all the bureaucracy to help move people from welfare to work to help create jobs and yes an amendment that I offered in the 104th Congress to give tax incentives to those good employers who will take those people off the rolls and give them jobs, working mothers like I spent 30 minutes on the phone late at night. A mother who was on crack said, ''I simply want to work and show my daughter it can be done.'' She is going to benefit and the person who hires her is going to be benefit as well by this tax credit that will begin to those who hire former welfare recipients moving from welfare to work and the $3 billion to our cities will help them provide training and help them along.

My airline friends were in controversy, small airliners versus large airliners. There are thousands of employees. The airline industries over the years have become more and more prosperous. I am gratified that we tried to work something out, decreasing the ticket tax, and then sort of working with our international airlines.

But we are not finished yet. I will promise them that I will monitor this so that airlines like Southwest Airlines, that has been so good to Texas, can keep strong, and Continental Airlines and others can work together to keep this industry functioning. We did what we could in this bill, but I think the industry should recognize that we have got to work together on this.

I have studied England, a very small nation that has a No. 3 place in the world in terms of its economy based mostly on the transfer of money over the last couple of years. The reason they have that value in their nation with such a small number of population is because the English have learned to save.

I know America is a country of bounty and we have tended over years not to save. I am gratified that we can clearly point to now real incentives for Americans to save their money, to create savings accounts, to have IRA's, to ensure that those who are frugal and work and save will be able to handle their business well.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, let me simply say that this tax bill is good for small businesses, and Democrats made it good for them, and family farmers by $1,300,000 incentive on the family farms when they are passed on to families.

And lastly, let me commit myself to watching this tax bill so there is not an out explosion on the deficit, because we brought it down as Democrats by voting in 1993 for a budget bill. And as well, I commit myself to simplifying this process of filing your taxes so that Americans can continue to support this system that is based on capitalization and support a system that supports all of America.

DEFICIT AND THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, tonight I come to the floor to celebrate the accomplishments that this House, in a bipartisan way, working along with the other body and working with the President, have accomplished really working over a period of the last 6 months, but really beginning the dialog after the last election, recognizing that we wanted to work together, that we wanted to make progress, that we wanted to address some major problems facing this country, and that we also wanted to get the deficit under control.

Today we passed the second piece of our major legislative package, the tax portion, which, combined with the spending portion, has moved us now, hopefully, the final steps towards getting to a surplus budget when the numbers come out. In the middle of August, I think we will see good news that the deficit for 1997 is going to be somewhere less than $50 billion, which is still a very large number.

As we start taking the look out at where we are going to be in 1998, the real possibility that we will move to a surplus budget in 1998, maybe 1999, but perhaps much sooner than the year 2002, which the bipartisan agreement set as its outside target.

□ 1845

We have made significant progress. The exciting thing about reaching these milestones, saving Medicare, reducing taxes, moving forward, getting to a surplus budget, is that it really now does open us up to consider a number of other issues that we can talk about and we can talk about in the context of saying we have got a surplus budget, now let us talk about some longer range perspectives. We have gotten rid of that nagging problem.

We have shown to the American people that we are serious about getting our House in order, we are serious about making the tough decisions that this country needs to make and hopefully tomorrow, we were supposed to have it ready today to share with Members, we have compiled what we call a journal of ideas. I put this together and I developed this with my former colleague here in the House, Mr. BROWNBACK, but this is a journal of ideas.

It is intended to be a thought-provoking document, a journal that raises some of the issues and some of the topics that I believe we can now talk about in a very constructive way, talking about we have reduced taxes but we have not really done what we want to do with taxes which is, sure, more tax reductions, but we want to move forward now with an overhaul of the tax system. We need tax reform. I do not know whether it is a flat tax, whether it is a national sales tax, but we need something that is fairer and less complex and less intrusive on the American people than the current Tax Code and the current IRS.

This provides us with an opportunity to think about Social Security in new and different ways, to make sure that Social Security is solvent much longer than 2029 which it is currently projected at. We now have the opportunity to go back and take a look at ending corporate welfare. We can now make attempts to have serious discussions about real budget process reform, regulatory reform, campaign finance reform.

The journal of ideas also has some documents in here for some things that I really want to talk about and that I can have the opportunity to work on, which are education reform and workplace reform. These two items are tied very, very closely together. But as I take a look at education, earlier this year we began a process which we call Education at a Crossroads. We have really in that process agreed with our President, when the President said in 1996 that we cannot ask the American people to spend more on education until we do a better job with the money that we have got now or the money that we are spending now.

