

issues are brought to the floor for a vote, it is also the issues that are not brought to the floor for a vote.

Health care reform, labor protections, minimum wage increases, these issues are hard to raise in Congress, in part because of the narrow interests that have fed the political machine with cold, hard cash. Money in politics affects everything lawmakers do in Washington, even our health and our safety.

For example, the meat institute and the grocery manufacturers reportedly spent over \$300,000 in the 1996 elections, and today they are actively lobbying against new proposed meat inspection standards in the wake of the E. coli concerns that all Americans share.

Then there is the infamous \$50 billion tax break for the tobacco industry in the recent balanced budget and tax agreement approved by Speaker GINGRICH and TRENT LOTT, \$50 billion of taxpayers' money given away in the middle of the night. Do Members think it is a coincidence that the tobacco companies are among the largest contributors to political parties and Members of Congress? I do not.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that this system needs to be changed, the leadership in Congress refuses to allow us to have a vote on a bill to reform our campaign finance reform laws. If we are serious about reform, there is still time to ban soft money in the upcoming 1998 elections. That is what I believe we should do, but we cannot get a vote on the House floor to do that. Again, we cannot do it because they say there is no time. Clearly there is time, because as we see, most Republicans have left this Chamber today early to go to New York for a fundraiser.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue and my colleagues will continue to call on Speaker GINGRICH to schedule a vote this month on a ban on soft money, and to restore the will of the people to the House of the people. Mr. Speaker, we are entitled to this vote, and the American people are entitled to this vote.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE ARMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you to my colleagues, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON] and the gentlewoman from Connecticut, [Mrs. NANCY JOHNSON], for the opportunity to join with them this evening from the Women's Caucus to discuss an important issue, which is sexual harassment in the Army's ranks; more importantly, what the Army is doing about this sexual harassment.

The Army released its report on the extent of sexual harassment in its ranks last Thursday. I commend the

Army for conducting and for making public this extensive review of the circumstances that have led to sexual misconduct at Aberdeen Proving Ground and at other Army installations throughout the Nation. This review hammers home the need for fairness, fairness in our armed services.

According to the findings of the review, 78 percent of women in the Army have experienced crude or offensive behavior, 47 percent have received unwanted sexual attention, and 15 percent have experienced actual sexual coercion. This is a mind-boggling number of women, women who have chosen to serve their Nation in the Army, who are being sexually harrassed or even assaulted.

This kind of treatment is intolerable anywhere in society, and it is particularly disturbing to find it so prevalent in our Armed Forces, from people whose mission it is to stand up for justice, not to promote inequality or discrimination.

It is important to note that while the spotlight of harassment has focused on women, and certainly that is a tremendous problem, the review also shows that men have also been subject to unevenhanded treatment. Seventy-six percent of men questioned said they had experienced crude or offensive behavior, 30 percent have received unwanted sexual attention, and 8 percent have been subject to coercion.

The Army's review states that the U.S. Army lacks commitment, it lacks commitment to its equal opportunity program. Soldiers sometimes do not even receive sexual harassment training until they are 3 or 4 months into their service. Even more disturbing, once soldiers receive the training, there is no strong enforcement of the rules.

Harassment complaints are, and I quote from the Inspector General's report, "generally not processed in accordance with . . . timeliness standards. Required complaint feedback is frequently not provided. Required investigation extensions are generally not done for cases exceeding regulatory timeliness. Required follow-up is generally not conducted to ensure corrective action is taken following investigation."

Most importantly, the Army lacks commitment among its young drill sergeants to teach respect as a core army value. Drill sergeants exercise total power over their charges. They have a tremendous responsibility to exercise that power wisely and fairly, and the Army has a responsibility to see that they do so.

In the past the Army has served as a shining example to the rest of the country by leading the way in desegregation. I hope that the Army will live up to its tradition of fairness by instituting policy changes that will ensure that every member of the service is treated with fairness and with dignity.

While sensitivity training is important, it needs to go further. We need to

know if the findings of this report reflect a trend throughout all branches of the military. We need to institute policies to ensure that the strong regulations and procedures which are already in place will be put into practice. Women must know that their complaints will be acted on so they will not need to be afraid to report misconduct. We need to ensure that all of our soldiers are treated with fairness and with equality.

Women serve our country with great distinction and honor throughout the ranks of all of the branches of our armed services. They play an essential role in our Armed Forces. They should be able to do so without discrimination or fear of violence of any kind.

EDUCATION SHOULD BE AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MCGOVERN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, as a Democrat who believes strongly that education should be this Nation's and this Congress' number one priority, I have found the past week's debate most disturbing and frustrating.

What could be more important to our children's future than providing them with a world-class education? Nothing. So why does the majority party continue to cut and cut and cut the education budget? Why do they continue to block old and positive initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education for all our kids?

□ 1715

In the Third Congressional District of Massachusetts, the district that I represent, we have children going to classes in buildings in desperate need of repair. There are school buildings in my district that were built when Ulysses S. Grant was President of the United States.

