TRIBUTE TO JUDGE MICHAEL M. MIHM

HON. RAY LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Judge Michael M. Mihm on receiving the USAID Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award. The award recognizes volunteerism in overseas development context. In January 1994, Judge Mihm was appointed the first chairperson of the Committee on International Judicial Relations by Chief Justice William Rehnquist. In 2000, he was approached by the Librarian of Congress, Dr. James Billington, to help design an expanded rule of law component for the Library of Congress' Open World Leadership Center. Judge Mihm has hosted three Open World delegations at his home. He continues to serve as the Russian liaison for the Committee on International Judicial Relations to the Open World Partnership. Judge Mihm also provides voluntary counsel to Open World and USAID's Russian American Judicial Partnership.

Judge Mihm has dedicated several years of his time to the Committee on International Judicial Relations and the Open World program. I am happy to recognize him for his work and dedication to these programs.

HONORING STUDENTS AROUND NEW YORK CITY WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CONSTITUTION EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the over 100 students from around New York City who participated this year in the Constitution Education Engagement Project. The CEEP program, of which Carl Bonomo is the founder and Dorothy McCloskey is the director, takes secondary school students from around New York City and asks them to have hearings, discussions and debates and arrive at a piece of legislation for this Congress to consider.

This year, the winner was from Wadleigh Secondary School. Karen Watts, Wadleigh's principal, led a group of students that represents the City's best and brightest: Vanessa Reyes, Aaron Gardner, Evelin Valladared, and Victoria Bunn. In addition, I want to mention individuals who deserve special commendation at two other schools that participated in CEEP: principal Joseph Zaza at the Leon M. Goldstein School and Susan Getting and Maureen Longeran at the Townsend Harris School.

The legislation that the Wadleigh team has come up with addresses problems that affect over 41 States in the United States, and that is the inequity between funding among different school districts. In New York State alone, $17,000 is spent per student in one district compared to $6,000 per student in others.

Since 1973, 45 different States have had to address the inequities in school funding. The students at the Wadleigh Secondary School deserve our thanks for their efforts to address the problems we have in our country through the legislative process.

I hope this House joins in paying tribute to their successes.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ACT (EEOA)

To provide equal access to quality education to all United States Citizens and Residents

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

(a) This Act may be cited as EEOA of 2004

(b) Table of Contents. The table of contents for this act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short Title and table of contents

Sec. 2. Abstract

Sec. 3. The EEOA

Title 1. Quality Education—Requirement to provide quality education to all citizens and residents.

Sec. 101. Definition of Quality Education

Sec. 102. Establishing a Uniform Standard

Title II. Funding—Establish permanent funding source that will allow goals of act to be met.

Sec. 201. Establishing special fund for act

Sec. 202. Increasing education expenditures on an adjusted per student basis

SECTION 2. ABSTRACT

We live in a time when only the educated are free. As we become more technologically advanced and information plays more of a critical role, only those individuals who have had a sound education will be able to compete and succeed in the global marketplace. This need for a quality education is most critical for those people who are on the lowest social and economic levels of our society. Now more than ever all must have access to a good education in order to have a fair chance in life. Sadly, those who are most in need of quality education have the least amount of access to it.

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that every citizen will have equal protection of the law, but a Supreme Court decision in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) almost erased the protections provided by this amendment. The Plessy decision created the system of separate but equal and allowed for the legal separation of people based upon nothing but the color of their skin. This ruling allowed for the establishment of separate school facilities for white people and people of color. These facilities were anything but equal. Schools that served students of color were inferior in many important aspects. The physical conditions of the schools were poor, books and other materials were in poor condition, outdated or not available at all. The teachers were paid less than their white counterparts. The landmark ruling in the Supreme Court case of Brown v. the Board of Education (1954) ended the practice of legal segregation in public schools and struck down the Jim Crow laws that forced second-class citizenship on people of color. Despite this, American society in many ways remains as segregated as it was before 1954. Nowhere is this segregation more evident than in our public schools. Even though great people such as Charles Hamilton Houston the architect of the argument for the Brown case, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., dedicated their lives to ensure that there would be equal educational opportunities for all Americans, we have yet to see this become a reality.

