

Real Estate Roundtable. It has the support from efficiency advocates and the environmental community, like the Alliance to Save Energy, the ACEEE, NRDC, and the BlueGreen Alliance.

There is not a lot in Washington, DC, these days that has that broad group of stakeholders—strange bedfellows, you might say—but this bill does because what we do here makes sense. It doesn't take a heavy-handed government approach, but it takes an incentive-based approach, not mandated but providing the information so States, localities, and communities can make their own decision and can help to ensure that the best practices out there in energy efficiency are known, and where people want to use it, they can use it.

If my colleagues are serious about both protecting the environment and growing the economy and increasing jobs, I believe this is the right legislation for them and that the voluntary business code language in the energy bill has to be included.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to help us with regard to an amendment we plan to offer later in this process to ensure that we do have the ability to both create jobs, improve the economy, and improve the environment.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL WILSON A. SHOFFNER

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor MG Wilson A. Shoffner, commanding general of the U.S. Army Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill, OK. Major General Shoffner is one of our Nation's finest military officers. Major General Shoffner will relinquish command and conduct his retirement ceremony on 6 March 2020, bringing to a close 32 years of distinguished service to our great Nation.

In 1988, Major General Shoffner commissioned as a second lieutenant of field artillery upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He commanded units at every echelon, from platoon to the Fires Center of Excellence, with duty in Saudi Arabia, Germany, Iraq, Afghanistan,

and the United States. As a young officer, Major General Shoffner deployed with the 1st Cavalry Division in support of OPERATION DESERT STORM. Major General Shoffner commanded 2nd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. Later, he served as deputy chief of staff, communications, Resolute Support Mission, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, during OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL in Afghanistan.

As a general officer, Major General Shoffner served as the deputy chief of staff, G-3/5/7, for the Army's Training and Doctrine Command. He served as the director of the Army's Talent Management Task Force under the Army G1 and then as the director of operations for Rapid Equipment Fielding under the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology. Major General Shoffner's career culminated as the commanding general of the United States Army's Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill, where he helped forge the future of the Army's Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery branches.

Major General Shoffner is an exceptional leader, an American patriot committed to our Armed Forces, our National Security, and our Nation, but most importantly, Major General Shoffner is a great man of character. It is for MG Al Shoffner, a soldier, leader, and selfless servant, whom we, with profound admiration and deep respect, pay tribute to for all he has done for the defense of our Nation for over three decades.

We thank Major General Shoffner, his wife Carron, and their daughter, Kristin, for their dedication and sacrifice, and we wish them well in the years to come.

REFORMING EDUCATION THE AMERICAN WAY: STATE BY STATE, COMMUNITY BY COMMUNITY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, last week Templeton Press published an important new book, "How to Educate an American: The Conservative Vision for Tomorrow's Schools," edited by the Fordham Institute's Michael J. Petrilli and Chester E. Finn, Jr., and published by Templeton Press. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the preface I wrote for the book.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

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I was participating in a humdrum educators' roundtable in Buffalo, New York, in 1988 when "Monk" Malloy, president of the University of Notre Dame, asked this question: "What is the purpose of a public school?"

There was a long silence until finally Albert Shanker, president of the American

Federation of Teachers, proposed this answer: "The public school was created for the purpose of teaching immigrant children reading, writing, and arithmetic and what it means to be an American with the hope that they would then go home and teach their parents." The reason to read this book is to judge for yourself whether the twenty-two conservative luminaries who wrote its chapters have produced a better answer today to Malloy's question than Albert Shanker did thirty years ago.

Shanker was a patriot—an old-fashioned, anticommunist, Hubert Humphrey—liberal Democrat union organizer whose parents had immigrated from Poland. So he and this book's conservative writers agreed on one thing: In coeditor Chester Finn's words, "Schools should inculcate a solid understanding of and appreciation for why America exists and what it stands for, to transmit history and civics and, yes, a positive attitude toward its strengths as well as a reasoned commitment to addressing its weakness." Or, in Shanker's words, "Public schools played a big role in holding our nation together. They brought together children of different races, languages, religions, and cultures and gave them a common language and a sense of common purpose. We have not outgrown our need for this; far from it."

Today, there is elite disdain for such Americanism. But this is not a popular attitude. Most audiences applaud and some come to their feet when I say, "We should teach more United States history in our schools so our children can grow up knowing what it means to be an American." There is bipartisan support for this sentiment. After September 11, 2001, George W. Bush and Al Gore both reminded the nation that principles create the American character—not considerations of race, religion, or national origin. In my first address to the US Senate, I introduced a bill to create summer academies for outstanding students and teachers of U.S. history. Within a day, Senator Ted Kennedy had rounded up nearly twenty Democratic cosponsors without my asking. Especially in today's internet democracy, an era Peggy Noonan calls "The Great Estrangement," Americans are hungry for institutions that unite. I suspect that most would agree that it would be a good idea to begin each school day with a student leading the Pledge of Allegiance and then giving his or her version of what it means to be an American.

According to education historian Patricia Graham, "Schools in America have danced to different drummers through their long history"—and schools have a very long history. Hunter-gatherer "play schools" helped children learn to survive. Sumerian schools taught scribes to help a culture survive. During the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, schools taught youngsters to work and got them out from under their parents' feet. Sociologist James Coleman said that in early America, schools helped parents do what parents could not do as well. That was especially true for teaching literacy. Graham says, "Now the drumbeat demands that all children achieve academically at a high level and the measure of that achievement is tests."

This book's conservative writers would temper that drumbeat with a second great conservative goal—in the coeditors' words, "to restore character, virtue, and morality to the head of the education table where they belong." This is no new thought. Plato said schools should create good men who act nobly. Thomas Jefferson believed that a democracy granting broad liberties needed institutions instilling moral restraint. But Yuval Levin's essay suggests why character education does not rise so easily on a liberal