Now, Democrats applauded President Clinton earlier this year when he proposed \$5 billion for school construction that would help local communities leverage up to \$20 billion for school construction and repairs. One-third of American schools need extensive repair, and I bet they are not all in Democratic districts. But what happened to that proposal? Why did that proposal not become law? Well, the Republican majority killed it in the budget deal.

So let us talk about priorities for a moment. What are the priorities of the Republican majority in this Congress? Well, the Republicans said that \$5 billion for school construction was too much money to spend on education. We just do not have that kind of money, they said; and yet many of us were absolutely outraged to learn that those same Members, in the very dead of night, secretly inserted into the budget

bill a \$50 billion tax break for the tobacco industry.

What message can that possibly send to our children; that they are not worth the \$5 billion it takes to repair the leaky roofs and the crumbling walls of your schools, but the wealthy and powerful tobacco lobby deserves a tax break of 10 times that amount? How insulting, Mr. Speaker. Tobacco tax breaks rather than investing in education. Talk about getting our national priorities out of whack.

The overcrowding of schools has become a national issue and a local crisis in towns and cities all across America. School enrollment in the United States is breaking all previous records. A new Department of Education report found that more than 52 million children just enrolled in schools this last fall. The fastest growing group is high school students, with high school enrollment expected to grow by 13 percent over the next 10 years. In Massachusetts, that growth is projected to be 23 percent.

So while Republicans are giving tax breaks to executives in corporate palaces, our children are being shoved into overcrowded classrooms with too many students for even our best teachers to provide them with a quality education. For shame, Mr. Speaker. For shame.

During the budget debate it was the Republican majority that tried to punish graduate students who are serving in our Nation's colleges and universities as teaching and research assistants by stripping away their tuition tax waivers. It was the Republicans who sought to punish the clerks, the secretaries, the janitors and the speech professors at community colleges and other academic staff and faculty by taking away tuition waivers for their children.

But Democrats fought back and saved these provisions for students and workers who dedicate their lives to making sure that our children receive a good education. It was the Democrats who fought for the \$1,500 HOPE scholarship. It was the Democrats who made the Taxpayer Relief Act one that promotes lifelong learning and helps families across the country find financial relief from the burden of higher education costs.

Mr. Speaker, many of us read in the newspaper about the 200-page guide that a Republican political consultant has been circulating among party members. It contains some suggested language for how Republicans can make themselves seem less unfriendly toward education. Well, let us take a closer look at how the Republican majority really feels about education.

It has been the goal of the Republican majority, ever since they took control of this House, to destroy the Department of Education. In the last session the Democrats said no, that is not what the American people want; people want the President's Cabinet meetings to include an advocate for American education. And Americans from across the land also sent a re-

sounding message of no, eliminating the Department of Education is not the way to improve the quality of American education.

So the Republicans were defeated in their plans to destroy funding for education. And this year they have attempted to dismantle Federal funding programs for a number of important education programs. In fact, we have seen attacks on the very programs that work the best, Safe and Drug Free Schools, School to Work, Educational Technology Challenge Grants, Goals 2000, a program initiated by President George Bush, Bilingual and Immigrant Education, and the Eisenhower Teacher Training Grants.

In school districts across this country these grants and moneys are being used for the most effective and innovative education programs. They supply computers and link classrooms together on the Internet. They support businesses, employers, and school-to-work closely together in promoting education curriculum and job creation. They hold schools accountable to high academic standards, and they help school districts provide professional development for teachers and upgrade their training.

Why do the Republicans want to break apart the very programs that are working best? Now, I understand that there can be legitimate differences of opinion and priorities between Republicans and Democrats, but I cannot understand why anyone would hold hostage the future of America's children and the Nation.

Democrats will fight to improve our country's schools and our children's education. I have decided to make education my No. 1 priority as a Member of Congress, and Democrats, I am proud to say, have fought hard to stem the education cutting frenzy that too many of my Republican colleagues continue to incite.

I call upon my Republican colleagues to abandon their education slashing ways and to join Democrats in our efforts to offer an affordable quality education to every American who wants one.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I wish to yield to my colleague and friend from Massachusetts, JOHN TIERNEY, who is a very eloquent advocate on behalf of education.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I was struck by the gentleman's remarks on education. I want to commend the gentleman for his work he has done on the floor in the last several weeks along with the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY], the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

When we dealt with the education matters, we did come up against a barrage of measures, all incidentally from the Republican side of the House, but not all Republicans participating in that, that seemed to attack the very foundation of the Federal role in the educational system.

I, as does my colleague, go home every weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and when we have in-district weeks, and we take that time to go from school district to school district, visiting the high schools, the junior high schools, and some of the elementary schools; going to the businesses, talking to the people that work in those businesses as well as the people that run those businesses, to find out what their thoughts are on the work force, on their own children, their own communities, and their own schools. I have yet, in the entire 6th District of Massachusetts, heard anyone telling me they are in favor of slashing the Federal role, which is already somewhat minimal in terms of what we provide for resources in education.