We have had a number of hearings around the country. We have been in New York, we have been in Milwaukee, Chicago, L.A., Phoenix, Louisville, Cincinnati, Little Rock. We have been around the country, along with hearings in Washington to ask some basic questions:

What is working in education today? What is not working? What Federal programs are working in education? Which ones are not? Our Federal education initiatives, are they fostering the type of change and creativity that we need at the local level, or are they barriers to helping our children get the kind of education that they need? The dollars that we send to Washington, are they helping our kids get the education that they need or are they being sucked up by a bureaucracy in Washington?

We know that as a Nation we are not achieving the kind of results that we would like to be getting. Some of our first hearings that we had in California in January of this year highlighted some of the problems.

We met with some college educators. People are interested in the young people who are graduating from our K through 12 system because they are receiving these children into higher education. When we met with them, the first thing they said to us is, ''Make sure you don't reduce or cut your remedial education dollars, your remedial education programs, the dollars that you are sending to higher education.''

And we kind of sat back and said, well, this is kind of interesting. These are kids who are getting into college, they have graduated from high school, and they are signing up for remedial education? In California it was 26 percent. We went to Arizona the next day

and I said well, that is not bad, in Arizona it is 27 percent. These are kids getting into college.

We say, why do we need remedial education? These kids have been accepted and they are going to college. Twenty-six percent, 27 percent of them are functionally illiterate. What does functionally illiterate mean? It means that they cannot read and write at an eighth grade level.

I think we may be asking the wrong kind of question here, or perhaps proposing the wrong kind of solution. The solution here is not to provide more dollars for remedial education in high school or in college. The issue here is finding out what is going on in K through 12, why these kids are not getting the kind of education that they should be. Why are they not learning in K through 12?

Let us not put a Band-Aid on the system. As a matter of fact, let us not give an incentive to the colleges by saying the more remedial students they get, the more money they get. Let us go back and fix the problem.

Sixty-four percent of 12th graders do not read at a proficient level. SAT scores have dropped nearly 60 points in the past 3 decades. What other things do we see going on? Almost 20 percent of Americans, this is including adults, almost 20 percent of Americans are considered functionally illiterate. Thirteen percent are considered totally illiterate, reading and writing below the fourth grade level.

Between 1992 and 1994 our NAPE reading scores have not improved by more than 2 points. In 1992 United States 14-year-olds scored an average of 535 on a reading literacy test. Eight other countries achieved higher scores. Sixty percent of our 12th graders cannot read at a proficient level. The same thing for math, science and history. These are real problems and real issues that we are facing.

We have had hearings on literacy. As the experts come in and talk about the impact of Federal programs, and there is debate about what works and what does not work, there is one consistent message that comes out. If we do not improve our educational system, if we do not improve what we are doing and how we educate our children, we will face a crisis because we have too many of our children who cannot read, who cannot write. We do know that in today's workplace, in today's environment, if you cannot read, if you cannot write, if you are functionally illiterate, we will lose you as an individual, which is a tragic situation for the individual, but we will also lose you as a contributor to helping America be a better place.

That is what we are here to talk about. That is what we have been working on in our subcommittee. We want to talk about education, we want to talk about education at a crossroads, because we have to pick a path on which way we are going to go.

We are also going to talk about a new project which our oversight subcommittee is beginning, which is talking about the relationship between, if this is what is happening in education, how does that impact our future workforce, a workforce at an opportunity in the global economy where we should be more excited about the opportunities for American workers to maintain and achieve the highest standard of living of any workers in the world. But how do we face that, and what issues do we need to address? And how do we take the changes, the changes in technology, the changes in the type of skilled workers we need, the labor law that we have in place, Federal spending on job training and other job programs, how do we address that to make sure that we will continue to be and have the most productive workers in the world?

Our purpose in education, our purpose in the workforce is to really find out what is going on, where we are, where we are going, and outline a perspective of the types of policy changes that we need to have. This is an ongoing process. We are in the middle of the education process and we are in the beginning phases of the workforce project.

Let me outline some of the lessons we have already learned as we have gone through this process, and have gone around the country and have heard from parents and teachers and administrators at the local level. Some of this, much of it, is not that complex. As some of people listen to this, they will say, ''Wow, we know that,'' and it is kind of like, ''Yeah, I thought everybody here in Washington would understand that as well,'' but I am not sure. Just today in one of our committee hearings on literacy, we heard the need for more Washington involvement, more Federal Government involvement, perhaps even more Washington rules and regulations.