Recent studies show that the country's largest inner city school districts remain dramatically divided along lines of race and economic class. These studies find that the poorest school districts have a population that consists mostly of minority students while white students make up the majority of wealthy districts. The difference in the funding received by school districts is also very surprising. In New York State alone, $17,000 is spent per student in the wealthiest districts while only $6000 per student is spent in the poorest districts. This stark difference led to the creation of the Campaign for fiscal Equity (CFE), a group of parents, businessmen and politicians who sued the state of New York to get more funding for the poorer school districts. After a long battle that lasted for several years, the New York State Courts ruled that the state must provide equal funding to those poor school districts. But New York is not the only state where we see this type of inequality—41 out of 50 states in the country have a similar situation.

Unequal funding has had a direct impact on the academic achievement of under funded schools and students. Students who attend schools located in districts that receive less funding also have lower scores on standardized tests and are more likely to be below grade level in reading and math. Students from these under-funded schools are also more likely to drop out of school and fewer students from these attend and graduate from college.

Recently, the federal government has tried to address the problem by the passing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB requires all school districts to achieve minimum academic standards as measured by standardized tests. Those states whose school districts do not meet these standards would lose some of their federal funds. The NCLB Act has been criticized because it does not provide the funding that schools would need to meet the standards set by the law. In fact, those school districts whose students are the most in need of additional funding would likely be the first ones to lose funding if their students, who also have the greatest academic deficits, do not achieve satisfactory scores. Many parts are NCLB are good and should be expanded, but a couple of the things that the law does not do is provide funding that is substantial enough to achieve it's goals, and it does not require that states provide equal funding. It is the goal of the EEOA to address the problems that NCLB does not.

SECTION 3. THE EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ACT

Title I.—Quality Education For All Citizens and Residents. The federal government will be required to ensure that every child within the boarders of the United States is provided with the opportunity to receive a ''quality educational experience.''

Sec. 101. Definition of ''Quality Education''—For the purposes of this Act, a ''quality education'' will be defined as: (1) An education that provides each student the opportunity to develop the skills that are necessary to become a productive member of their local, national and global communities. (2) Developing the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively participate in the global marketplace. (3) Adequate physical facilities to meet the demands of the uniform distribution of funds. (4) Well-trained certified teachers who are paid at a competitive rate. (5) Providing a variety of learning experiences that include opportunities for extracurricular interests and social development.

Sec. 102. Establishing a Uniform Standard—To ensure that each child receives a quality education this act shall establish a framework for the equitable distribution of funding to create the programs and curriculum necessary to meet the goals of a

quality education as defined in Sec. 101 and to provide states and local school boards with the resources to address each school's unique challenges in meeting the requirement for a quality education through a flexible and equitable distribution of dollars so each school has an equal opportunity to shore up its curricular weaknesses as they define it in their local communities once the basic national, state and local requirements and standards have been met, a standard by which individual state education programs will be measured.

Title II.—Funding. A special fund will be established to fully implement all aspects of the EEOA. Additionally a special committee will be created to develop a formula for per student expenditures that will result in equal spending for all students.

Sec. 201. Establishing a Special Fund to Fully Support the EEOA—A fund will be created that will be used solely for the purpose of providing support of the EEOA. The fund is to be developed and established by appropriate legislation.

Sec. 202. Increase in Per Student Expenditures—A commission will be created to determine per student expenditure required to support the provisions included in Title I of this act. Several factors will be taken into consideration when making this determination, including: 1) economic and social conditions that exist in a student's school district 2) the academic and social circumstances of the student 3) the ability of the student's school and community to raise funds independently. Taking these factors into consideration will insure that the schools and students who have the greatest need will receive the greatest amount of funding and support. School districts that have adequate spending for each student will not be required to reduce their expenditures. When developing the per student spending formula, the commission shall also consider external factors such as the cost of living in each school district, property values in the district and additional community resources. This will allow the amount distributed to each school district to be prorated according to these factors. (Building a school in Georgia does not cost as much as building a similar facility in New York City, therefore the actual dollar amount spent on a student in Georgia may be less, but the value received from the expenditure is equivalent).

