Mr. Speaker, the real tragedy is that stories such as this can be told by countless Americans struggling to build a better life for themselves and their children. To those who deride the Republican tax bill, I would challenge you to explain to Mr. States how a Tax Code that stifles investment, discourages savings, and destroys the American dream should not be reformed. I cannot give such an explanation. That is why I insist on meaningful reductions in capital gains tax rates.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TEACHING EXCELLENCE FOR ALL CHILDREN [TEACH] ACT OF 1997

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday July 24, 1997

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer the Teaching Excellence for All Children [TEACH] Act of 1997.

This legislation addresses a longstanding concern that many of our Nation's school children are being taught by teachers who are not qualified to teach in their subject areas. This is a disservice to students, to parents, to the teachers themselves, and to taxpayers.

The problem, documented in several studies, will only get worse as the student population continues to rise along with the demand for ever more new teachers.

Parents have a right to know whether their children are being instructed by qualified teachers. And taxpayers have a right to expect Congress to do all it can to ensure that Federal education dollars are being spent in a responsible manner. I believe this legislation addresses both of those important demands.

Under this legislation, States receiving Federal education funds would set clear standards for teacher quality. The bill also will ensure accountability for federally supported teacher education, provide financial rewards to teachers who choose to teach in high-need schools and who pursue advanced teaching credentials, and establish local community partnerships to help to schools to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

TWO MILLION TEACHERS NEEDED OVER NEXT 9 YEARS

The number of elementary and secondary school students is expected to increase each successive year between now and the year 2006, from the current level of 51.7 million to an all time high of 54.6 million.

The need for qualified teachers will increase accordingly. Between now and 2006, enrollment and teacher retirement together will create demand for an additional 2 million teachers.

The shortage right now of qualified teachers to fill this demand is a significant barrier to students receiving an appropriate education.

TOO MANY TEACHERS ARE NOT FULLY QUALIFIED TO TEACH IN THEIR SUBJECT AREAS

Last September, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that one-quarter of classroom teachers were already not fully qualified to teach their subject areas. An even newer report—forthcoming from the Department of Education—indicates that 36 percent of teachers have neither a major nor minor in their main teaching field. Both reports show that the problem is even more serious in academic subjects such as math and science and in schools with high numbers of low-income and minority children.

Research evidence suggests that teacher quality is probably the single most important factor influencing student achievement. Now is the time to redouble efforts to ensure that all teachers in our Nation's public schools are properly prepared and qualified and that they also receive the ongoing support and professional development they need to be effective educators.

A FAIR DEAL FOR TEACHERS

Teachers are among the hardest working people in our country and they certainly have one of the most important jobs in our country. The vast majority of teachers deserve our wholehearted admiration, respect, and gratitude.

Unfortunately, our public policies have not always reflected this attitude. As the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development recently pointed out, ''teacher education, which encompasses preservice preparation as well as ongoing professional development, has suffered a chronic lack of funding, resources, and status in the United States, particularly as compared to education in other professional fields.''

In addition, the Teaching for America's Future report pointed out that: ''Not only do U.S. teachers teach more hours per day but they also take more work home to complete at night, on the weekends and holidays.'' At the same time, the report goes on to say that ''Other industrialized countries fund their schools equally and make sure there are qualified teachers for all of them by underwriting teacher preparation and salaries. However, teachers in the United States must go into substantial debt to become prepared for a field that in most States pays less than any other occupation requiring a college degree.''

I think the public is willing to address these issues. Education tops the list of concerns in most public opinion polls. But at the same time, parents and taxpayers want greater accountability to ensure that any additional resources directed at improving teacher quality have a maximal impact on student achievement.

By coupling support for teachers with enhanced accountability, this bill is a win-win for all those involved: educators, parents, taxpayers, and, above all, our Nation's schoolchildren.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Last week, the President announced his intent to put the issue of teacher quality at the top of his educational agenda. With the issue of teacher qualifications receiving increased attention in Washington and across the Nation, I am more optimistic than ever that we can work together to achieve the goals set out in this legislation. I look forward to working with the President and my colleagues on this important issue.

TRIBUTE TO SUE NELSON

HON. FRANK RIGGS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Sue Nelson, a resident of my hometown of Windsor, CA. She was just recently selected as the Windsor Chamber of Commerce's 1997 ''Business Person of the Year.'' The chamber made a very fitting selection.

Sue is a businesswoman of 20 years and is currently the president of the Brelje & Race, Sonoma County's largest engineering company. In that capacity she has been a dynamic force in the chamber's activities, placing her and the company's support firmly behind virtually every chamber event over the last several years.

She worked on the Windsor Map, the new town brochure put together with volunteers from the chamber. She also worked on the Windsor Festival.

Her community work has not been limited to the beneficial work of the chamber: She is a member and past president of the Windsor Rotary Club, as well as a trustee of the Boys and Girls Club.

It is the good work and dedicated community activism of individuals like Sue Nelson that builds and strengthens the communities in which our families and children live. I am particularly pleased that my hometown chamber of commerce has chosen such a deserving recipient for their annual honors. I offer my warm congratulations to Sue Nelson for a continuing job well done.

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION RESTORATION ACT OF 1997

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on July 22, 1997 I introduced H.R. 2220, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Act of 1997, legislation that will begin to address an inherent unfairness under present law that affects the surviving widows of our Nation's veterans. As you know, many of these veterans gave their lives for our country, yet their surviving spouses are now being denied benefits that were promised to them.

In 1970, Congress enacted legislation that guaranteed widows of military veterans who died from service-connected disability that their dependency and indemnity compensation [DIC] benefits would be reinstated upon the termination of the widow's subsequent marriage(s) by death or divorce.

The apparent rationale behind this reinstatement policy was twofold: First, to encourage DIC widows to remarry, thereby removing them from the DIC rolls and saving the Federal Government money; and second, to bring Veterans' benefits statutes in line with other Federal survivor programs—e.g. Federal Civil Service employees, Social Security annuitants—which granted reinstatement rights in this instance.

However, in 1990, Congress passed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 which abruptly terminated DIC reinstatement rights for widows who lost these benefits upon remarriage. To make matters worse, the Department of Veterans Affairs never formally notified DIC widows of their loss of reinstatement rights, thereby relegating notice to be disseminated by word-of-mouth or by notices in publications of military and retiree organizations.