

him, Steve will tell you he is just doing what is right. But that takes courage. Thankfully, Kentucky's Governor has had no shortage of that.

He reinstated an executive order prohibiting LGBT discrimination against government workers, made Kentucky the first State in the Nation to adopt Common Core and the second to adopt New Generation Science Standards.

When it came to medical care, he absolutely refused to play politics with the health of his State. He expanded Medicaid and led the creation of the Nation's most successful health exchange, Kynect, and reduced the number of Kentuckians without health insurance from 20.4 percent to 9 percent, the best improvement in the Nation.

In my district alone, the uninsured rate dropped 81 percent. For the first time, quality, affordable health insurance is a reality for hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians. It is thanks to Steve Beshear.

Of course, he has been working for the people of Kentucky since long before he was a Governor, and he never did it alone. Throughout his decades of public service, he has depended on the strength of another great Kentucky leader, his wife and our first lady, Jane Beshear.

Mr. Speaker, I have been honored to be Steve and Jane's ally these past 8 years and I have been lucky to have them as mine as we worked to revitalize Louisville's manufacturing sector, address our community's infrastructure needs, and make sure Kentucky children, veterans, and working families are taken care of.

Over the past 30 years, Mr. Speaker, I have had the honor of calling Steve Beshear my Attorney General, my Lieutenant Governor, and now my Governor. But, above all, I have been most proud to call him my friend.

In his first inaugural address in 2007, Governor Beshear noted that the path of progress in Kentucky "will involve new thinking and new ideas. It will require cooperation and patience. And it will demand courage."

Steve, you successfully embraced those new ideas, you promoted cooperation and patience, and you had the courage not only to serve, but to serve us well. I wish you the very best as you leave public service.

I want to thank you, First Lady Jane Beshear, and your devoted staff for doing the right thing on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Mr. Speaker, Kentucky is a stronger, more prosperous, and a far healthier place because of the dedication and the work of our Governor Steve Beshear.

THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT MUST BE REAUTHORIZED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on

the Every Student Succeeds Act, which will reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill goes a long way to rectifying the problems that were created by No Child Left Behind. We have seen 14 years now of Federal encroachment on local schools, one-size-fits-all testing, and local school districts that are not allowed to apply local solutions to local problems.

Mr. Speaker, the version of ESEA that is coming to the floor later today will fix these problems. The bill will streamline the annual assessment process and will ensure that our teachers are not required to teach only the material that will be on these tests. It will remove the high stakes from these assessments and will ensure that school districts have the local control over the assessment process.

More importantly, the bill will allow States to develop their own academic content and achievement standards that are designed to suit the needs of their students. Teachers and administrators will be given the freedom to truly educate their students and will be able to innovate and develop real solutions to their problems without fear of a bureaucrat in Washington looking over their shoulder.

Mr. Speaker, though I rise in support of this bill, I must say that I am disappointed that the final version to come out of conference did not include the text of an amendment that I offered that was adopted in H.R. 5, the Student Success Act.

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My amendment would have forbidden States from requiring school districts to divert Federal education dollars away from the classroom and into State pension funds to pay off unfunded liabilities of the past.

In my home State of Illinois, the State government is presently requiring school districts that choose to use Federal education dollars to pay teacher salaries to divert over one-third of their Federal education dollars to the State's Teachers' Retirement System to cover past financial mismanagement. This amounts to a Federal bailout of State pension programs at the expense of schools and education. Mr. Speaker, this only happens in Illinois.

So what does this mean for the 10th District of Illinois? In 2014, Wheeling Community Consolidated School District 21 had to send over \$140,000 to the State to cover past pension obligations. That is 35 percent of the \$400,000 of total Federal dollars that came to Wheeling that Wheeling spent on teachers. If Wheeling had only had to pay the normal pension cost, the current pension obligation, it would have had to have contributed \$32,000. That means that Wheeling was forced to divert over \$100,000 to the pension system to cover past pension obligations at the expense of teachers in the classroom. At \$40,000 per year, this would have enabled them to hire an additional 2½

teachers that could have been educating our children, reducing classroom sizes, and making each of our students receive the individual attention that they need to succeed.

In Waukegan, Illinois, this problem is even worse. Waukegan spent \$2.6 million in Federal education dollars on teachers and was forced to divert over \$900,000 annually to the State to cover past pension obligations. If the Dold amendment had been law, Waukegan would have had an additional \$700,000 to hire more teachers, or in the case of District 60, they would have been able to offer full-day kindergarten. That makes an enormous difference in children's lives—and parents' lives for that matter.

More tragically, because Illinois does not require the same kind of contribution when teacher salaries are paid with State or local dollars, this policy is taking away Federal education dollars from our neediest and most vulnerable children, precisely the students that the ESEA was intended to help.

Mr. Speaker, my amendment would have fixed this problem once and for all and would have ensured that education dollars intended for the students of Wheeling and Waukegan and everywhere else where Federal dollars can make a real difference in our children's lives would have actually gone to help these students.

I will continue to fight on this issue and will continue to work with my colleagues to make sure that the Federal dollars that are given to school districts are not diverted away from the neediest to cover up financial mistakes of the past.

Mr. Speaker, Every Student Succeeds Act is by no means a perfect bill, but it is a significant upgrade and a step forward that goes a long way toward fixing the problems posed by No Child Left Behind.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill and ensure that our children's getting the education they deserve is something that we can all count on.

WAR ON COAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, as we hear talk of bills on the floor and international climate meetings with the world community, I want to bring to my colleagues' attention and to you, Mr. Speaker, the real destruction that is going on in the fossil fuel areas of our Nation, one that I represent, the Illinois coal basin.

I want to start by quoting the mayor of a town named Galatia in two articles from the paper called The Southern. In a November 5 article, he basically says: "Without the coal mines, we are going to be in dire straits. That's all there is to it."

The mayor is referring to what we have come to the floor numerous times to talk about, and you actually heard