passed two bond issues. We have the state bond money on a match," like California. He said, "I do not know how we are going to make all these things fit with the tremendous growth we have without some help." The Wade County superintendent, where our state capital is, I was on a conference call with him two days ago with the Secretary. They are gaining 3,500 students a year in new students. He said, "We are spending \$3 million a month on construction and renovation and can't come close to keeping up."

These are the kinds of things where we need that partnership that you were talking about. No one entity is going to be able to take care of these tremendous burdens of cost, and if we will take care of the need for facilities, the technology will be there, it will be readily available.

But, more importantly, the other issues that we struggle with here, the issue of crime, the issue of drugs, the issues of violence and safety in our schools, they will tend to go away, because when you have a good clean learning environment, academics go up and discipline problems go down. Statistically that is true. There is no question about it. It certainly happened in my state, and I think we are no different than any state in this country. Because when children have a nice place to come to, a nice building, in some of our communities, and it makes no difference whether it is an upscale community or otherwise, when you have a nice school building, that one school building becomes the community center for that community. And then pride comes. If you build a nice new school, academics improve and you start seeing reinvestment in that community all over again.

So it is a good piece for investment in America. If you build a school, you put a lot of people to work, but, more important, you put a lot of people to work around that school building.

Mrs. LOWEY. I want to thank my colleague, Mr. ETHERIDGE from North Carolina again, and, of course, Ms. SANCHEZ from California. Mr. ETHERIDGE has been cochair of the Education Task Force, and you have brought your huge experience, your wide range of experience as a superintendent of schools in North Carolina. So you have really seen the change over, I believe it is, eight years.

Certainly Ms. SANCHEZ, who has been very involved in the community, has seen the change. I could not help but think as a young woman who grew up in the Bronx, New York, in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, how times have changed. In those years the biggest problem in the school was someone was chewing bubble gum or one child pushed another child. Life is different today, and all the problems of the community converge in our schools.

My colleague, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and I were working on a proposal for comprehensive

schools, because we believe, as you said, and I could not help but think of it as you were talking about it, that the school should be the focus of the community. It could be a place where not only the children gather, but our seniors could gather, where you could have reading programs, where the seniors could assist the young people, and we could really do creative things in the school.

I mentioned before that I tour my schools all the time. My colleague, Ms. MCCARTHY, who could not be here with us tonight, represents another suburban district. It is amazing for us to see how this issue cuts across all of our communities. It is not just an inner-city issue, it is a middle class issue. In fact, I want to emphasize again a point I made before and my colleague Ms. SANCHEZ, who is an expert in this area of financing made before, that we are actually, by focusing on the school modernization program, the bill that was introduced by CHARLIE RANGEL and myself and several others this year, are cutting taxes because of this partnership which will be controlled by the locals, not us in Washington, the local communities will make the decision. But because we are sharing the burden through tax relief, they will have a lower tax rate, because they will not have to raise the local property taxes.

So I cannot understand why the majority party opposes this school modernization proposal. It makes sense. It helps us help local governments in revitalizing their schools, modernizing schools, expanding schools, providing up-to-date technology in our schools, putting computers in our schools, with the infrastructure, and that is a fancy word for anyone who is looking for it, for the wires and the mortar and bricks that support the computers. You just cannot put computers in these schools.

So, to me, this should be an issue that everyone supports. My little girl, my grandchild that is watching this, wants to go to a school that provides up-to-date technology. Your children and your family all want to make sure that we are giving our youngsters the best education they can get, and I know how important this is to you.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Let me explain a little. I am a businesswoman. That is the background I come from. I am in the finance area. Look at all the downsizing that has gone on in our United States. A lot of people have now begun their own businesses.

Let us say tomorrow you decide to go and start your own business. Probably the first place you are going to do it from is your own home. Many people are doing that. You go home, you decide you are going to set a room aside. What would be the first thing you need? Well you need contact to the outside world. So how many phone lines would you put in that one room in your home to start a new business?

Well, you would not put one. Most people would put at least two, three, maybe four. Let us see, you need one

for your computer, you need one to access out to the Internet, you need one to receive calls, maybe one for your fax, maybe one to call out. You are going to put at least three lines in your own home for yourself to start your business.

Now, can you imagine if I would tell you that the elementary schools in the City of Anaheim have three phone lines into their entire school? A school where you have a principal, and probably about three or four administrative-type people, and then you have, what, maybe 60 to 80 teachers, what I would call middle managers. Then you have the employees, maybe 20 or 30, and really the client, the people who are in the classroom. You have 800, 900, 1,000 people in a particular spot every day, and the schools there only were built with three lines into the school.

So that means if I am a parent and I am calling in to say my child is sick, I might get a busy signal, because if the PTA happened to buy a fax machine for that school and they have a fax and something is being faxed out, and the principal is there and she is on the line talking to another parent or the school district or to somebody, someone outside of the school, and I am calling in as a parent trying to say my child is sick today, and maybe there is more than one sick child that day and the other mother is calling in at the same time, guess what? The line will be busy.

You would never do that in your own personal one-room business, so why do we allow our children to have inferior, inferior, offices when they go to school?

We need to modernize. We need to bring it up. How can we have our children on the Internet, on computers in the classroom, so they can have the high-tech jobs of the future that we are all counting on? That is what globalization is about. We continue to say we are going to get rid of some of those other jobs and in their place we are going to put higher paying high-tech jobs for our children. How can they be skilled to have that type of a job if they started out for six or seven years without even a phone line into their classroom?

This is what I believe America has not seen. Enough business people have not gone into the classroom to come out and shake their head and say, "You know, we need to do something about this."

□ 2045

That is what our school construction program is about, modernizing, building new facilities, giving our kids the same kind of office we would expect to have a fighting chance to start our business.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for those wise comments. I am particularly pleased that the gentlewoman talked about the global economy, because this is a global economy. We have to be sure that we

are preparing our young people so that they can compete in this global economy, so they get the best education that we can provide in the leader of the free world, so these youngsters can go out there with this education and earn their own way in the world.

We talk about cutting back on a lot of the support programs in our country. We can do this if we make sure our youngsters are educated, that they have the best education that we can provide them.

I am going to close by just emphasizing a few points that we talked about this evening. With President Clinton's leadership, we did balance the budget. This is the time that we can focus on the concerns of working families in this country.

Families care about education. They worked very hard to raise their children. They should not worry, when their children go to school, that the school is not safe, that it is not providing them with computer technology that is up-to-date. Parents should not have that concern.

I know there are some people in the majority party who believe the answer to education is providing a voucher, to take a small percentage of youngsters out of the public schools and letting them go to another school, where we feel that we have to be sure not 2 percent, not 3 percent of youngsters get the best education, but that every youngster gets what they are entitled to, the very best education that we can provide.

It is unfortunate that we end up in one large omnibus bill, and that the majority party could not get each appropriation bill passed. I am a member of the Committee on Appropriations, and I would have liked to see every appropriations bill passed in a timely way. But this is where we are.

So I am hoping that as these negotiations are going on, that everyone on both sides of the aisle remembers who sent us here, all the families of this country, and that we focus on not just education for a few, not just vouchers, which would take youngsters out of the school, but that we renew our commitment to every child in every community; that we include a school modernization program, so that every youngster can go to a school that is up-to-date, that is modern, that has computers, that is safe. Because it seems to me that that is the responsibility of this country, to provide the best education we can for our youngsters.

I thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ), for joining us here this evening. Whether it is California or New York, this would mean millions of dollars to our local school districts, creating a partnership that I know our families and our communities and our country need, so that we can be strong and enter the next century as a strong Nation.