by a worker, not a union official, not an employer, and certainly not the U.S. Congress.

The National Right to Work Act reduces federal power over America's labor markets, promotes economic growth and a higher standard of living, and enhances freedom.

No wonder, according to a poll by the respected Marketing Research Institute, 77 percent of Americans support Right to Work, and over 50 percent of union households believe workers should have the right to choose whether or not to join or pay dues to a labor union.

No other piece of legislation before this Congress will benefit this Nation as much as the National Right of Work Act.

I urge my colleagues to quickly pass the National Right to Work Act and free millions of Americans from forced-dues tyranny.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999. Teaching children to master skills and knowledge is the key to our nation's future success and economic growth and the surest ticket to a better life for our Nation's citizens. As the House Education Subcommittee Chairman on Early Childhood, Youth, and Families, I offer this legislation—which I began work on in the 105th Congress—as the first item on the Subcommittee's agenda in pursuit of attaining educational excellence for children across the Nation.

The Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999, also known as Ed-Flex, will bring much needed relief to our schools, while boosting the productivity and the academic achievement of students. There is nothing more important to the future of our country than ensuring our students receive a challenging and enriching education. In talking to teachers about our schools, one of the complaints I hear repeatedly is that the Federal Government often weighs in on local school matters in a counterproductive and burdensome way. Often times, regulations put in place at the Federal level—intended to assist local schools in attaining educational excellence—actually have the opposite effect. Instead of strengthening teachers' time in the classroom, some regulations end up taking talented teachers away from students so they can fill out paperwork or assess program spending. Again, the intention of these regulations are good. Everyone wants students to achieve at higher rates and schools to provide better educational opportunities. However, because each school district is structured differently and because each student body has diverse needs, regulations sometimes actually interfere with the schools main focus of educating children. In these instances, we have actually added to the barriers of attaining educational excellence, instead of breaking them down. A 'one size fits all solution' rarely works for everyone, and though they provide a framework for schools, they do not cross every 'T' or dot every 'I'. We can help fill in this gap, however, by supporting education flexibility.

Under current law, 12 states are authorized to participate in an enormously popular pilot program known as Ed-Flex. My proposal extends that authority to all states. Under Ed-Flex, states can grant schools waivers of certain federal requirements that, while intending to assist, actually inhibit the school's ability to improve educational opportunities for its students. For example, in Ohio, the program was used to significantly reduce paperwork for schools, school districts, and the state education agency. In addition, the state granted two statewide waivers. Each of these required school districts to describe the specific regulatory barrier, show how the removal of the barrier will benefit students, and describe a plan to evaluate the waiver's effect on teaching and learning. The time saved on completing applications frees up staff time to address more substantive and crucial needs of the students.

Texas has successfully used Ed-Flex waiver authority to improve student performance through more than 4,000 programmatic and administrative waivers, such as permitting schools to offer school-wide Title I programs, changing the priorities for professional development activities under the Eisenhower Professional Development program, and reducing paperwork for schools. After only two years of implementation, preliminary statewide results on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills show that districts with waivers outperformed districts without waivers 87 percent to 84 percent in reading and 82.6 percent to 80.2 percent in math. For African-American students, the gains were even bigger. For example, at Westlawn Elementary School in La Marque, Texas, African-American students improved almost 23 percent over their 1996 math test scores with 82 percent of students passing. The statewide average was 64 percent.

Maryland, another Ed-Flex state, used its waiver authority to reduce student-teacher ratios for students with the greatest need in math and science from 25 to 1 to 12 to 1. Under the Howard County waiver, the school will provide additional instruction time in reading and math and increase each student's time on task. The State holds schools accountable through performance on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program. Ed-Flex allows schools to tailor waivers to meet their individual needs. I believe all States should have the opportunity to obtain similar improvements in their regulatory process and, more importantly, in academic achievement.

In response to a report released by the General Accounting Office on the Ed-Flex demonstration project, my proposal strengthens accountability in the program by ensuring that states demonstrate that student performance improves through the use of waivers and adds to the list of programs eligible for waiver under Ed-Flex. My proposal also ensures that states do not issue waivers to allow schools to participate in Title I that are more than 5 percent below the average poverty rate—thereby maintaining targeted funding for disadvantaged children.

Ed-Flex facilitates a seamless system of services for students because the federal and state programs can be well coordinated. In testimony and reports submitted to Congress by the U.S. Department of Education, states gave examples of how Ed-Flex has given them not only greater flexibility, but also the ability to set even higher expectations for student performance—by asking for a higher level of accountability in exchange for Ed-Flex waivers. In addition, by enacting this legislation now, the immediate experiences of the States can help Congress identify the areas of federal regulatory burden for school districts. We can then address these problems during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Ed-Flex will allow our schools to work more creatively in meeting student needs while ensuring that important Federal education priorities remain in effect.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

HON. BILL ARCHER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a joint resolution to amend the Constitution in order to give the President line-item veto authority on appropriations approved by Congress. I first introduced this resolution during the 99th Congress. As the Supreme Court confirmed on June 25, 1998 in ruling that the 1996 Line Item Veto Act was unconstitutional, a constitutional amendment is indeed necessary.

During this era of ''as far as the eye can see'' surpluses, I am deeply concerned that our commitment to fiscal discipline will be eaten away. The ''desire'' to cut spending may no longer be enough to fight the Washington spending machine. Last year's 40-pound, 4000-page, $520 billion ''omnibus'' spending bill is compelling evidence of this point.

President Clinton's FY2000 budget was an even further retreat from his earlier claim that the ''era of big government is over.'' Without any thought of giving back some of the surplus to the people who put it there, President Clinton called for more than $200 billion in new domestic spending over 5 years, including nearly 40 new mandatory programs and almost 80 new discretionary programs. How does he propose to pay for this spending spree? $108 billion in new taxes and fees!

Obviously, a fixed mechanism to fight unnecessary and abusive spending must be put in place. A constitutional line-item veto amendment must be adopted—to restore fiscal discipline to the Federal Government and to save the well-being of our Nation. I want American Presidents to have the tools they need (just like the governors of 43 States) to resist the inevitable pressures to spend our Nation's assets.

A TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL ROGER W. SCEARCE, USA

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to a great General, a great leader, a great soldier and citizen from my home state of Florida, Brigadier General Roger W. Scearce, on the occasion of his retirement from the United States Army. On this day, he