So there is a real contrast and a real conflict and a real contest of ideas here in Washington about how to improve education, whether we move forward in one way by increasing the control that Washington has on our local schools, or by saying perhaps that system does not work and we need a child-centered, I call it a child-centered approach versus a Washington bureaucracy approach. I think there are certain things that lead us to a child-centered approach.

Lesson one that we have learned from our site visits, not complex, parents care the most about their children's education. But there are those here in Washington that would argue with that point. We heard it today. They would say, no, it is more important, they may not say it that clearly, but they are implying that it is more important and that a bureaucrat perhaps cares more about a child's education than what a parent would. Parents care the most about their children's education.

In Los Angeles, we traveled to the Vaughn Learning Center where Dr. Yvonne Chan has blazed a bold new charter school. Here is a woman who was a principal in a public school, and she was frustrated by the process.

''As a public school principal,'' she said, ''I had to worry about the 3 Bs.'' In the hearing we asked, what are the 3 Bs? We know about the 3 Rs, but what are the 3 Bs? She said, ''As a public school principal, I had to worry about busing, budgets and buts.''

We understood the busing part, we understood the importance of meeting budgets, but we did not know what she meant by the buts. She said, ''Well, whenever I focus on my kids in my school and I see something that I think my kids need, and my kids may be a little bit different than the school down the street and my needs may be a little bit different, but I would go to the L.A. unified school district and I would say this is what I would like to do for my kids,'' because I am focused on my kids and I am focused on my kids learning. She said, ''Sometimes I would get the response that it is a good idea, Ms. Chan, but page 15, paragraph C, section 3 says you cannot do that, we cannot let you do it.''

Or it would be, ''That is a good idea, but if we let you do it, we would have to let everybody else do it. And then what would happen?''

And it was clear that when she was talking about educating and focusing on her children, the children in the school and what was best for them, she ran into another approach which was the bureaucratic approach, which was not focused on the kids but was focused on the rules and the regulations.

We saw the same kind of thing when we went to Phoenix. We saw the ATOP Academy, it is another charter school, serves mostly African-American students in an inner city area. It focuses on college prep courses, personal discipline. How do they go into this in a very tough environment and how do they make a difference with these kids?

For the kids to get into this school, parents are asked to agree to the following basic 5 points: Curtail the children's television viewing during the week. Secondly, spend 15 to 20 minutes on school nights reading to their children. Attend all parent-teacher conferences. Attend parental involvement monthly committee meetings. Participate in their children's classroom activities. The parents are required to have an up-front commitment and involvement in their children's education.

It is not only in Los Angeles, it is not only in Phoenix, but we have gone around and we have seen great programs in so many different cities, and it is very interesting what we hear when we ask teachers, parents, students, what is making this school successful? I have yet to hear it is Program ''A'' from Washington, or that what really made this school excel is when Washington came out with this program and told us what to do.

□ 1900

Now it is when parents and administrators and teachers were given the freedom, the opportunity, to put kids first and not bureaucracy.

Awhile back we saw another initiative come forward from the White House. Lesson two is that good intentions do not equal good policies. Too often we see a problem, we create a program, put a nice name on it, give it some money and say, yes, we have fixed the problem. No, we have not. All we have done is created a program, gave it some money, gave it a nice name, and we have not necessarily fixed anything.

The Washington approach of good intentions not equaling good policies; this is the chart of good intentions. This is also the chart that demonstrates that we probably are not going to get results. What is this chart? This chart is the Washington response of good intentions trying to solve a very complex problem. What do all these lines and boxes and circles and different colors symbolize in these little boxes in here with numbers? Twenty-one programs, 3, 17, 2, 42, 15. What this is, is a compilation of the 760 Washington programs designed to help education.

And you say, boy, am I glad that we have an Education Department because when we have an Education Department, we can take these 760 programs and we know that they are going through one agency and they are going to be streamlined and coordinated, compliment each other, streamlined to the school districts and the States so that very easily this money flows from Washington, flows to the schools, flows to the classroom, and we really leverage where we need the money to be, which is in the classroom and with the teacher.