I think it is notable that the school-to-work program, which the gentleman just mentioned, which was targeted to be wiped out completely, except for the matter that the Member figured, I think, that he did not have the support and finally withdrew his motion, it was targeted to be wiped out completely, and every business in my district is supportive of that program, every community is supportive of that program. The Chambers of Commerce, the individual businesses, the people that work either unionized or nonunionized that participate as mentors for high school students, helping them acclimate to the adjustment that it will be going from school to work or school to work plus going back to college or junior college. These are important programs that are working that are showing success.

Two weeks ago I spent time with 14 students from the Lynn, Massachusetts High School that had been working with NYNEX, now known as Bell Atlantic, and basically they have been on that school-to-work program and they have been getting mentored by people that work within the company. And the business itself would put management people into work with that program.

The students were so impressed with what they were learning, when it came time at the end of that summer to get a week's vacation, all of them have opted not to take the week off but to stay in the program right up to the time they went back to school and asked the company if they could not work something out to do part-time, because they were learning valuable skills. They were learning valuable behaviors about the workplace and also learning what they had to know further in order to do very well in the workplace; what other schooling behind high schooling they might need, whereas before they were not everyone anything in that direction. So that is important.

Literacy in our district. We have 15,000 people in Massachusetts that are waiting in line to get into an adult literacy program; that want to help their children with mathematics skills and

with reading; that want to be able to encourage their children to go to school and do better. They want to be able to get a job of their own that earns more money for their family and gives them a better quality of life, yet they are waiting in line. Programs like that were targeted to be eliminated, when the ones that we have are working and can be made to work better.

For the first time in our district we got all of the literacy programs, public and private together, introduced them to each other, told them how the system works, how the funding works down, and got them to work cooperatively so that there was not a contest to sort of pull the funds away from each other but to maximize their use, to work with one another so that the programs would dovetail and more people could participate and benefit.

I could go on and on, but I suspect the gentleman has comments he can make of his own.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is absolutely right and he realizes, as I do, and as the President of the United States does, that education is really everything. It is the most important priority we can have in this Congress.

We talk about competing in the global economy, we talk about being the economic superpower of the world, but that is not going to continue if we do not have a well educated work force, if we do not invest in our young kids now. I would suggest that we need to invest starting at age zero, and we need to also focus some attention on the very important issue of early childhood development.

Mr. TIERNEY. If the gentleman would further yield, one of the more insidious aspects of this debate that happened over the last couple of weeks was the intention and the repetition that we do not want National Government to get involved with education. We do not want to nationalize education. We do not want the Federal Government doing education programs.

Nothing could be further from the truth in the programs that have been created over the last 15 years, and the resources for which are provided to States and local communities. And the superintendents and the school committees, the principals and the teachers and the parents all recognize that these resources otherwise would not be available.

These programs came into being because local communities and States either were not purposely doing things that they should have been doing or did not have the resources to work on these programs and to give these opportunities, particularly in areas or communities where money is hard to come by, where the tax rate may already be stretching the limits and the base is not big enough to expand.

The programs were designed for participation. One of the programs that people attacked on the other side of the aisle repeatedly was the whole

school concept. We have debated that for several days and eventually we passed it, I am happy to say. We needed only to change the language so that others on the other side of the aisle could perhaps feel more comfortable that their efforts had gone for something. Now I believe it is known as the comprehensive school concept.

But to show how it was really not the idea of nationalizing education that they were attacking, that what they were attacking was education and the Department of Education, the project that they eventually ended up working with us to pass takes the resources and brings them down to the community. There is nothing in that package that says the Federal Government instructs them to take any particular action.

What it says is that we go down to a local community and we have to have that community working together to support the concept of building a mission and a foundation for that school or school district. Parents get together, teachers come back to the table to negotiate what changes have to be made, administrators get into the program, businesses in the community and colleges in the community. And they work together and get the kind of effort that identifies what that school's goals are going to be, what are the standards of achievement that are going to exist for those children to live up to. What are the tools that will work, in terms of curriculum and materials to provide those children. How many hours a day will they go and how many days a week in a year will they attend school.

This was a program that was put together, and there are 1200 programs across the country and it has worked.

Mr. MCGOVERN. My colleague raised an important point. Some of our friends on the other side of the aisle accuse us of trying to take the decision-making aspects with regard to education out of the hands of local communities. That is not the truth. What we are advocating here is the Federal Government to support some of the great efforts that are going on in our cities and towns all throughout this country. They need help.

When we go to a town that has a crumbling school, the cost of rebuilding that schooling is phenomenal. It can break the budget of a town. We need to provide the Federal resources to help those towns build the very best schools that are available.

The programs that the gentleman has outlined here today all deserve the support of the Federal Government. Nobody is advocating taking the decisionmaking role away from the local communities. I think that is an important point. But what we are advocating here in Washington, and I think it is appropriate, and I commend the President for doing this, is we are advocating higher standards. We are urging people to aim high and nothing could be more important.

