CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WILLIAM F. HALLORAN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 1997

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize the accomplishments of the William F. Halloran Alternative School in Elizabeth, NJ, for their designation as a 1997 blue ribbon school. The criteria for being chosen as a blue ribbon school includes several conditions of effective schooling such as leadership, parental involvement, organization, teaching and student environment, and community support. The criteria for designation also includes indicators of success such as student performance, positive attendance rates, good student retention or graduation rates, postsecondary pursuits of students and previous awards given to the school, teachers, or students. This highly competitive and prestigious designation is one of the top honors awarded to any school by the U.S. Department of Education. The William F. Halloran Alternative School has been granted this honor because they have generated an excitement about learning and a commitment to educational excellence that has allowed them to meet the above criteria for a blue ribbon school.

The William F. Halloran Alternative School offers a gifted and talented program that attracts the best and brightest students from Elizabeth and also has a special education program for students who are identified as communications handicapped. The school emphasizes the performing arts and curriculum that promotes diversity awareness for all students and faculty. All students are encouraged to become skilled in current technology and are able to take advantage of afterschool tutoring. In addition, students participate in ministudies and clubs designed to develop their special talents, such as visual or performing arts or physical education.

Teachers at the William F. Halloran Alternative School participate in a program called Team Teaching that is designed to offer in-class support to students who need extra help. Staff are also encouraged to become involved in professional development programs so they remain updated and attend teacher conferences.

Mr. Speaker, the William F. Halloran Alternative School is an example of the positive achievements occurring in our public schools. They should be commended for their commitment to enhancing community and parental involvement in our schools. It is my hope that the William F. Halloran Alternative School will serve as a model for other schools in our area of New Jersey and across the country for educational excellence.

HELPING EMPOWER LOW-INCOME PARENTS [HELP] SCHOLARSHIPS AMENDMENTS OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Education and Workforce Committee, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2746, the Help Scholarships Act.

In the 105th Congress, our education agenda centers around four important priorities—sending more dollars directly to the classroom, returning control of education to local communities, bolstering academics, and increasing parental involvement by providing more choices.

H.R. 2746 is an essential component of our education agenda because it provides low-income parents with choices normally reserved for well-to-do families—to be able to send their children to the best schools of their choosing.

Additionally, H.R. 2746 maintains the primary role that States and local communities play in our education system. Before Federal funds can be used for school choice programs, State governments must enact legislation establishing a choice program in their State.

Therefore, it is my hope that following passage of the Help Scholarship Act, all 50 States will quickly pass enabling legislation so that our country's neediest students have an opportunity to attend the school that is best for them.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 2746.

LEGISLATION TO HELP PRESERVE AND ENHANCE OUR NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 1997

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's parks are among our Nation's greatest treasures and an integral part of our national heritage. We have an obligation to protect them for future generations to enjoy, learn from, and experience.

Unfortunately, in recent years we have failed to take proper care of our parks. The cover of the U.S. News & World Report's July 21, 1997 edition was entitled "Parks in Peril", this magazine focused on overcrowded parks, crumbling historic structures, limited access to collections and increased pollution. Over the past 20 years, annual funding for our national parks has decreased by $635 million. And yet during that same period, our national parks served approximately 40 million more annual visitors than they did in 1978. While it is incumbent upon Congress to appropriate adequate funds for the operation of our national parks, the backlog of natural and cultural resource protection needs, together with other needs for transportation improvements and building repairs, is now so great that we need to find innovative and aggressive funding sources for renewing and enhancing our national parks

That is why I have introduced legislation to create National Park Bonds. These Bonds will be sold to the general public, in the same way War Bonds were sold during World War II. My legislation will set up a National Park Capital Improvement Fund within the Department of Treasury. The Capital Improvement Fund will be secured by existing national park entrance, special use, and concession fees. My legislation also requires the Department of Treasury to work with the Department of Interior to set up a program for disseminating the bonds. The National Park Bonds will have competitive interest rates, reach maturity in no longer than 20 years, and be fully guaranteed by the Federal Government.

The National Park Bonds will be focused towards the billions of dollars in backlogged construction and renovation needs in our parks including: new infrastructure, wildlife protection and preservation, development of transportation systems, scientific assessments and research, and the development of educational and interpretation programs. The bonds would not go to any new land acquisition projects.

Mr. Speaker, National Park Bonds would give all of our Nation's citizens the opportunity to invest in the preservation and enhancement of our National Park System.

WILLIAM HUDSON ON FAST TRACK

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 1997

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, as we reach the final phase of our consideration of legislation on fast-track trade legislation, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues the recently published remarks on that topic. William J. Hudson, the chairman and CEO of AMP, Inc., a major electrical connection device manufacturer located in Harrisburg, PA, in my congressional district, makes a cogent argument for the passage of fast-track authority. I hope his remarks are read and followed by this Congress.

FAST TRACK: RENEW THE PROMISE

(By William J. Hudson)

A family quarrel in public isn't always a bad thing. When the quarreling family members are the Congress and the President of the United States, the result could well be a salutary demonstration of democracy at work. If Congress passes a fast track bill this fall, it will give the world just such a demonstration.

Now that the Senate Finance Committee and the House Committee on Ways and Means have approved solid versions of a fast track bill that the White House can support, we have a clear signal that the Administration and the leaders of the House and Senate are working together to get this critical legislation approved. Let us hope they succeed. The first test should come later this fall when Congress votes on the fast-track, more formally, the "Reciprocal Trade Agreement Authorities Act of 1997".

If they do anything but pass it, the result will be far worse than the embarrassment of a public quarrel. It will be the public crippling of America as leader, the economic leader the world has depended upon for the past 50 years. To understand why, one needs to know a little about fast-track and a little recent history.