Wrong. We do not have one agency where 760 programs go through. We do not have 10 agencies. We have 39 different agencies that develop education programs, that develop criteria, they develop ideas, not always coordinated; most of the time they are not. As a matter of fact, as we had hearings in the Committee on the Budget, we asked different people in the administration as to where is the focal point for bringing these 760 programs together, to bring these 39 agencies together, and by the way, $100 billion? Where is the focal point for this? Is it Secretary Riley at the Education Department? Is it somebody else at another agency? And the answer came back, well, the focal point for 39 different agencies is exactly where you would think it would be. It would be at the President, the presidential level.

Now I think the President is a pretty bright guy, but I do not believe that with all of his responsibilities that he in the Executive Branch at that level can coordinate 760 different programs, and I do not necessarily think that we should ask him at that level to coordinate those programs.

So good intentions do not always equal good policies. I would argue, in fact, that too often good intentions in Washington equal bad policy. We have had so many good intentions, we have got a hundred programs in here that are not even funded. So we keep passing good ideas, we do not have the money or do not know how to get the money down to a classroom, but this is a bureaucracy that has gone out of whack. It just is not working.

As we take a look at this, the Washington mentality now says we know that we are not getting the kind of results that we want to get in the classroom, we need to fix this. If you believe the lesson of good intentions does not necessarily equal good policy, but that is the myth in Washington, that if we have got a problem, create another program, our kids are not learning, we are not satisfied with the results, what would you expect the response to be? The response would be, well, we must need more. If our kids are not learning, let us have a few more literacy programs.

We talk about the literacy issue. We now have some more suggestions about how to have literacy, spending perhaps up to $1 billion more for tutors. So let us put another agency in place, Corporation for National Service, put another program in place so we got 761, 40 different agencies, and put another billion dollars with it, and we got $101 billion. We have not asked the basic question as to why this $100 billion is not enabling our kids to read and learn what they should learn in the classroom, we will just say we will put tutors out there to help them after school.

And think about this process. Kids are not learning, so we need another program, we need another bureaucracy, we need to come up with another set of rules and regulations about what to happen in the classroom. Of course, we need $100 billion. So the taxpayers are going to have to work a little harder to send a little bit more money to Washington and to get a little bit more money and to keep their heads above water. Maybe we are going to have some more parents and some more families that are going to say, wow, we are getting stretched here, Washington needs some more money, maybe one of us ought to take a second job or ought to work a little bit longer, meaning that instead of a parent tutoring their child this parent is going to take a second job so that a tutor can come and take care of their child after school. More is not always better.

The fourth lesson that we have learned so far is education must be child centered. Too often we find that the education and the process is not focused on the child, but it is focused on the bureaucracy and the bureaucrats.

I shared with you this story about Mrs. Chan worrying about the ''buts,'' trying to do what she wanted and thought was necessary for the children and her school, but constantly running into the bureaucracy that said no, a bureaucracy that was not focused on the children and what needed to be done and recognize that for understanding what needed to go on in that school and what needed to happen with these children probably was best understood by the principal, by the teachers and by the parents associated with the kids in that school.

Fifth lesson, new spending equals new tax burden. Just talked about that a little bit. Every time we come up with a new program it equals new tax burden. The disappointing thing about our tax burden is I would love to believe that when we send, and tell you, that when we send a dollar to Washington for taxes that 98, 95, 93 cents made it back to the classroom, made it back to the teacher, made it back to the student. But that is not where it goes. The dollar goes through a whole series of different cycles. To get that dollar local school districts need to spend money to get that dollar back. We estimate that when you send a dollar to Washington, in that process of actually getting it back into a classroom and getting it back to a student, we probably lose about 30 to 40 cents. We do not know the exact number, but somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 to 40 cents of every dollar that comes to Washington, only about 60 to 70 cents of it ever makes it back into a classroom.

We think that is a problem. We think that that whole system, the whole system of 760 programs, 39 different agencies and a hundred billion dollars of spending means that when we walk across the street and we walk back to our offices we like to think that we are walking and crossing Independence Avenue. But when you have got 39 agencies involved in educating our children, 39 education agencies that are based in Washington, that really do not know the difference between what the needs are in my congressional district back in west Michigan versus the differences in New York City versus the differences in Miami, and when you have got 39 agencies in Washington doling out money, when you have got 39 agencies in Washington that are sending out rules and regulations, when you have got 39 agencies that are requiring paperwork and accountability back from local schools, that really what we have done is the street that we cross is called Independence Avenue.

