families and individuals, while forcing corporations to pay their fair share of the taxes. At present, corporations cover only 11 percent of the tax burden, while individuals and families shoulder 44 percent of the tax load. We want to fight this injustice and balance the tax burden. Mr. Speaker, if we want to balance the budget, first balance the tax burden and relieve individuals from high taxes while we raise the burden on corporations up to a more reasonable level.

Mr. Speaker, we want to fight for an increase in foreign aid to Africa, the Caribbean, Haiti, and other third world countries to assist with vital health and education needs. During this weekend we passed a specific resolution related to education.

Mr. Speaker, I am the chairman of the Education Brain Trust of the Congressional Black Caucus and the National Commission for African-American Education, along with the Congressional Black Caucus Brain Trust Assembly, and those organizations declared their full support for the organization of a National Education Funding Support day on Wednesday, November 15, 1995, during open school week. Just about 6 weeks from now, during open school week on November 15, 1995, we would like for people to come out in large numbers.

We want all of the community groups, senior citizens, businesses, all kinds of people, churches, unions, to mobilize and bring people out on the morning of November 15, to the nearest public school. Everybody come out to the nearest public school to show that in America, there is overwhelming support for education, that there is overwhelming support from all walks of life, and we want to reaffirm this on November 15, during open school week. So please come out and participate. This is a particular and specific outcome of the Congressional Black Caucus weekend and we would like the support of every individual across the Nation.

REPEAL OF THE DAVIS-BACON ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOBSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SALMON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in strong support of the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act. Davis-Bacon is over 60 years old, but has already lived out its usefulness by that long in dog years.

This act is an example of the command and control economics practiced by the failed Soviet state. Instead of the free market determining the wages of workers employed by Federal construction contractors, we have a handful of bureaucrats in the Labor Department right here in Washington deciding how much their fair pay should be.

That's right, the same Government that spent the American taxpayer's money to study the effects of cow flatulence on the ozone layer has decided to give electricians in Philadelphia a raise from the $15.76 market average to $37.97 per hour just for working on a Federal building.

I would love for somebody to show me how the federally determined prevailing wage can be over twice as high as the city-wide average.

From its creation in 1931, Davis-Bacon has been used to freeze lower-wage, nonunion workers out of Federal construction projects. That was its purpose then, and that is what is does now. By equating the prevailing wage with higher wages, the Department of Labor is still protecting unions from being undercut by their less costly nonunion competitors who are paying wages determined by the free market.

That is why small business organizations like the NFIB and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce so strongly support the repeal of Davis-Bacon. By requiring firms to pay their employees the higher wage, small businesses are virtually frozen out of every phase of virtually every Davis-Bacon contract. We should be committed to expanding opportunities for small businesses, not continuing unsound policies that limit their participation in Government contracts.

Davis-Bacon is also costly to the American people. The act has cost taxpayers billions of dollars over the years as the taxpayer has been forced to pay too much for construction work that could and should have been done for less. The CBO estimates that the act costs at least $1.5 billion per year. For this reason, the GAO has been arguing for its repeal since 1979. In these tough budgetary times, not repealing this act is simply irresponsible.

This act also costs our States and localities in terms of added paperwork. Dallas TX, estimates that their officials spend 4,000 hours just to comply with the mandates of the act. That is 167 days, or almost 6 entire months! This is just time spent on compliance, not even the actual building Davis-Bacon projects—unless you consider the towers of paperwork a construction contract.

It has also been estimated that Davis-Bacon adds 10 percent to the cost of inner-city construction nationwide. This is the equivalent of adding a full percentage point on an 8 percent, 30-year mortgage. How do you think our constituents would feel if they woke up paying another full percentage point on their home loans. Well, if you don't think they would like it, you had better not tell them about the Davis-Bacon Act.

This act is a bureaucratic nightmare, it inflates costs for States, localities and for the American people, and it freezes small business out of Federal construction contracts. It does not ensure higher quality, or faster work for all the extra cost, it just protects higher-paying union shops from getting undercut by their more efficient nonunion competitors. It is counter-intuitive and antifree market. It is an idea whose time may never really have come, but clearly has gone.

If we had a chance to put this law on the books today, I don't think that we would take it. We will soon have an opportunity to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act. Let's reaffirm our commitment to the free market, to open and fair competition, and most of all, to the American taxpayer. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act.

A NEW THINKING IN WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I also want to join my colleague, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS], in stating that indeed, the Congressional Black Caucus had a very substantive and meaningful weekend wherein they not only spoke of issues that affect African-Americans, but they talked about issues that affect Americans as a whole, and wanted to see how the quality of life for all Americans can improve. To that vein, Mr. Speaker, we are reminded, and they reminded us, that people are suffering.

Mr. Speaker, like never before, Congress is seeking to change America, changing the role that the Government will have in the lives of Americans by reducing and eliminating social programs, restructuring college loans and grants, revisiting nutrition programs and cutting Medicare and Medicaid. These programs have increased the quality of American lives and have added to the productivity of this Nation. This budget cutting affects all Americans, young and old, men and women, low- and middle-income, black and white.

There is now a new thinking in Washington, Mr. Speaker, a new thinking that does not seem to care or to focus on inspirational leadership, a new thinking driven by a desire to abandon the collective spirit of uniting all Americans, the unity that built this Nation. This new thinking seems to embrace the individual and isolate each of us from one another. That kind of thinking can only lead to weakening the very fabric that makes America strong.

Mr. Speaker, if some in Congress have their way, Government would shift from the halls of Congress and the corridors of the Federal executive to places where State and local government officials can treat their people and citizens differently from what America stands for. In many instances, Congress is dumping on State and local governments, and they should not do this.

