director should be recognized as an expert in the area of religious persecution and is barred specifically by the language of the bill, from holding any other federal position while serving in this capacity. More importantly though, this office is empowered by the bill to make findings of fact on any potential violations as discovered by the State Department and submit these findings to the Secretary (of State) and President with recommendations for action. Additionally, the office will create and issue an ''Annual Report on Religions Persecution'' that can be used by this Congress and other policy-makers to ensure that no oppression go un-noticed. This bill, in sum, is a powerful statement to nations of the world, that we will not countenance the rampant disregard of our fellow man's unalienable rights.

As for the bill's remaining provisions, in regard to the sanctions against aid given to countries that violate the religious freedom of their citizens; we should not, we must not, and we can not sit back and enrich governments that either conduct or condone the persecution of citizens on the basis of their religious beliefs. In all of our policy decisions, we need to show our displeasure with this kind of heinous conduct. This bill mandates that the President of the United States take action against all countries that engage in violations of religious freedom. It offers the President a list of options from which to choose an appropriate response, ranging from diplomatic protest to economic sanctions. That flexibility is important because it allows us to tailor our action so that more innocents are not hurt because of our mandated retaliation. Finally and importantly, this bill causes the creation of a structured asylum program for religious refugees a noble objective which is long overdue.

Millions of persecuted people around the world are waiting for this bill. I hope that we can send it to them unanimously.

CELEBRATING THE FRESNO BUSINESS COUNCIL'S 5TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 16, 1998

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to today to congratulate the Fresno Business Council on the occasion of its fifth Anniversary. This dedicated group of community leaders plays an important role in the community.

The Fresno Business Council began with just seven members, pulled together by president Bob Carter, who set out to discuss the problems facing the community and what they could do to help. They began to organize and focus their efforts to assist the public sector in addressing the challenges faced by Fresno County. The Council currently has 125 members, each of whom is selected from the highest level of local executives in business or major institutions in the public sector.

The Council operates four standing committees: Crime, Jobs and Economic Development, Education and Public Policy and Government Relations.

As part of their work, Crime Committee members have assisted the Fresno Police Department in getting past political barriers to implement policies involving real property and burglar alarms. Through analysis and advocacy the Council provided merit-based arguments convincing the Fresno Bee not to pander to the public. In the coming year the focus of the council will be on consolidation of policing services whenever an improvement in efficiency or effectiveness can be demonstrated.

The Jobs and Economic Development Committee has a number of leaders, each putting their own mark on the agenda. Under its first chairman, Roger Flynn, the committee helped to create the one stop permitting center and began an incubator project. With Rich Olsson as chairman, the committee began exploration of permitting issues and training dollars. Current chairman Claude Laval has recently taken over the committee and they are now focused on regional strategic planning and collaboration among organizations.

The Education Committee has approached education in both comprehensive and specific ways. Committee members helped pass the Fresno Unified and Clovis Unified school bond measures, and sponsors Commission on the Future of Education in Fresno County with the County Office of Education. The Commission is studying all the aspects of how education is delivered in Fresno County.

The fourth standing committee is the Public Policy and Governmental Relations committee. It is through public and private partnerships that the Council implements its Agenda. The committee has hosted numerous meetings with elected officials to increase communication and build relationships.

Mr. Speaker I rise today to pay tribute to the Fresno Business Council in celebration of its fifth Anniversary. This group of leaders has done great things for the community. I urge all my colleagues to join me in wishing the Fresno Business Council many years of continued success.

EDUCATION DEBATE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 16, 1998

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts on the education debate that has consumed much of this Congress in recent days. For all the sound and fury generated by the argument over education, the truth is that the difference between the congressional leadership and the administration are not that significant; both wish to strengthen the unconstitutional system of centralized education. I trust I need not go into the flaws with President Clinton's command-and-control approach to education. However, this Congress has failed to present a true, constitutional alternative to President Clinton's proposals to further nationalize education.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the experiment in centralized control of education has failed. Even data from the National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP] shows that students in States where control over education is decentralized score approximately 10 percentage points higher on NAEP's tests in math and reading than students from States with highly-centralized education systems. Clearly, the drafters of the Constitution knew what they were doing when they forbade the Federal Government from meddling in education.

American children deserve nothing less than the best educational opportunities, not warmed-over versions of the disastrous educational policies of the past. That is why I introduced H.R. 1816, the Family Education Freedom Act. This bill would give parents an inflation-adjusted $3,000 per annum tax credit, per child for educational expenses. The credit applies to those in public, private, parochial, or home schooling.

This bill is the largest tax credit for education in the history of our great Republic and it returns the fundamental principal of a truly free economy to America's education system: what the great economist Ludwig von Mises called ''consumer sovereignty.'' Consumer sovereignty simply means consumers decide who succeeds or fails in the market. Businesses that best satisfy consumer demand will be the most successful. Consumer sovereignty is the means by which the free market maximizes human happiness.

Currently, consumers are less than sovereign in the education ''market.'' Funding decisions are increasingly controlled by the Federal Government. Because ''he who pays the piper calls the tune,'' public, and even private schools, are paying greater attention to the dictates of Federal ''educrats'' while ignoring the wishes of the parents to an ever-greater degree. As such, the lack of consumer sovereignty in education is destroying parental control of education and replacing it with State control. Restoring parental control is the key to improving education.

Of course I applaud all efforts which move in this direction. the Gingrich/Coverdell education tax cut, The Granger/Dunn bill, and, yes, President Clinton's college tax credits are good first steps in the direction I advocate. However, Congress must act boldly, we can ill afford to waste another year without a revolutionary change in our policy. I believe my bill sparks this revolution and I am disappointed that the leadership of this Congress chose to ignore this fundamental reform and instead focused on reauthorizing great society programs, creating new Federal education programs (such as those contained in the Reading Excellence Act and the four new Federal programs created by the Higher Education Act), and promoting the pseudo-federalism of block grants.

One area where this Congress was successful in fighting for a constitutional education policy was in resisting President Clinton's drive for national testing. I do wish to express my support for the provisions banning the development of national testing and thank Mr. GOODLING for his leadership in this struggle. However, I wish this provision did no come at the price of $1.1 billion in new Federal spending. In addition, I note that this Congress is taking several steps toward creating a national curriculum, particularly through the Reading Excellence Act, which dictates teaching methodologies to every classroom in the Nation and creates a Federal definition of reading, thus making compliance with Federal standards the goal of education.

So, even when Congress resists one proposal to further nationalize education, it supports another form of nationalization. Some Members will claim they are resisting nationalization and even standing up for the 10th amendment by fighting to spend billions of taxpayer dollars on block grants. These Members say that the expenditure levels do not matter,