But more appropriately, as we are talking about education, it is Dependence Avenue, that local school districts, local parents, State agencies are dependent on what happens in Washington rather than being independent to create and develop and solve the problems locally, learning from what other people are doing, understanding their needs and their own area and developing the solutions that work best for them.

Too often at the local level people who are involved in educating our children have been reduced to filling out

paperwork, being and reporting back to Washington rather than back to parents. It is a problem that we need to work on, and you know, it really does get to be this is another which we prepared; we call it the Tale of Two Visions, and it very much applies to this issue of education. Is our vision a vision of Washington; we call it the vision of bureaucracy, or are we more attuned to what we believe is most appropriate, which is called a Vision of Opportunity?

We have gone around the country, and we have seen schools that are excelling, and it is not because of the bureaucratic vision, the bureaucratic vision that is symbolized by this photo of Washington, DC, but the vision of opportunity which we see as we have gone around the country, the vision of opportunity of parents, of teachers and administrators at the local level saying give me the opportunity and the freedom to educate these kids. I know their names, I know their needs, and I care more about them than anybody else in this country. I want them to excel. Give me the resources, but also give me the freedom to enable me to achieve the kind of results that every American child is entitled to. Do not take the money from my community, do not send the money to the IRS, do not send it into a bureaucracy that is going to suck up 35 to 40 cents of every precious dollar, taking it away from my children and feeding it into a bureaucracy.

That approach puts the Washington bureaucracy first and puts the child second. We need to flip that equation. We need the child Senate approach first asking why are not children learning before we propose new Washington solutions.

Recognize that perhaps some of the Washington solutions are part of the problem. Parents I do not think want to hear about a million new tutors. I think parents want to ask that basic question: if my kids in school 5½–6½ hours every day, why are they not learning in the classroom? Do not put an over lay Band-Aid on there. Help us solve the problem in the classroom. Take a look at why your federal programs are not working, and take a look at what we need to do to make the local system work and not the bureaucratic system.

Mr. Speaker, what we need and what we know in education is that it is time to act more wisely. We need to be smart. We cannot afford to lose our kids, we cannot afford to spend or send a dollar to Washington and only get 60 cents back to our children.

□ 1915

I was with the Speaker last night and taking a look at a picture he has of Eisenhower looking at Utah Beach, and in 1945 we mobilized, we mobilized and we retook Europe.

What we need to do now is we need to put a major emphasis on saving our educational system, because we need to go out and we need to take and ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn and that we as a Nation cannot afford to lose a single child, which means we have to go back and we have to rethink some of the Washington assumptions.

We really have to rethink the issue about who cares most about our kids. Is it bureaucrats, or is it parents? If it is bureaucrats that care the most about our children, then let us empower bureaucrats. If it is parents, let us empower parents. Let us evaluate the assumption of good intentions. We have 20 years or more of good intentions in Washington and we have not seen improvement. We need to take a look at whether 760 programs going through 39 different agencies, spending $100 billion based in Washington is the best way to help our kids learn. We have to take a look at that assumption, and when we do that, we are going to have to make the decision.

If we believe this works and we still have problems, then the answer is very clear. If this is the way we go, we need more. We need more money, we need more programs and we need more agencies. Or, if we believe that maybe this does not work, we need to streamline this process and move power and authority and responsibility back to the local level, back to parents, and back to the States. We need to analyze the assumption as to whether education, to be successful, can be developed in a manual that says, here is the how-to; we can develop a bureaucratic approach, a bureaucratic how-to manual to help our kids, and if we go to the manual and if we understand the manual and if we follow the rules and the regulations of the manual, we will be able to teach our kids and our kids will learn. This manual will apply to Johnny and Sara and Billy and Brian and Aaron. Or, does every child need a personal development plan, recognizing that they have their own individual needs, individual skills, and there has to be a level of flexibility around that child about how the teachers and the parents and the administrators meet the needs of that child.

We spend more almost than any other industrialized country and we are getting disappointing results. We need to reevaluate this model of education.

What are the implications as we move forward? As we talked about this as a committee, we said, we have responsibility for education; we also have responsibility for work force development. What are the implications as we move forward and we recognize we have this growing group of people, kids coming through the system, who do not have the necessary basic skills perhaps to function in our economy. As a matter of fact, let us take a look at what the economy is, and that is what we said. We need to now go take a look at what the work force requirements are going to be in the year 2000 and beyond. What kind of economy are we moving into? Do we have an economy where kids who are functionally illiterate that they can move into and they can get good paying jobs, where they will be successful. We need to really examine that. The answer, as I think we all know, is no. Take a look at it.