If some in Washington have their way, infants may not have immunizations, children may not have school lunches, and high school students may not have summer jobs, and students may not have loans to foster their education. More importantly, senior citizens may not have the opportunity for quality health care.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest if these new thinkers in Washington really want change, they should indeed change the minimum wage. They should have meaningful change. They should change the tax cut that they are proposing and make sure that they not only give a break to the wealthiest Americans, but give a break to all Americans. If they want real change, they should restore school lunches for children who need it. If they want to make significant change, they should change their mind about cutting Medicare and cutting Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware that these are difficult times and we all must and should be expected to make sacrifices. That is the point, that all of us should make the sacrifice, not just the poor.

One of our priorities must be to reduce the Federal deficit. However, I believe we can achieve a better and more efficient use of our spending priorities without cutting education programs that have been the national priority for many years, without eliminating job programs that provide hope and a way out, without cutting nutritional programs that allow children to grow and live, without cutting farm programs that produce the food for all of us to eat, and without cutting Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare and Medicaid is a true contract with America.

Mr. Speaker, we are strong because historically we have been able to make a place for all who live here, including those who are least able to help themselves: the young, the old, the poor, the frail, and the disabled. What makes us a great Nation is the compassion we show to those who live in the shadow of life.

In this time of increased scrutiny, I believe we must examine each and every program, but we must also consider each and every person affected by our changes. We must ask the question: who is helped and who is hurt?

Mr. Speaker, we live in a time of many problems, yet we live in a time of much promise. It concerns me that there are so many young people these days at the sunrise of their lives engaged in such destructive behavior as teenage pregnancy, drugs, and killing each other. Those are some of the problems. Too many are planning their funerals instead of their future.

The hope for America rests with our young people; our children truly are our future. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the majority in Congress has launched an assault on the education of young people and other programs like nothing we have ever witnessed in the history of our Nation.

Under the pretense of ''gliding toward a balanced budget,'' their assault is relentless and damaging for all. The Labor-Health and Education bill, which passed recently, clearly demonstrates the difference between the policy of the Democrats and the extreme policies of the Republican majority. But worse, the bill ignores the pain it will cause to children, youth, and the elderly of America.

Rather than promoting education, the bill is an obstruction to education. Half of that bill, some $4.5 billion, comes from education. Title I is cut by $1.1 billion, and nine critical basis education opportunities which make our nation strong.

Mr. Speaker, this is no way to build America. I ask all of our colleagues, the time is not too late to change our minds and make sure we carry ourselves on the right path to restoring America.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING ON MEDICARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today is Wednesday, and the House is back in session. I was told that today in the Committee on Commerce, which I am a member of, that we were going to have a Medicare bill from the Republican leadership and that we would begin marking up the Medicare bill today. Of course, we did not receive a bill. We do not know when we are going to receive a bill. The latest information is that apparently a bill may be forthcoming either Friday or sometime over the weekend, or maybe not for another week or so.

So the clock keeps ticking and still Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership have not given us a Medicare bill. I think it is very unfortunate. We really do not know what the Republican leadership is proposing with these vast changes in Medicare that have gradually been leaked out, and we certainly have not had any opportunity for any real hearings.

As some may know, the House Committee on Ways and Means had one day of hearings last week. That obviously was not acceptable. We think the Democrats feel, and I feel very strongly, that we should have about a month worth of hearings and debate on something so important as Medicare. As a result, we have decided to have alternative hearings, and today was the second day of those alternative hearings out on the lawn in front of the Capitol where we heard from people from various parts of the community about the problems with the Republican leadership's proposal to change Medicare and take some $270 billion in cuts in Medicare in order to fund tax cuts primarily for the rich.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say, I was very pleased today, because I have noticed now that not only on Medicare, but also on Medicaid, the health care program for poor people, that this is no longer a partisan issue in my home State of New Jersey. Increasingly, Republican legislators have come out, both on the State and the Federal level, and criticized their own party for what is happening to Medicare and Medicaid. On the Medicare program for the seniors, today, or I guess it was yesterday, in Ocean County, which is the county that I used to represent, three State legislators, including Senator Conners and also Assemblyman Moran, both of whom have been in the State legislature for a long time, came out and had a press conference, sent a letter to Senator DOLE and to Speaker GINGRICH saying that they should scrap the Medicare proposal as it is, said that it was not fair to take away the money from Medicare to the tune of $270 billion and use it to finance a tax cut for wealthy Americans.

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They asked the Speaker and Senator DOLE to simply throw the thing away. They pointed out, which I thought was very significant, that the proposal by Speaker GINGRICH to double the Medicare Part B premium for doctor bills over the next 7 years was totally unacceptable and that seniors in their part of New Jersey, in Ocean County, would not be able to pay that Part B premium.

This is something that myself and other Democrats have been complaining about now for several weeks but now we are also seeing Republicans in New Jersey coming out very strongly against these proposals.

One of the worst things that happened, not only with regard to Medicare but also with regard to Medicaid is that my own committee, the Committee on Commerce, last Friday reported out the Medicaid bill that essentially the Republican leadership had put together. I have rarely seen such a travesty committed against the American people, particularly poor people, particularly elderly people.

The New York Times in an editorial today called it a cruel revision of Medicaid. They said, ''Congress shows no signs of slowing its assault on the social safety net stitched together over 6 decades. The House Commerce Committee tore another hole in the net on Friday by eliminating the Federal guarantee of Medicaid insurance for millions of poor families. At the same time it voted to slash Federal Medicaid spending, virtually forcing States to kick millions of poor children out of the program.''

Let me tell just briefly some of the things that the Committee on Commerce did on Friday by a strictly partisan vote, all the Republicans voting for it and most except I think for one Democrat voting against it. First of all they eliminated all standards for nursing homes. They are giving money under Medicaid to the States for the