Mr. TIERNEY. If I can interject for a second, all of the business community

in my area is very, very focused on having the product of our public school system and our private school systems get up to a level where they can hire these people and put them to work and do the fine-tune finish training for their particular product or service.

But all of them expect that the school system, through the elementary and secondary level, is going to prepare these people either for a community college or college and/or work, so that they can come in and contribute and make us a productive society and make those businesses be able to perform.

In my area of Massachusetts, which the gentleman also represents a part of, we are going to need millions of jobs in the next decade. Somebody has to fill them. All these jobs will require a lot more in terms of skill and education than we have known in the past, and businesses understand that. That is why they support the school-to-work program. That is why they generally get involved in each one of these local efforts to try to make sure these schools have higher standards and the students have the bar lifted for them to meet.

One of the more inane exercises around here in the last few days was the Republicans arguing against testing on a national level and saying they do not want it, and then arguing, in fact, they want the States to set the standards, in the same breath fighting against Goals 2000, which in fact provides resources so that States can do just that, establish achievement standards and have their students meet those levels.

□ 1730

So a lot of times we get into the rhetoric of the debate. It is more about politics. It is more about trying to establish who wants bureaucracy in government versus who wants to bring the money to the classroom, and it gets obstructed that way.

One of the debates before the amendment was withdrawn, an amendment that sought to block grant all the programs and throw them down to the State, talked about wanting to take government bureaucracy out. The fact of the matter was that under the block grant up to 15 percent of the money could be spent on State bureaucracy to implement the programs, whereas if they were left alone, virtually every one of the programs required that 90 percent, usually 95 percent of the money get to the student and not be absorbed through bureaucracy or administration.

It also implies the fact that some administration is necessary. There is no program that is going to work by going out and handing a check to a kid in the 5th grade. The fact of the matter is that somebody has to construct a program and make sure that it works and that that child deserves and gets the benefits of it.

So to bring the debate to that level and to try to make it that clear is to

sort of distract the issue when we try to work on that basis. I think we have to get back down to sensible discussions about what works and what does not. And that is fine. We can disagree on that and have the debate on that level.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Reclaiming my time, let me just raise one other aspect with regard to education that I think is important, and I think Democrats can take some pride in having fought for some real accomplishments, and that is making college education more accessible to so many young people in this country.

This tax cut bill that eventually passed this House in the end was a much better bill because Democrats fought for over \$35 billion in tax cuts for education that are in that bill. There is not a day that goes by when I am home in Massachusetts, when I do not bump into a family who complains about the high cost of a college education, who wonders how they are going to finance the college education of their daughter or son, and who are looking for help. One way to help them is through the tax cut system, and we have done that, I think, to a certain extent in this tax cut bill. But we need to do much more.

My first bill that I introduced in this Congress was a bill to increase the maximum amount of Pell grants from \$2,700 to \$5,000, which is where it should be if we kept on adjusting Pell grants for inflation. We need to make the dream of a college education not just a dream. Anybody in this country who wants a college education should be able to get one. People should not be told they cannot get a college education because they do not have the economic resources to do so.

Mr. TIERNEY. If the gentleman would continue to yield, John Kenneth Galbraith, who lives in our State and is well-known by everyone, wrote a book recently called "The Good Society." Is not a difficult book to read. It is not long. He has an excellent small chapter on education.

He talks with an historical perspective about colleges being very private in nature at first because, obviously, wealthy families wanted the best for their children and society thought that education was the important instrument to obtain that. So they moved in that direction and they provided college education for their children. And at some point society woke up and decided this was a good thing for society, to have a large number of people, in fact the more people as possible, who could be trained and educated to increase our productivity and to make it a better place to live, to be better participants in the Government, and simply to raise the quality and standard of life for each individual.

So we created a public higher education system, and most States started with a State college and university system and community college system, and that works basically through a fee

system also. But then we started to decide, as the economy got tougher, that we had to find other ways to encourage people and enable them to get their families and children on to college. That is the Pell Grant Program that you started, that you did not start but that you enhanced. But the basic Pell grant was an effort to give the children and families the opportunity to get that entry into college and to go.

As school became more and more expensive and there were not enough public college slots for people, we also tried to help people get into those institutions through scholarships and loans. Now the situation in front of the Subcommittee on Higher Education will be to look and see how, if at all, we can constrain the rising costs that are rising disproportionate to other rising costs, and how we can further enable families to make sure that their children get the opportunity. Because, in essence, we are helping our businesses and we are helping everybody in society.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Reclaiming my time, as the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TIERNEY] knows, it is not just young people who are concerned about the cost of college education, it is people mid-career.

The Department of Labor tells us that the average person who enters the workforce today may have 7 or 8 jobs in his or her lifetime. There may be a point in that person's career where they may need to get additional education. And again, it is in our interest as a Nation to make sure that that education is available and affordable for that person. I mean, that should be a priority of this Congress. That should be a more urgent priority than it is right now.