Technology. We are in a rapidly changing environment where technology is just growing. That should be an opportunity for this country. We should not view that as a problem. It is an opportunity that we need to get our young people ready for; it should not be, well, we have these unskilled kids coming in, we better find a way so that they can deal with technology. No, it is a huge opportunity for them and for us as a Nation.

We need to take a look at what happens in terms of global competition. What is the impact of unskilled workers coming in? Will we have the ability to compete on a global basis? I sure hope so. Because the opportunities are tremendous. Markets are opening up around the world, and our workers right now are the most productive in the world, and that is where we want to keep them. So the new project which we have is we call it the American Worker at a Crossroad, building off of education at a crossroads, because we want to take a look at what their skill level needs to be, what the world market opportunities are going to be. Some of the labor law that we have today was developed in the 1930's and the 1940's. Is it still the appropriate model for labor law in the year 2000 and beyond.

We need to take a look at the Federal spending. We give the Labor Department $30 billion to $40 billion each year. We need to take a look at how they spend their money. How do Federal programs on job training work? Federal job training dollars work in such a way that we give people dollars after they lose their job. That might be okay when people are in one job for a long period of time, perhaps only one job their entire career, but in the new economy where perhaps people are going to be going through two, three, four job changes, significant career changes, where their skills need to change, it does not make sense anymore to have a Federal job training system in place that empowers people to learn after they lose a job. I think we maybe need to step back and take a look at how do we encourage and help people continually upgrade their skill levels as they are working so that they can move and evolve into new jobs.

We want education and workplace policies which will create the environment where the American workers can be the most productive, highest paid, and enjoy the highest standard of living of any worker in the world. I am excited about being able to combine the education with the work force project, because even though on education we need to be making changes soon, the work force project allows us a little bit of time to step back and to really take a longer range perspective

on this and say, where do we want to be by the year 2010, and what types of changes do we need to be putting in place over the next 2, 4, 6 years, so that we can gracefully move to the changes and the environment that we want to have.

We know that the American education system is not the benchmark; we know that we need to improve that. We are creating a generation of American workers who are not equipped. We need to fix that problem. What we do know is that if we do not fix that, we are going to have some severe problems. But we are going to work on that and we are going to reassess all of these assumptions.

This also leads us to consider where we are going to go on the work force policy side. The changes need to be made. I flew here a couple of weeks ago and picked up a Detroit Free Press. The front page: Detroit is going to create, over the next 5 to 7 years, 133,000 new jobs, high tech, high quality jobs. Being from the State of Michigan, that is exciting. That should be a great story. It should be a great lead. It should be a great close: 133,000 Michiganites getting high pay, high quality jobs.

There is one problem. The thrust of the story was that we may not have the workers with the skills to fill those jobs. If we do not get those workers and develop their skills to be able to fill those jobs, what happens? That work will have to be done, and there is a good potential that those jobs will move somewhere else. They may not move somewhere else in Michigan; they may not move somewhere else in America, they may move somewhere else.

The job opportunities that we see evolving and developing in Detroit may not be filled by people from Detroit, they may not be filled by people from Michigan, they may not be filled by people from this country. If we do not develop the skills, we do not develop the people, those jobs may move and they may move overseas, and that is a problem.

So we need to create a climate where our young people are learning and where our workers who are working are upgrading their skills and are provided with the opportunity to constantly upgrade their skills.

I also want to talk just a little bit about what I think the new workplace may evolve into and what it may look like. I think we have to look very positively at the future for the American worker. We have to have an optimistic view and a vision of an empowered American worker. They are knowledge workers. They are going to have a great amount of skill and knowledge. They are going to be knowledgeable, responsive, and I think capable of helping their companies compete in a global economy. They will have unprecedented opportunities for personal growth. They will increasingly understand their responsibilities to their jobs, their corporations, to themselves and to their families, and I think they will have and recognize the need to constantly be upgrading their skills to take advantage of the opportunities of an ever-growing economy.

The empowered American worker will see global markets and global competition as an opportunity and a threat, recognizing that in 1997 the American workers are the most productive workers in the world, and that by the year 2010, rather than seeing that gap closing, we should see that gap widening. As we bring in technology, as we increase the knowledge and education of the American workers, as we invest capital and bring the appropriate equipment and machinery into place, as we invest in capital and human capital, we can increase the difference in productivity. As we increase that differential in productivity, it means that our workers will be more valuable and we can pay them more and they will have a higher standard of living.

