

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my good friend and colleague, Chairman RUBÉN HINOJOSA, for his work on this issue of adult illiteracy which he just spoke about.

Just like RUBÉN HINOJOSA and his district in Texas, in my State of Rhode Island where unemployment rates continue to rise, 23 percent of the adult population in my district alone lacks a high school diploma. Last June when the National Commission on Adult Literacy released its report, it served as a wake-up call for all those concerned with the quality of our adult workforce. The commission found that 80 to 90 million adults in this country have deficiencies in basic education and that our investments in adult education and training were reaching less than 3 percent of those who need it. That's why we need to ensure that our adult education and workforce training programs have the tools and resources they need to prepare our workers for the next generation of jobs in energy, in health care and in technology. We need to improve the way we deliver adult education and workforce training programs and the way we provide career paths to higher growth fields through greater involvement with business leaders, State agencies and adult education community and workforce leaders. We need to better leverage employers to provide educational programs to their employees. We need to enhance the use of technology to improve quality learning access and delivery of adult education, literacy and workplace skills services.

The Adult Education and Economic Growth Act which RUBÉN HINOJOSA and I are introducing will do all of these things in order to provide those employed and unemployed with the ability to attain the skills they need to compete in an ever-changing workplace.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

THE ADULT EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (AEEG) ACT OF 2009

WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO

1. Will refocus the adult education and workforce skills system to make postsecondary and job training readiness a primary goal.

85 percent of GED graduates have to take at least one remedial course before they can enroll in postsecondary education. We need to do a better job preparing them for success in school and in work, rather than getting them to an arbitrary finish line that actually leaves them short of where they need to be.

2. Will give incumbent workers greater access to the workforce skills training and adult education systems.

It is too hard for people already on the job to receive workforce skills training and adult education. It's not enough to get someone into a job, we need to get them into a career. That means continued training, even after a worker is on the job.

Only 3 to 4 percent of the workers with the most limited literacy proficiencies receive basic skills training from their employers. Our bill will create greater incentives for employer involvement in the education of their employees.

3. Will ensure that federal funding formulas accurately take into account the adult education and workforce skills needs of individual states.

Federal funding formulas are outdated, and especially penalize states with a high proportion of non-native English speakers. Our legislation will ensure a fairer distribution of federal funds.

4. Will increase the use of technology in workforce skills training and adult education.

Technology has greatly increased our ability to reach workers at times and places convenient to them. By 2006, 73 percent of American adults were online, including those at the lowest literacy levels. We cannot reach all of those needing services without deploying technology to provide services outside the classroom walls.

5. Will increase access to correction education programs and provide for added accountability in the system.

Offenders with education and training are statistically less likely to commit crimes after release. There is a direct correlation between education level and recidivism: the higher the education level, the lower the recidivism rate. A decrease in recidivism reduces costs to taxpayers and keeps our communities safer.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

God of mercy and goodness, may this midday moment of prayer and dedication be received as a welcome gift by all, refreshing Your people and clarifying our purpose in serving this Nation.

Bless the work that Congress has begun this day. Rectify any defects and strengthen its integrity. Let us finish the tasks You set before us in a way that pleases You and gives glory to this Nation and Your Holy Name, both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr.

PAULSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PAULSEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 951. An act to authorize the President, in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the historic and first lunar landing by humans in 1969, to award gold medals on behalf of the United States Congress to Neil A. Armstrong, the first human to walk on the moon; Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., the pilot of the lunar module and second person to walk on the moon; Michael Collins, the pilot of their Apollo 11 mission's command module; and, the first American to orbit the Earth, John Herschel Glenn, Jr.

S. Con. Res. 11. Concurrent resolution condemning all forms of anti-Semitism and reaffirming the support of Congress for the mandate of the special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and for other purposes.

IN SUPPORT OF STATUTORY PAYGO

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. I rise today in strong support of statutory pay-as-you-go legislation, which will be taken up this week by the House. This bill demonstrates our commitment to fiscal responsibility and will restore the policy that led us from deficit spending to debt to surpluses.

We have to reduce our deficit spending. If we don't, we will not be able to invest in vitally important priorities like health care, education, and clean energy.

PAYGO is very simple: All the policies that cut taxes or reduce revenues must be paid for or offset over 5 and 10 years. All policies that expand entitlement spending must be paid for over 5 and 10 years. Discretionary spending is not subject to PAYGO, and exceptions could be made for emergencies.

This makes common sense and families live by it every day. If you spend more in one area of the family budget, you have got to cut back in other areas. It's about time that our government start living by the same rule.

DON'T TAX EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYMENT

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, before I came to Congress, I ran a small business. And in that small business I offered a health insurance benefit to my