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DONNA FERGANCHICK

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Donna Ferganchick for her tireless service to her Delta, Colorado community. Donna is a dedicated volunteer for numerous community organizations and it is my privilege to recognize her efforts before this body of Congress and this nation.

Donna is a western Colorado native. Her family moved to Delta in 1956, and then to Cedaredge where she graduated from high school. Soon after Donna met and married her husband Les in 1959. She purchased the family ranch on the Gunnison River near Delta where she and her family have lived for the last thirty-two years, raising three children.

After receiving her real estate license and attending some classes at Mesa State, she was persuaded to run for Delta County Assessor. Donna faithfully served her county for two terms and was urged to run for county commissioner. Months later she was elected and became Delta County's first woman county commissioner, again serving her community for two terms.

In 2001, Donna retired from civil service so that she and her husband could travel. In September, Les became ill and tragically passed away. When Donna was at the hospital she was overcome by how friendly the staff was to her, so she decided to return the favor by being an emergency room volunteer and also serves on the hospital foundation board. She also helped with the Delta County 4-H foundation, sits on the hospice advisory board, and is a part time executive director for Grand Mesa Scenic Byways.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Donna Ferganchick has been an invaluable resource to Delta County and the city of Delta. Her hard work and humble service to her community is extraordinary and worthy of acknowledgment before this body of Congress and this nation. Thanks, Donna, for all your hard work, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

SUPPORTING THE UMWA ON COAL MINE MEMORIAL

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) who over the last two days have been participating in a coal mine memorial.

The UMWA has called for a nationwide two-day memorial, shutting down all the union mines in the U.S. to symbolize the importance of a federal court decision expected sometime this week. This decision has the potential to impact the fate of health care benefits for 250 working miners at the Zeigler 11 mine near Coulterville, Illinois and hundreds of retired coal miners in my congressional district.

These people have worked hard to earn benefits and a pension to sustain them and their families through retirement. Yet, the way our laws are structured, we allow companies to get out of their responsibilities to these hardworking Americans and their families. This is unfortunately happening more and more across our country and it needs to stop.

Health care has gone from a matter of concern to a crisis of major proportion. Seniors are splitting their pills to make their medications last. People will not go to a doctor because they cannot afford it. We have more than 40 million people who are uninsured. Health care has become a crisis in America.

There is a historical commitment to providing health care for retired coal miners and we must continue that commitment. Mr. Speaker, the people that are in jeopardy of losing their health care spent their careers producing the energy which powers this nation. We must not turn our backs on them now. We must not allow them to be robbed of the health care they so desperately deserve and need.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO HONOR THE CHILDREN OF AMERICA

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today my fellow colleague from Colorado, Representative BEAUPREZ, and I are introducing a resolution to honor this nation's children and express the desire to mark the first Wednesday in March as National Children's Day.

The resolution expresses the sense of the House of Representatives urging the President to proclaim that the first Wednesday of March each year should be named National Children's Day in honor of the future generations of our country.

The Great Sioux Nation can be used as a role model to lawmakers in America as we debate any bill here on the floor of the House of Representatives. They place a high value on the children of the tribe, as they represent the future of the tribe. When important decisions are being made, the Sioux always discussed what the impact of the decision would be, not on the current generation, or the next generation, but the seventh generation out.

The Sioux Nation placed a priority on the future of the tribe, through its children. I believe that it is important that we, as lawmakers, keep the importance of our future in mind as we make decisions everyday here in Congress.

In that spirit, I believe this legislation is fitting as it honors the importance of our nation's children and the role that we as adults have in the upbringing of a child. Through special attention from the adults in a child's life, that child is more likely to experience success throughout their life. This resolution urges American adults to set aside time throughout the day to support a child in their life or community.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and spend some time with a child in their lives.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO RONALD PETTIGREW

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ronald Pettigrew and thank him for the remarkable civic contributions he has made to his Durango community and the State of Colorado. Ron is an active and well respected leader in his community, and I believe it appropriate to acknowledge his many accomplishments to the Durango community before this body of congress and nation.

A second generation native to Southwest Colorado, Ron graduated from Fort Lewis College in western Colorado, and has been a business owner in Durango ever since. Due to his many civic and business contributions, he was recognized by the Durango Area Chamber Resort Association as their Citizen of the Year in 1992.