

the Department of Education, school enrollment is projected to climb to a whopping 54.6 million by the 2006 school year.

In addition to the need to repair decaying schools, we also need to modernize schools so our students will have the resources they need to compete in today's economy. The National Center for Education statistics have noted that only 4 percent of schools have enough computers to allow regular use by each student. Forty-six percent of schools lack the electrical wiring necessary for computers in all classrooms. A mere 9 percent of classrooms are currently connected to the Internet. More than half the Nation's schools lack the needed infrastructure to access the Internet or network their computers.

The Department of Education estimates that over the next 10 years, 6,000 new schools will be needed in response to the increases in student enrollments.

I wanted to mention, Madam Speaker, that in addition to the effects deteriorating schools can have on the health of children, we must also keep in mind the harmful effects that overcrowding and decaying schools can have on the quality of education to students. I know from my own experience in my own district, having gone around to some of the schools, how limited classroom space, cramming students in the gyms or labs or other facilities can really have a very negative impact on students' attitudes, as well as teachers' attitudes in the classrooms. For these reasons, Madam Speaker, the Democrats are making school construction one of our top priorities within our education agenda.

Last night I was joined in a special order by the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY] who has introduced legislation that proposes to provide local school districts with 50 percent intrasubsidies for new construction and renovation. The plan includes a \$5 billion Federal jump-start and has the goal of increasing school construction by 25 percent over the next 4 years. This is the type of thing that we need.

We finished the budget about a month ago, and a big part of that was addressing the needs of higher education, more accessibility, more affordability for higher education. But right now there is this big gap in the whole effort to upgrade our education programs in this country, and a big part of that gap is the need for new schools and to upgrade existing, crumbling schools and to address the issue of overcrowding.

I want to pledge that we, as Democrats, are going to make this a major priority. We are going to pressure the Republicans, the Republican leadership, into addressing this issue and endorsing a plan similar to that of Mrs. LOWEY or some other plan that addresses the need for school construction. It is not something that is going to go away; it is something that is only going to get worse, and there is a need

for a Federal partnership with local governments and State governments to address this issue.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I want to talk about campaign finance reform this morning. I want to say that campaign finance reform does not have to be a partisan issue. It is becoming a partisan issue, but it does not have to be. The question before this Congress is whether we are going to spend millions of dollars and months of time investigating and never get to the step of actually doing some legislating.

I believe that we came here to legislate reform and that we ought to do it. Investigations, millions of dollars and months of hearings, are not enough.

I said that campaign finance reform does not have to be a partisan issue. The freshmen have proved that. The gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON], a Republican freshman, and I from Maine, have been cochairing a bipartisan freshman task force composed of six Republicans and six Democrats.

After 5 months of hearings, after 5 months of negotiations, after 5 months of consultations with experts from outside this Congress, with people who represented organizations, who participated in the 1996 election in one way or another, with advocates ranging from those who want to take all limits off campaign spending to those who want to put more limits on candidate spending, after all of that activity, we came up with a proposal, with a bill. It is H.R. 2183. It is the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act of 1997. It is truly bipartisan.

What does this act do? Well, quite simply, it takes the biggest of the big money out of politics. All of the hearings that are going on on the House side and on the Senate side involve what is called soft money. These are the \$500,000, the \$1 million contributions to the national parties, and they did not used to be able to be used for television ads, but that is what they are used for today; that is what they were used for in 1996. We need to stop that practice. We need to ban soft money.

The Campaign Integrity Act does that, H.R. 2183. We take the biggest of the big money out of politics by banning soft money. No Federal candidate, no Member of Congress, no Member of the Senate could raise soft money either for the national party committees or for State party committees.

We also make sure that we speed up the process of candidate disclosure so those of us running for office would have to report our contributions on a monthly basis and do so electronically.

Third, we make sure that people will not be able to run third party ads and

not tell the public who they are. So there would have to be a filing with the Clerk of the House and with the Secretary of the Senate to make sure that third party independent groups identify who they are and identify how much money they are spending.

As I said, this act is truly bipartisan. The question is, when will the Republican leadership of this House allow a vote on the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act? When will it happen? We are not asking for a vote next year, we are not asking that this issue once again be put off sometime into the indefinite future. We are saying, act now, do not just investigate now.

This issue will not go away. The American people will not let this issue go away, and this House should not go home, this House should not adjourn without having a vote on a bill to ban soft money.

I suggest to my colleagues that H.R. 2183, the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act of 1997, is that bill. We need a vote on that bill and all we ask from the Republican leadership is a vote on this House floor.

EDUCATION AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. ROGAN. Madam Speaker, I have been intrigued by the comments of my two colleagues who just preceded me in addressing the House, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE]. I am compelled, based on their commentaries, to make a few observations.

First, with respect to the challenge that was made to Republicans on the issue of supporting school construction, neither party has a monopoly on virtue on this particular subject. The question is, how are we going to fund school construction, and which party is truly standing for proposals that will increase school construction?

Back in my home State, when I was majority leader of the California State Assembly, we passed more money for education last year than had been appropriated in almost 30 years. Members then went home after the session and congratulated themselves for that accomplishment. But the reality was that the victory was somewhat Pyrrhic in nature, because in California the manner in which school construction is funded is impeded in two significant ways.

In California, like with the Federal Government, we pay construction contracts with a labor union prevailing wage. The California prevailing wage law works like this: if a school is being built in a rural area of the State, the government pays those with whom it contracts the highest union wage paid to workers in urban areas like San