Mr. TIERNEY. If the gentleman will yield further, I think that we are going to find that education is not an issue that is going to go away with the American public. I think that the polling that my colleague referenced that was done for the Republican party is going to have to move beyond linguistics, going to have to move beyond the idea of semantics as to what language to use. We are going to have to move in the direction of doing something substantive.

Vouchers, where you run away from the public school system, where you try to abandon it and take a few people with you on the way out, it clearly is not going to work on its face. It does not seem to make sense or reason. What we need to do is work within the public school system to improve them so that there is equal opportunity for every family and every child to go on. When we do that at the secondary level and at the elementary level, then we will also be improving the people that go into our college level and we will be able to move forward in that direction.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Reclaiming my time, let me say one thing about the public school education in this country. I spent a lot of time during my vis-

its back home in Massachusetts touring schools. My district almost goes across the entire State, from Princeton to Dartmouth, in Massachusetts. I have visited countless schools, and I have to tell my colleagues that I am very impressed by the quality of teachers that I have encountered, by the curiosity of the students, by the eagerness to constantly challenge those students and to try to basically provide them the very best education.

I think what we need to do here in Washington is to support our teachers back home, to support our school districts, to make sure that they have the funding, to make sure that they are teaching in a classroom that is adequate, that provides the right environment so kids can learn, so there is not this problem of overcrowding, so they have the best textbooks that are available, so they have all the tools that are available, making sure that every classroom in this country is hooked up to the information super highway.

All of those things are vitally important. And we here in Washington can play a vital role in supporting some of those initiatives.

Mr. TIERNEY. If the gentleman will continue to yield, one of the important things we need to do is to focus the debate where it belongs. In order for a voucher program to get support, not only for the abandonment of public schools to get support, I think the polling that we referenced earlier of the other party shows that first they have to denigrate the system so badly that people want to walk away. They have to disparage it. They have to say all schools are bad, all teaching systems are bad, all participants are not performing.

And that simply cannot be done. My colleague knows from the tour of his schools, and I can see that we have with us a former superintendent of schools in his State, that the fact of the matter is a number of public schools are performing and performing well; a number of pilot programs are working and working extraordinarily well; that teachers are trying very hard; that, given the tools, they do perform to an extraordinary degree; that we have teacher involvement programs, the Eisenhower program being one; that we have technology programs available which allow teachers to have the technology in their classrooms and enable them be able to use them effectively in teaching students. So that the whole entire public education system is not broken.

I like to use, instead of the word "reform," the word "improvement." We need to improve those systems that need improvement. We need to build better schools when that is the issue. We need to have smaller classrooms where that is the issue. We need to have better materials, more teacher improvement. We need to have community involvement and parent involvement.

We have all the tools for that in the various programs that we have implemented here as a small part of the Federal budget spent on education. But it is a major impetus for communities to be able to embark on those avenues that will give them hope and equal opportunity for every public school student.

I think that block granting is the first step for the Republican party trying to eliminate education as a Federal part of the agenda, and I think we ought to move away from that.

I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for allowing me to participate.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TIERNEY] for his remarks, and I think he has made very clear that the priority of this Congress should be education, education, education.

I would like to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], who has spoken many times on this issue.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MCGOVERN]. I was listening to some of his comments before I came down on the floor. Obviously, both gentlemen from Massachusetts are very concerned about where we were going with the education system and want to do whatever they can to improve public education here in the United States. I know they have got some very good ideas which they articulated about how to go about that.

One of the things that I am very proud of is that our party, the Democratic party, for the last few years and historically, but the last few years particularly, has stressed the need to upgrade education, not only at the higher education level in terms of providing finance assistance, loans, grants, work study programs, which we did as part of the balanced budget agreement, and we insisted that there be more money available for assistance programs to students so that they would have access to college and university education, but also now particularly we feel as Democrats that it is important to try to improve and provide additional resources for public schools, for secondary schools.

We talked in the last few weeks on the floor about the need to upgrade infrastructure because schools are overcrowded, that we need to provide a program to provide funds to local boards of education so that they can fix up crumbling schools, address the concerns of overcrowding, because there are so many schools that need repair.

We also talked about standards. One of the major aspects of the Democrats' program for education is to upgrade standards and provide for national standards and provide for ways to help the local boards of education to improve standards.

One of the things that I think that we stress as Democrats is that this needs to be a partnership with the Fed-

eral Government. We all know that primarily States and local communities and local governments are the ones that have the primary responsibility for public schools. But there is no reason why the Federal Government cannot be a partner in that, particularly with regard to resources.

I just want to say, one of the things that has been upsetting me a great deal in this appropriations bill, the Labor, Health, Education bill that we have been dealing with in the past few weeks here in Congress, here in the House, is that the Republicans repeatedly put up amendments which seek to attack and I think ultimately reduce resources that are available for public education.

Today there was an amendment that would basically provide a block grant and eliminate Safe and Drug-Free Schools, School-to-Work, Goals 2000, teacher training programs. And I know that the Republicans who are sponsoring that amendment will say, "Well, we are going to give the money back to the schools but we are not going to tell them what to do with it, so that is okay, they are still going to get the same amount of money."

