

are missing as a result of the 20-year conflict.

I personally visited with 84 Moroccan POW's military personnel who have been freed by Western Sahara as a gesture of goodwill and whom the kingdom of Morocco will not permit to return to their country.

On my visit to the refugee camps, I met with an organization which tracks missing Sahrawis. 526 Sahrawis remain among the disappeared. They are either prisoners held by Morocco or are missing, all held incommunicado by Morocco.

In a country like Morocco, which is a friend of the United States, it is strange to hear reports of such clear violations to fundamental human rights as to not identify POWs and missing people.

I urge the Kingdom of Morocco to reconsider their policy and identify all those held incommunicado as well as accept back their own military which have been freed by Western Sahara.

#### ONLY ONE PARTY SERIOUS ABOUT EDUCATION REFORM

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, the truth is now known to the whole world. One party in this body is serious about education reform, and the other is not. On July 21 of this year, President Clinton vetoed Education Savings Account legislation that would have allowed parents to save more for their children's education.

We have here a classic case of special interest politics. The big donor special interests win while the children trapped in dangerous schools lose. What can we say to these children who are in terrible schools who the only thing they demand is to have the opportunity to pursue the American dream?

Many people are able to send their children to private school or live in areas with excellent schools. What are they going to say to these children who do not have the same chance? Maybe that is a question better directed to the administration and to others who failed to back real education reform.

#### TALK ABOUT EDUCATION REFORM IS NOTHING BUT TALK

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, on July 21, President Clinton showed the entire world that all talk about education reform is nothing but talk. The President's veto of the Education Savings Account legislation that passed both Houses of Congress is clear evidence that one party is beholden to special interests who benefit from the status quo.

□ 1015

Education failure is virtually in every city in America. The liberals accept that failure in our education system year after year after year. The rhetoric is fine and wonderful sounding, repair crumbling schools, spend more money, hire more teachers, but nothing seems to change.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans have a better idea. Republicans believe that accountability and competition in the marketplace produce excellence in the auto industry, in the computer industry, and in manufacturing of consumer goods. Why should education be any different?

If we believe in accountability and if we believe in excellence, not in words but in practice, then I would urge my colleagues to vote to override the President's veto and overcome the status quo by making education savings accounts the law of the land.

#### THE STATE OF ONTOLOGICAL RAMBLINGS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the state of disbelief continues to grow in this town the longer Mike McCurry pretends to inform the public of any factual information regarding the investigation of Judge Starr.

His penchant for passing on ill-informed statements to pass as answers to the American people will now be known as "McCurryism," a new word I am coining today. This is a word which means to pretend shock at the suggestion of impropriety by a reporter's question and then answer that question with nothing but pure spin.

For instance, a McCurryism from January 21, 1998: "The President is outraged by these allegations. He has never had any improper relationship with this woman. He has made it clear from the beginning that he wants people to tell the truth on all matters."

Another McCurryism from yesterday: "I can only report what I can ontologically know."

Well, Mr. McCurry, no amount of metaphysical existentialism can pass as answer to the question: What exactly was the nature of the relationship with the President and one of his female interns?

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). The gentleman should avoid personal references to the President.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, when I first came here 5½ years ago, we were not only borrowing a great deal from the Social Security Trust Fund, but we had an additional deficit spending that approached \$300 billion.

Now, this year, we are not only going to have a zero deficit under the traditional way that we calculated deficit spending, but this year, if we have just a little bit of luck, we are going to have a real balanced budget. That means that we may have balance not considering the \$80 billion that government is borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund. This is one of the best years in the history of this country in terms of revenues exceeding expenditures. This year we might exceed \$80 billion in terms of the unified budget. That means a real, honest balanced budget without the Social Security surplus.

I think it is very important that in the future we start changing the way that we do business. We stop fooling people, we stop borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund, and consider that revenue as a way to mask the deficit. A real balanced budget is when we reach balance, not including that amount borrowed from the trust fund. My bill HR 4033 does that and I invite my colleagues to co-sponsor.

#### REAL EDUCATION REFORM FOR AMERICANS

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

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, on July 21, the President vetoed a bill that would have helped millions of American families save for the education needs of their children. I would like to invite my colleagues on the other side to listen carefully, because this issue crystallizes beautifully the differences between the two parties.

I said that the bill that the President vetoed would have helped "millions of American families." We make no reference to the income of families because the bill would help all families save, rich or poor. The President and the Democrats, of course, on this and other issues, immediately turned the issue into a class warfare issue, and if a single family of wealth would benefit, brand the bill as a tax break for the wealthy.

