for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell two stories, one of success, and one of failure.

In August, the Education Department awarded a grant to a local coalition dedicated to helping students in Lorain, Ohio, go to college. The grant is part of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, or GEAR-UP.

Lorain County has a large number of low-income students and the lowest incidence of postsecondary education in northeast Ohio. The GEAR-UP program provides training and materials to volunteer mentors from local industry and universities. These positive role models will meet with students early, before they internalize negative messages. The program intends to motivate students to ask for, and answer to, increased academic demand.

But here is where we risk failure. Funding for GEAR-UP is eliminated in the current Labor-HHS appropriations bill. Why? Because GEAR-UP supports public-private partnerships to support local students? Because it creates dollar-for-dollar matches between local partnerships and States? Because it provides college scholarships to reinforce the message that hard work begets opportunity?

Mr. Speaker, let us make sure our failure does not deter students from future successes before they have a chance to begin. Let us fund the GEAR-UP program.

CONGRESS SHOULD REPEAL THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a portion of this 21-page report, entitled ''The State of Our Union, the Social Health of Marriage in America,'' by David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead.

It says, and I quote:

> Key social indicators suggest a substantial weakening of the institution of marriage in America. Americans have become less likely to marry. When they do marry, their marriages are less happy, and married couples face a high likelihood of divorce.

The report goes on to say many other things. It has many findings. It concludes that marriage is a fundamental social institution; that it is central to the nurture and raising of children. It is the social glue that reliably attaches fathers to children. It contributes to the physical, emotional and economic health of men, women, and children and, thus, to the Nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should promote policies that value, endorse, and encourage marriage, not punish it. We should repeal the marriage penalty tax.

DEMOCRATS CANNOT BREAK ADDICTION TO SPENDING

(Mr. HILL of Montana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, it absolutely astounds me. It astounds me to hear Democrats come to this floor and suggest that a 1 percent across-the-board spending cut would threaten government. I believe, without a shadow of a doubt, that our government still wastes 1 percent or more of its budget.

What those Democrats are actually saying is that they cannot find a way to break their addiction to spending money. Mr. Speaker, for 40 years, when the Democrats ran this House, they were so addicted to spending that they raided every trust fund in government. They raided the Highway Trust Fund, they raided the Aviation Trust Fund, they raided the Medicare Trust Fund, they raided the Social Security Trust Fund.

Mr. Speaker, they cannot break this addiction to spend, even though it threatens the well-being of our country, even though it threatens the retirement of over 30 million seniors. They lack the willpower to do what is necessary to maintain the discipline we have brought to this House.

We Republicans have the discipline, the willpower, and the commitment to do what is right, and that is to stop the raid on Social Security and to do it now.

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STATE FLEXIBILITY FOR MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. DEMINT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, we have an exciting opportunity to give our States greater control over the minimum wage so they can continue to help those struggling to make ends meet. In 1996, we gave the States the responsibility to move people off of welfare and into productive jobs. Today, States need the freedom to tailor the best wage rates to fit the needs of their communities.

Mr. Speaker, State flexibility gives security to those who need it and opportunity to those who want it. It allows each State to choose the minimum wage increase that is in the best interests of its workers and those struggling to find jobs. More importantly, State flexibility recognizes that our governors and State representatives are no less compassionate or committed to improving the lives of our most disadvantaged citizens.

I ask my colleagues to send dollars, decisions and freedom home. Let us support State flexibility for the minimum wage.

PRESCRIPTION FOR DISASTER FROM IMF

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, the IMF fiddles while the world's poorest countries burn, in poverty, disease, ignorance and debt. The International Monetary Fund uses its control over global finances to impose economic and social policies on poor countries. The result: poor people in poor countries have virtually no health care, no education, and crippled economies.

The IMF is not a doctor with a cure, it is a quack selling poison potions. The United Nations just released a report saying that over 800 million people go to bed hungry every night, and the world's three richest people, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet and Paul Allen, have more than the GNP of all poor countries on the planet combined.

The time to act is now. We must stop the IMF from imposing austerity and poverty on countries too poor and hungry to fight back.

SOCIAL SECURITY LOCKBOX HELD HOSTAGE

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, today is day 145 of the Social Security lockbox held hostage by the Senate Democrats and President Clinton. One hundred forty-five days ago, House Republicans and Democrats joined together to pass my legislation, H.R. 1259, the Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act of 1999, by an overwhelming 416–12 vote. The House of Representatives has made a commitment to not spend one penny of the Social Security trust fund on unrelated programs.

Senate Republicans have attempted to bring this bill to the Senate floor seven times and on seven occasions the measure was blocked from even being considered by a straight party line vote. Mr. Speaker, American seniors deserve more from Senate Democrats and President Clinton. They deserve a lockbox for their Social Security.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE KENNETH W. STARR

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Judge Kenneth W. Starr and thank him for more than 5 years of service of investigating and prosecuting crime and corruption at the highest levels of this Nation's government. What started out as an investigation of a land deal soon led down the road to lies and deceits. For the 5 years of his life Judge Starr devoted in his search for truth and justice, he encountered nothing short of roadblocks,