The bottom line is that Federal policy should, in my opinion, be based on what the needs are. We need safe schools. And Goals 2000 has been a very effective program, and the whole School-to-Work program. All these things have been very effective.

I just want to give my colleagues an idea. In New Jersey when we talk about Goals 2000, which the Republicans also tried to eliminate last year, last year, in the 104th Congress, they had a whole series of cuts in elementary and secondary education which included significant cuts in Goals 2000. Goals 2000 is basically a way for the Federal Government to help individual States with their educational programs.

Just to give my colleagues an idea, in New Jersey, with a relatively small amount of money, I do not know if I have the figure here or how important the figure ultimately is in terms of how much New Jersey got, but it was in the millions. It was several million dollars. And basically what they did was to use the money that came from the Federal Government to provide for schools to be safe from violence.

We in New Jersey launched a multifaceted safe school initiative in December of 1994. And reported findings, as a result of that program, indicate a reduction in the number of reported incidents of vandalism and violence in New Jersey public schools for the 1995-96 school year. I can give you the specifics about how crime declined. This was as a direct result of Federal funding coming down through Goals 2000.

I will give my colleagues some of the others, but I see my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. ETHERIDGE] would like to comment, and I would certainly yield to him at this time with your permission.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE]

and the others who have organized this evening.

The point my colleague made earlier I think is so important for us to understand as we are talking about block grants and education. I do not know why it is just block grant education we want to deal with. We are not talking about block granting funds to the Department of Defense. We do not talk about block granting materials to other things.

As my colleague just indicated, it is important to have a priority; and if there is an issue we want to deal with, what we are talking about is reducing the funds. I cannot imagine this body ever, or any other body who has to report to people, turning over the funds without asking for accountability.

The truth is that is a good way to put it out and do away with it. That is really the bottom line. I remember revenue sharing a long time ago when I was a county commissioner. And when revenue sharing came, I said to the folks, "We do not spend any of this money in programs, because I guarantee you it is going to be cut out because we are getting it without any strings."

□ 1745

Guess what happened to it? It got cut out. If you block grant it without the people who are in your appropriations process understanding what is happening and having feedback directly from what is happening, it is going to be cut out.

The last thing we need to do at a time when this country is growing and expanding and we are dealing in a global economy, we are asking our young people to change and the whole economy to change for that matter in a way like we have never had, we do not need to be pulling away the needed resources for our schools. Six to 7 percent, depending on the State, where they are, is about all the Federal Government is putting in. By and large those dollars are going to specific programs. Most of it goes to chapter 1 and other programs that are for children who have special needs, and that really helps with reading and with math, some of it in very targeted areas for children who are the poorest among our poor children in this country. That does not go equally to States. It really is divided up among the States who have the greatest population of those students and with the greatest needs.

As the gentleman indicated, funds for safe and drug-free schools, that is based on a student population. But if it is sent down and it does not have some direction, I can assure the gentleman, I have been in the Department, I know what will happen. There will be competition for those dollars, and unless there is a requirement to go to certain areas, they may not get there, because the last time I checked, there were those who will stand up and tell us there are too many dollars in education, that we are spending too much money.

If that is true, if that is true as a premise, then why does almost every school in this country have a PTA, and every night on TV we have parents complaining about children retailing to get funds into schools to buy paper and books and all the other things? It is nothing more than a half truth at best and an outright sham at worse. It is not true. It is absolutely not true. It may be true in some communities, but in the bulk of the communities in my State, it is absolutely not true. Otherwise we would not have parents from PTA's selling all these things and doing things and having kids to sell them.

There are not enough resources. We have allowed our schools, as the gentleman indicated, almost half of them in this country have need of some attention, either plumbing, electrical or overcrowding, for a variety of reasons.

What we care about in our communities are what we pay attention to. If you ride through a community, the last thing that is really held in communities in this country right now, in my opinion, that is still intact is that public school where children go. The families are having problems. There are a lot of problems in a lot of institutions, and the school may be the last thing that is holding the community together. The last thing we need to do as a Nation is to pull the underpinnings out from under the one thing that is helping hold this country together.

I would be the first to say if every family was intact, and we had two-parent households and they were there, man, things would be great. It is great to wish that. It is just not true. It is not true in this country today.

We need to give children a safe haven if we can and an opportunity to learn and participate in this great adventure we call America and we call democracy. Education is the one way that we allow those children, whether they come from a Hispanic household, an African-American household, wherever they may come from, as they come to the shores of this country, or if they have been here for 10 generations, they have an opportunity to share in the American dream. If we take away that opportunity for education, and their parents cannot afford to send them to a private school, we have guaranteed them and the next generation that they will not have the opportunity to participate in it. We should never let that happen as long as this Congress meets in Washington, DC.