The Democrats cannot, on principle, support a bill that will help families, families plain and simple, even if millions of middle class and poor families would benefit, because the idea that a wealthy family might also benefit is simply unacceptable. Children of middle class parents will be the losers and real education reform will continue to be nothing more than class warfare rhetoric.

#### SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were

communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

# CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 629, TEXAS LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL COMPACT CON- SENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Before recognizing the gentlewoman, the Chair would like to wish her a happy birthday.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, that is very kind. I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 511 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

## H. RES. 511

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 629) to grant the consent of the Congress to the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), my good friend and colleague, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, July 28, the Committee on Rules met and granted a rule to provide for the consideration of the conference report accompanying H.R. 629, the Texas low-level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Consent Act. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

Mr. Speaker, in 1980, Congress passed legislation to provide a system for States to take responsibility for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste. Examples of low-level radioactive waste include that which is disposed of by hospitals, universities conducting research, and by electric utilities. This waste poses relatively few risks and typically does not require any special protective shielding to make it safe for workers and communities.

When it passed the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act of 1980, Congress recognized that, while the Federal Government should handle high-

level waste, that States should be primarily responsible for disposal of the low-level waste generated within their own borders. Through the 1980 act, Congress encouraged States to either build their own disposal sites or enter into compacts with other States to share waste disposal facilities. That is exactly what the States of Texas, Vermont and Maine have done.

Mr. Speaker, on October 7, 1997, this body considered and passed H.R. 629 by an overwhelming vote of 309 to 107. During its initial consideration in this body, an amendment was accepted to limit the compact disposal facility to accept waste solely from the States of Texas, Maine and Vermont. This amendment was accepted on the condition that the affected States would be consulted as to the impact such a limitation would have on their ability to effectively implement the compact.

The conferees concluded, after consultation with the affected States, that the limiting language would not be in the best interests of the compact. The additional language would present serious questions regarding the need for ratification, and it would lead to costly litigation, and it would create an uneven playing field within the compact system. In addition, such a limitation would create a possible infringement on State sovereignty.

Compacts are contractual agreements between the States, as required by Congress. In fact, Congress has historically ratified them without amendments. This rule will provide for the consideration of a clean bill that deals with a straightforward process, the ratification of an interstate compact under the 1980 law, as Congress intended.

Once again, it is important to point out that the States of Texas, Maine and Vermont have done their job. They have negotiated a compact between them to provide for the responsible disposal of low-level radioactive waste and submitted it to this body as required under Federal statute, for the consent of the Congress. That is exactly what this conference report will allow us to do: tell the States of Texas, Maine and Vermont whether or not we accept their mutual agreement.

As I have stated before, Congress has already given its consent to nine such compacts covering 41 States. This conference report will ratify compact number 10.

This conference report has the strong support of the governors of the member States as well as the National Governors Association, the Western Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Mr. Speaker, as we heard during the testimony in the Committee on Rules, this issue has been around for a long time. Adoption of this rule and the conference report will finally allow the States of Texas, Maine and Vermont to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Therefore, I encourage my colleagues to support the rule so that we may con-

sider the conference report on H.R. 629. I urge a "yes" vote on this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and also wish her a happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 511 waives all points of order against the conference report on H.R. 629 and against its consideration. This conference agreement would grant congressional consent to an interstate compact among the States of Texas, Maine and Vermont providing for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste.

Mr. Speaker, conference reports are normally privileged and do not require rules for their consideration on the House floor. Why does this report require a rule?

The answer is that the conferees chose to delete from the conference report certain provisions included in both the Senate and House bills. This is a violation of clause 3 of rule XXVIII that requires conference reports to be within the scope of the disagreements submitted to the conference committee. In other words, despite the fact that both bills contain similar provisions, the conference report did not include those provisions.

Under clause 6(f) of rule X, conferees shall "include the principal proponents of the major provisions of the bill as it passed the House."

## □ 1030

This provision is designed to ensure that the House conferees fight for the provisions of the House bill. However, in this case, a conferee testified at the Committee on Rules that he checked with the Governor of Texas and followed his wishes, rather than the expressed will of the House. Apparently neither the House nor the Senate conferees fought for the provisions in each of their bills that the conference report deleted.

As we all know, conference committees have enormous power to shape legislation. The only checks on that power are the handful of points of order that individual Members can raise against the consideration of the conference report.

Under the rules of this House, a single Member can make a point of order against this conference report because it eliminated the provisions contained in the House and Senate versions. But the rule we are now considering prohibits that point of order from being raised. The proposed rule prohibits Members from exercising the protections expressly included in the House rules for the situation.

I am not taking a position on the deleted material nor on the conference report itself. However, I have to ask Members, particularly the vast majority of us who do not serve on conference committees, to not lightly