I think the empowered worker who takes care of and sees responsibility for increasing their knowledge, who sees responsibility and opportunity and helping their companies grow and to meet the challenges of foreign competition, who sees global markets as an opportunity rather than global competition as a threat also need to create an opportunity where workers and management can come together.

As we have taken a look, those roles are very much less defined in 1997 than they were in 1947. There has been a coming together of management and employees and so often it is difficult now to tell the differences, so that we have to evolve and change labor law that enables them to work in a partnership and enables them to work in tame environments to meet the objectives of the corporations and of the individuals that are part of those corporations.

□ 1930

We need to empower employees in very different working environments and work styles, some who are part time, some working at home, some where both parents or both individuals in the family are working, to recognize that they ought to have a whole series of opportunities to choose the work arrangements that they would like to have, the benefits that they would like to have so they can tailor their benefits and their work times and their work schedules to meet their needs and their family needs and their personal needs rather than the needs of the corporation.

It is one of the interesting things in today's society, today's work force, one of the most important ingredients and one of the things that they now measure leisure by, and one of the most important commodities to workers is the amount of leisure time that they get; how much time do they need to spend working to be able to meet their needs, to meet the requirements for their families.

What we have seen, we have seen that increasing. Families are under tremendous stress. Individuals are under tremendous stress because of the work requirements we put on them. We need to increase their skills and give them more flexibility and allow them to change their job arrangements so they have the opportunity to get more leisure time and spend more time with their families.

There is one other way to do that, which is what we did today. We lowered their taxes, which says rather than now spending some of your time to work for the Government, or actually spending a lot of time to work for the Government, we are going to lessen the amount of time that you work for the Government, and you can then decide to take that as perhaps more personal income. Or you can say rather than spending this time working for the Government, I am just going to have some more leisure time.

These are the kinds of issues that we are going to be studying and taking a look at over the coming months, continuing to aggressively pursue the education agenda, continuing to aggressively pursue an agenda which empowers parents, not bureaucracies; which drives toward focusing on the child; which gets dollars into the classroom, not into bureaucrats; focuses on the basics, the reading, the writing, and the math, not all the other extraneous things that go on in education today, but giving the kids the basic skills in K through 12; really putting them into a safe school, dealing with the basics.

We are going to challenge some of the Washington assumptions about what is good for education and what is good for kids. But it is a struggle, it is a debate. It is a wonderful debate, because as we go on through this process, whether we are in Little Rock, whether we are in Cincinnati, whether we are in the Bronx, we have seen kids in every part of society be able to learn. That is exciting. We see kids everywhere over this country who are empowered and are having the opportunity to learn.

It is kind of like when adults and when the bureaucrats and when Washington gets out of the way, man, watch these kids go. Watch these parents and watch these schools excel. When Washington gets in the way, whoa, watch out and see how things start to change focus.

We are going to focus on education. We are also going to do the same kind of thing in the work force, examining where we are, what the changes are, what opportunities the changes in our economy are going to bring, are going to appear, and how Washington at that point in many cases needs to step back and get out of the way so American workers, American companies can employ the skills and the energies that make America such a wonderful place, perhaps the most creative people on the globe, willing to take more risks,

willing to take that creativity and that risk and to work hard. That is why we are the most productive.

So in some of these areas, we need to remove the barriers and let American workers and American companies excel. We are setting the standard today. We need to make sure that we recognize what our skills are, what makes us different, so we can step out of the way and let those skills and those differences bloom, so we can continue to lead the world because of the quality of American workers.

Those are the kinds of challenges we will take up when we come back in September. Those are the kinds of challenges that we can now get our hands around and have a constructive dialogue and debate, as we have kind of changed the shift. We are moving power back to the American people with the bills we have passed today, the bills from today and yesterday, by reducing taxes, by getting the deficit under control and hopefully being at a surplus budget within the next year or two.

We have turned the ship around by saying we are not going to keep moving more power to Washington and getting in the way. We recognize that there is a limit to the kinds of solutions and the extent of the solutions that Washington can bring, and we have come back to recognize the real beauty of America, which is individuals and freedom and opportunity and creativity and entrepreneurship.