Mr. PALLONE. I just wanted to say very briefly, I am not going to go into the rest of these things that outline what New Jersey is doing with its Goals 2000 money. We can go into it more. It is very effective. But I just want to say, the gentleman is so much on point. He talks about the public schools being the basis for the community. I think that is totally true.

What I find is that it is true that my constituents talk to me about the need

to improve the public schools. They recognize that there are problems. They recognize that the schools can do better, but they want them to do better. They want us as their elected officials to help in that regard. They do not want us to go for voucher systems which are basically going to drain the resources of the public schools and make it so that more and more people go to private school, whatever those schools happen to be, because the bottom line is that public schools historically have brought people together. They have been the equalizer, so to speak. They have been the vehicle for equal opportunity. We just cannot give up. Our constituents do not want us to give up.

I think those who argue for vouchers and encourage voucher-type programs, they have basically given up on the public schools. They are telling us, oh, if we do the vouchers, that that somehow is going to benefit the public schools, and they are going to get better. Not true. It is the people who have given up on the public schools that want to go to a voucher system. That is not what the majority of our constituents want. They want us to do what we can do to improve the public schools and to provide them with adequate resources.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I could not agree more. I think the American people do believe in the institution of public schools because most of them came through it. The truth is that will be where they will be in the future. We need to strengthen every institution we have, and we can define any number in America today. Those institutions are changing. Whether it be financial, whether it be legal, whether it be medical, whatever that institution is, it is changing. The public schools are changing. If we are defining the public schools as some do as they ride by and see the same building they have seen, they do not go inside and they do not talk, they do not see what is happening in those classrooms.

I have had occasion to do that, as the gentleman has. You will see they are changing. But it takes time, and it takes resources, and it takes commitment, and as the gentleman indicated earlier, it takes support. It is awful hard to ask an institution to change when all you do is throw rocks because you are too busy ducking. I served in the military. There is one thing you learn to do is keep your head down when you are in a fire storm. When you have got your head down, it is kind of hard to be moving forward.

We need to as an institution, Democrats and Republicans, stop throwing rocks and start giving a helping hand. Stop the rhetoric. Quit being rhetoric makers and become help makers. The teachers would applaud us, the children will appreciate it, and I can assure my colleagues their parents would welcome it. That is what it is about.

That is one reason I ran for this people's House, because I want us to have

a positive voice in Washington, talking about there are good things happening. Are there problems? Absolutely, as everyone has said already. There are problems in every institution. But we ought to help correct those problems and not just try to destroy the institution. That is so important to the foundations of our democracy, because if we destroy it, I can assure my colleagues our democracy will shortly follow.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I for one am glad that the gentleman ran and got elected to this Congress because he has been one of the most passionate and eloquent defenders of education. I think this Congress is absolutely in need of more voices like his.

I would also say that he is right on target when he says that we should stop throwing rocks. That means, I think, we should stop blaming everything on the teachers. I have two sisters, Wendy Talcott and Kelly Tuttle, who are teachers in the Worcester Public School System, where I am from. I do not know of two people who work harder, who care more about the well-being of those children than they. They are not unique. In every school that I visit throughout my congressional district and throughout Massachusetts, I encounter teachers who are thoroughly dedicated to those kids. It is inspiring. They need support. Instead, what they are getting too much of is they are being blamed for everything. Not that every teacher is perfect, but the vast majority are good, and we need to give them the support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO].

Ms. DELAURO. I am delighted to once again join this discussion about education. I think we can approach the situation from a couple of points of view. I think everybody has acknowledged that we know and we understand that there are difficulties in the public school system. But we can approach it in two ways.

We can say, OK, we are going to end this, move on to something else; or we can say, OK, this has been a provider of excellence in the past. It has, as my colleague from New Jersey pointed out, been truly the great equalizer in education for youngsters from every walk of life, from every social strata, from every economic strata, and the opportunity for people to succeed according to their God-given talent. It has proven its mettle and its worth in those areas in the past. That is something that we should applaud, and we ought to say, where are the difficulties, and how can we make this a better system, and how can we change what patterns there are here that are helping to bring down the system? That is, I think what we are suggesting that it is fundamentally a good system, and that what we need to be doing is focusing in on how to make it a better place to be.

I find it just strange when we do have so many people on the other side of the aisle who will say that the system is

bad, that it is not producing youngsters who can read or write, that it is a dangerous place, their schools are dangerous places to be, that they are not being run properly, and, therefore, one change that could be made, which was the amendment that was offered today by some of our friends on the other side of the aisle which was to take billions of dollars from the Department of Education and giving it to, in fact, the places that are responsible for a poorly run system.

The Federal Government is only about 6 or 7 percent of the Federal budget that is engaged in the public school system. It is a small amount of money. The Federal Government is not running the education system in the United States. In fact, most of the emphasis is in States with local school boards. Yet there are people here who would like to talk about how bad the institution is on the one hand and yet want to take the billions of dollars from the Federal Government and send it to those who would continue a failing system. It seems wrongheaded, which seems to me to be, as I said, crazy.

