

make sure that we give the resources, the freedom, and the flexibility to our teachers so that they can help shape the character of our children. Teachers can help establish the fundamentals upon which our children will prosper and, hopefully, one day succeed at whatever their dream may be.

For those who have taught me, to my family which has served the education community, I want to extend a special thank you to them all.

ENCOURAGING BROWNFIELD DEVELOPMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. VIS-CLOSKY] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. VIS-CLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in promoting an effective way to encourage the redevelopment of abandoned, idled or underutilized commercial and industrial sites known as brownfields. Nationwide, brownfields are often overlooked for redevelopment because of real or perceived contamination. As a result, developers frequently turn to undeveloped greenfield sites. This creates a vicious cycle of lost tax revenues and job opportunities for local residents, while the brownfields are not cleaned up.

There is wide bipartisan support for measures that would encourage the redevelopment of brownfields. Although the specifics have not yet been worked out, I am pleased that the recent budget agreement contains a brownfields initiative to assist cities in cleaning up contaminated sites as part of a broader economic redevelopment strategy.

Effective brownfield redevelopment must create jobs, clean the environment and generate economic activity in our urban areas. However, we must not start a race to the bottom where cleanup standards are sacrificed on the altar of brownfield renewal. We must ensure that brownfield redevelopment does not become a back door to let polluters off the hook. A final product that does not meet these reasonable standards falls short of a readily achievable goal.

In March, I introduced the Brownfield Cleanup and Redevelopment Act, H.R. 1206. This legislation would establish a process whereby States with EPA-certified voluntary cleanup programs would be authorized to make final decisions regarding the cleanup of low- and medium-priority brownfield sites. To date, roughly three dozen States have implemented or are in the process of implementing voluntary cleanup programs. While these programs have been popular, the benefits of State cleanup programs will be significantly enhanced in the context of a Federal system that, first, encourages Federal-State partnerships; second, provides legal finality to the cleanup process; and, third, removes

Federal requirements for certain procedural permits for cleanups conducted under certified voluntary State programs.

My bill would expedite the clean up of eligible brownfield sites while protecting human health and the environment and creating jobs. H.R. 1206 is designed to encourage the cleanup of brownfields by providing certainty and finality to owners or prospective purchasers that the EPA will not require additional cleanup after an EPA-approved State voluntary cleanup has occurred.

My bill makes clear that if State voluntary cleanup programs meet certain criteria and are certified by the EPA, then approved cleanups conducted by certified State programs could proceed in lieu of Superfund. However, under H.R. 1206, the EPA administrator would certify State voluntary cleanup programs based on several criteria including, first, adequate opportunities for meaningful public participation in the development and implementation of cleanup plans at eligible facilities; second, the provision of adequate technical assistance, resources, oversight and enforcement authority; and, third, certification from the State that the cleanup of an eligible facility is complete. In addition, certified State programs could modify Federal permit requirements for eligible facilities to expedite their cleanups.

However, this bill is narrowly targeted to address only sites that are not Superfund sites that are not included on the national priorities list or subject to enforcement actions. Further, under H.R. 1206 the EPA explicitly retains its authority to gather information on any brownfield site. If it is discovered that the site is contaminated in such a way that it would not be considered a low- or medium-priority brownfield, it will no longer be eligible as a facility under the legislation, and EPA would retain full enforcement authority under Superfund.

I also want to briefly highlight another bill I have introduced. It is H.R. 1462 which would authorize \$20 million over 3 years to establish a pilot revolving loan fund for State voluntary cleanup programs. Because of their experience in administering targeted loan assistance programs, States are in a good position to use Federal funds to support local cleanup and redevelopment projects. Under H.R. 1462 States would provide a 20-percent match and begin repaying loans within 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to sponsor these bills which will build upon existing redevelopment efforts. By creating a distinct beginning and end to the voluntary cleanup process, businesses and jobs will be more attracted to unproductive brownfields as opposed to undeveloped farmland and other greenfield sites.

TRIBUTE TO MY TEACHER, FATHER JOHN PUTKA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. BOB SCHAFFER, is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today is National Teacher Appreciation Day, and we celebrate this all week long. I am reminded today especially of the teachers that have had such a profound influence in my life, and powerful influence at that, not the least of which was my father, a school teacher for his whole career, retired now; taught in a government-owned school system in which I did not live and did not have the chance to attend there, but he had the good sense to send me to another school where I had the opportunity to learn from this man here who I brought a picture of today.

Mr. Speaker, this picture is from January 7, and the man, this is me over here on the left, the man at the right here is Father John Putka who my colleagues will find at the University of Dayton presently. This was the day that I got sworn in, and this was a teacher who made the trip here to the U.S. Capitol to celebrate the occasion, and I have to tell my colleagues that there are many, many individuals throughout this country who have been inspired by Father John Putka.

Now he was my high school teacher at More High School in Cincinnati, OH. It is a Catholic school and one that is run by the Marianist Brothers, which Father Putka is a member of that holy order, and Father Putka was my senior Christian marriage teacher. Now he taught several different topics. His training is in political science, and in law, in philosophy and divinity, and he manages to bring all of those disciplines together in a way that has such a remarkable influence upon the lives of all of the students that have had an opportunity to sit in the chairs before him.

It is interesting about this picture itself, because when we were having it prepared and it was downstairs in one of the offices, one of the staff members who was preparing this did not want to part with it, and the reason was because she had the opportunity to learn from Father Putka too, as it turned out.

I have to tell my colleagues that it is unfortunate that there are not more students throughout the country that have a chance to learn in the kind of setting that I had an opportunity to learn in and that many students do throughout the country, but still not enough. I was able to attend this school because choice, school choice, was something that was available to me and to my family and to my brother and sister and others in my community. It was an opportunity for me to choose which kinds of education settings made the most sense for me. For