We are going to get Washington out of the way, and we are going to go after some of these chronic problems. We are going to move forward. We are going to reassess some of the assumptions that we have had for the last 30 years of moving power to Washington as the way to solve the problems and saying maybe we have gone too far, and it is time to continue to move some of that power back to parents, to school districts, to move it back to workers and management at a local level, providing some wonderful opportunities.

That is why I think that the balance of this Congress and future Congresses, because we have that monkey off our back of the deficit, perhaps we have the monkey off our back of partisan politics, that we have now found a way to work in a bipartisan way, that we are going to have some great days in front of us. We are going to be able to pass some legislation and some new initiatives that really will start to address some serious, nagging problems.

If we do not address them, it will create some huge problems for us in the future. But if we address them, and we no longer have 30 percent of our kids going into college needing remedial education, just think, in 4 years if we went down from 30 percent needing remedial education, think about it; I do not even know how we as a society accept that today, K through 12 turning out 30 to 40 percent of our kids who are illiterate. How do we accept that? Just think, if in 5 years and 8 years we move that down to 5 percent, it is still too high, but boy, we will have come a long way.

Think of the energy, the positive energy and the positive influence that that will bring into our whole economy and our whole society if we raise the threshold from 70 percent literacy to 95, 98 percent literacy, and the positive benefits that we will all receive from those kinds of changes.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 138. Concurrent resolution to correct technical errors in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 2014.

The message further announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2014) ''An Act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to subsections (b)(2) and (d) of section 105 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1998.''.

IMPROVING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. SKELTON]) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, when he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell often described the men and women he led as an exquisite military force. I do not believe he was overstating the situation. Soldier for soldier, sailor for sailor, airman for airman, marine for marine, the U.S. military today is as fine a fighting force as has ever been assembled, perhaps the best ever.

It is a force that is well trained and well led. It is equipped with modern weapons. It has worked hard to devise and implement a body of military doctrine that multiplies its effectiveness.

The military services are more and more able to work jointly to carry out their missions. It is, above all, a high quality force made up of well-educated, carefully selected, disciplined volunteers. When called upon, the members of this force have served with as much bravery and distinction as American soldiers ever have.

A large part of the reason for this exquisite character of this force is that it is comprised of professionals. As virtually all senior military officers now acknowledge, the all volunteer force, or AVF, that was instituted in 1973 has been a remarkable success.

The all volunteer force, to be sure, took some time to fulfill its promise. In its early years the all volunteer force was plagued by a host of difficulties. Like the country as the whole, the military had to recover from the fissures of the Vietnam era, and adjust to sweeping cultural changes as the baby boom generation grew up.

Both the country and the volunteer force got through it. Nurtured by a cadre of military leaders that matured after the war in Vietnam, the all volunteer force today has shown, first, that a high-quality personal military force can be recruited and sustained by a democratic Nation, and second, that a professional force can exploit modern technology and carry out an extraordinarily broad range of military missions with great loyalty and dedication.

One of the concerns that people had when the all volunteer force was instituted, however, seems to me to deserve some additional attention today, especially as the country makes a transition from the Cold War era to a new period in world affairs. This is the issue of civil-military relations, by which I mean the relationship between the professional military force and the broader society from which it is drawn and which it serves.

Let me be clear at the outset that I am not worried about a loss of civilian control over the military. On the contrary, it is built into the very fabric of the U.S. military to be dedicated to the defense of democratic institutions.

I am only slightly more concerned about the supposed politicization of the military, a situation in which many members of the Armed Forces feel themselves at odds with their elected and appointed leaders in the executive branch. Though this could become a problem, it is incumbent on senior officials in the executive branch and on senior officers in the military to prevent a serious rift from growing.

What I am mainly concerned about is that the professional military may be becoming more and more isolated from the rest of society, to the detriment of popular understanding of the needs of defense. The result will not be the evolution of a rogue military force, but rather, the loss of public support for necessary military preparedness.

Indeed, for most Americans, the military is an institution, as a rule, simply off the screen, unless an international crisis develops, or some military scandal gets on the front pages. Because the military is off the screen for most Americans, it is also increasingly off the screen for Congress.

The solution to this problem, it seems to me, has to be addressed mainly by the military itself. Above all, the military has to try harder to establish and maintain better ties to the communities in which it works.

Mr. Speaker, the reasons for a gap between the professional military and the rest of society are deep-rooted. For most of American history the peacetime standing army was very small, and sometimes quite isolated. After World War II and the Korean conflict,