Parents today want to make sure that their kids have the best possible education, that there are standards, particularly because parents are not home after school every single day in the way that that used to be the case. They just cannot be. It is economically not feasible.

I used to volunteer my time at the community school in my neighborhood. I had one of the best experiences of my life. I used to teach at that time. I used to go from school to school and teach calligraphy as an afterschool program, a writing program. No one would believe that today, but I was a volunteer in the public school system. I was a substitute schoolteacher in the public school system. I watched community schools, which we took money away from years ago, I watched them open at 7 o'clock in the morning, close at 9 or 10 o'clock at night, and see youngsters and middle school kids and high school kids playing basketball, grandmothers coming in for a program, parents coming in for programs, and this was in an inner city, in the city of New Haven. But we ended that. We did not think that that was such a hot idea.

Now we have got, as I said, mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles in the workplace, and we do not have community schools where kids can go to. Instead of focusing our time and our effort and our resources at making this existing system a better place, we are spending our time denigrating it and trying to put an end to it.

There has been an attempt by some on the other side of the aisle to try to eliminate the Department of Education. I think the American people spoke loud and clear about that, and they said no. I think that we are seeing trying not to go at decimating the Department of Education in one fell swoop, but looking at it piece by piece.

As I mentioned the amendment today, which, thank God, was ultimately withdrawn, that amendment would have eliminated Federal initiatives that do work, safe and drug-free schools, school-to-work program, and a whole variety of other programs that are working.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her remarks. I also want to commend her for her leadership in another area of education which is vitally important, and that is on the issue of early childhood development. She has been a leader, and it is something that this Congress needs to focus more attention on.

□ 1800

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey, [Mr. PALLONE] will be recognized for the balance of the minority leader's hour and for the gentleman's information, that is 16 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I thank my colleague. I just want to say, I find that we are looking at another tool in the arsenal of some of my Republican colleagues when they are talking about education issues today. I think this is worth pointing out. The kind of new catch phrases and code words to hide some of this effort to try to, if you go back when we were talking about school lunch and we were talking about the whole variety of educational programs, the single biggest cuts in education in the history of the country were initiated in the last session of Congress by the majority. So they were unable, and thank God, really unable to succeed in that effort, mainly because the American public spoke out loud and clear.

But there is kind of a new tool in this arsenal, the catch phrases and code words. I just want to call my colleagues' attention to something that was produced by Frank Luntz, who is a Republican pollster, as part of a series of materials. This one is called Education: A Smarter American.

If I can just mention a couple of things here, it says "overview." This was put together to present to the Republican majority as a communications tool, how to talk about specific issues, not what to do about them but how to talk about the issue.

Education: A Smarter America. Overview. "We have been able to isolate specific words, sentences and ideas that may help Republicans sell their education legislation and undercut the President."

I mean, that is the first item of this document. If I can give you some examples, what Luntz is trying to do is teach people, as I said, how to talk about destroying America's public schools in a way that makes it sound

as if they are doing the opposite. Again, as I say, a few examples. He recommends that Members, "talk about children in almost every sentence." If you listen closely to the debate on this floor, you can hear it loud and clear. Yet when it comes to putting money where their mouth is, sometimes the majority is leaving America's kids out in the cold.

As I pointed out before, it was the Republican majority, and this is not all, believe me, this is not everyone, because there are reasonable people on the other side of the aisle who in fact do believe that we need to foster a good, solid and strong education system.

They try to eliminate the Department of Education. They insist that the bipartisan budget agreement not include any money for school construction, and they have been pushing a voucher program that my colleague from New Jersey mentioned before that would siphon off needed funds for public schools.

I think one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle brought up a New York situation with regard to the voucher program and said well, you know there has been a commitment to assist 1,000 youngsters in being able to go to the school of their choice.

I applaud that effort. I do. I think that is a good thing. But that is 1,000 youngsters. We have hundreds of thousands of youngsters. If we begin to pull out money and resources from the public school system to only help a few, we then go back to what we dealt with years and years ago, which is education is the purview of the privileged and of the few, that is not what it is about. It is what public education has stood for, is to be there for everyone to take and get that opportunity that my colleague from North Carolina talked about before.

Mr. PALLONE. Just briefly, just to give you an example, I know for example in my local schools how difficult it is for them just to provide the curriculum that they would like to provide. In other words, if they do not have enough money to hire a teacher at the end of the year, they may not be able to have an advanced placement course or have a program for the disadvantaged or a sports program. You talk about starting to take the money away from vouchers from the public schools, even in a small way, even if it impacts 5 or 10 or 1 percent of their budget, that is going to mean no advanced placement classes, no tutorials for kids having a problem reading. They may have to abolish one of their sports programs, because they are on tight budgets. It is not pie in the sky where they have the opportunity to spend all kinds of money. Everything they do is watched. Most of it is subject to an annual referendum about how much they spend.

Ms. DELAURO. I wanted to make one comment, because I think this voucher program, which is going to be the subject of great debate here, in his documents Frank Luntz goes so far as to