the lowest student loan interest rate in 17 years, making college affordable for middle class and working families.

We have doubled the Pell grant twice of what it was when we were first elected, now making college more affordable for low-income students unable to qualify for student loans.

We have increased funding for Head Start. We have increased funding for special education. Even while balancing the budget, education was a top priority last year, including this year as well; in fact, with last year's balanced budget, the first balanced budget in 28 years.

We increase funding by 10 percent, a $5.4 billion funding increase. I am proud of that. Lowest student loan rates in 17 years, doubled Pell Grants, low income students, increasing funds for Head Start and special education, and making education a funding priority.

I will say, though, I am disappointed. There are some initiatives that were passed by this House that the President did not support, so they are not going to happen. Education savings accounts to help families better afford additional cost and public education and better afford the opportunity to go to a private parochial school, unfortunately, the President vetoed that effort to help families better afford education for their children.

Unfortunately because of the President's opposition and because of opposition from Members of his own party, an effort to give tax deferred status to prepaid college tuition programs unfortunately failed after we passed it out of this House, helping make college more affordable.

In an effort to provide for school construction, bonding programs to help school districts in Chicago and the south suburbs and other growing areas add classrooms and fix the roof, unfortunately the legislation, $1 billion initiative which passed this House as part of the 90–10 plan, unfortunately we were not successful because of the President's opposition.

But we have had a very important victory for local schools and a very important victory for education in the final days. I am glad to see that this Republican Congress and a Democratic President on the end of Pennsylvania Avenue can work together.

The President talked earlier this year about the need to reduce class size, the need to hire additional teachers to accomplish that goal. Many of us in this House, in a bipartisan way, agreed with him.

The question was how were we going to achieve that goal. Are we going to have this type of program micromanaged from a bureaucracy here in Washington, or are we going to give the resources to local school districts and local school boards and local school administrators and give them the flexibility how best to decide that type of priority.

I am proud to say that we have reached an agreement. It is my understanding the President and the Republican majority have reached an agreement to provide $1.1 billion in funds to help schools, and decision making will be in the local districts how best to use those dollars. That is a big victory for education, a big victory for local education, local schools.

STRIVE TO MEET DEADLINES IN THE 106TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, today, we have seen quite a transformation of the nature of the debate. I think all of us remember the debate from yesterday, the day before. There was a great deal of anguish over how we would support education in this country. Would there be funds and assistance for school construction and modernization? Would there be money for teachers? Was this going to be Federal interference with local education?

This body was badly polarized for all of us that sat and listened to the exchanges, horribly polarized. It is amazing. Here we are today, and it appears that we are uniform in supporting teachers in the reduction of class size.

I think that it is important that, as we debate these issues, the Nation understands that sometimes the debate is rhetoric. Sometimes the debate is real. Probably even today, if one searched and scratched hard enough, one would find that code words are being used to illustrate differences that now we are more interested in glossing over.

But I think it is a victory for the American people, for our students that we are focusing on reducing class size. I trust this is an initiative that is not just one that is being promoted here in Washington, but in State capitals around the country and in the offices of local school districts around the country and in the homes of the citizens of this Nation as all of us join together to emphasize the importance of small class size and the best possible educational preparation for our children.

There is another aspect about the debate and the proceedings this week that I would like to touch upon, and that is the unseemly chaos that is accompanying the close of this 105th Congress.

Some have complained that the President has not been here every day and every hour and blame the President for the fact that these last days have been added to the session.

Others have pointed out, as I would like to emphasize, that we have not had a budget resolution to guide this body. The lack of a budget resolution certainly cannot be blamed on the White House. That budget resolution is a concurrent resolution adopted by the House and the Senate to guide this body in passing appropriations bills for the 1998, 1999 fiscal year.

I am sure that all of us are well aware that that fiscal year started October 1, 15 days ago. We are half a month into the fiscal year. We have no budget resolution. Indeed, we are 6 months past the due date for the budget resolution, April 15, 1998. We have no budget resolution.

Going further, this will go down as the first Congress in 24 years of having a budget requirement that has failed to produce a budget resolution. We do not have a concurrent budget resolution. I submit that this contributes to the frantic nature of the negotiations and the delay that we have experienced in this 105th Congress in bringing our efforts to a close.

I note with some concern that the same party controls this body and the Senate. I would have hoped that a budget resolution would have been enacted because of that leadership from the same political party. But unfortunately it has not.

I can certainly see situations where my side of the aisle might well have had parallel difficulties. But the lesson to be learned here is we need to work together to find some way, even within our own caucuses, to bring closure to divisive debates.

Certainly if we cannot within our own caucus and within our own party find a way to pass a budget resolution, how much more difficult is it in the body at large.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we should make a resolution as we leave this institution and returned to our respective districts, that in the 106th Congress, we will endeavor to do better and observe the deadlines that apply within the budget process, and hopefully we can then come up with an educational program earlier in the season and not have to have the debate delayed and become so divisive as it has here in the fall of 1998.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER SUSPENSION OF THE RULES ON FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 1998

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 589, I hereby give notice that the following suspensions will be considered tomorrow, October 16, 1998:

H.R. 1197, Plant Patent Amendments Acts of 1997;

H.R. 1756, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Strategy Act of 1998;

S. 610, Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

THE SURPLUS CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, it is the nature of politics that we never get everything we want. But when American people support the general direction in which we are going, small victories do become possible.

I think today's agreement between Congress and the White House on the remaining spending bills represents a victory for those seeking to take this country in a direction of smaller government, holding the line on spending, local control of education, tax relief, a stronger military, and more weapons for the war on drugs.

After many months of difficult negotiations, an agreement has been reached that reflects the priorities of this Republican-controlled Congress. This Congress, I think, can properly be called ''The Surplus Congress.'' I think there is great pride in that nomenclature that this is ''The Surplus Congress.''

Just a short time ago, Congress was faced with $200 billion a year deficits for as far as the eye can see. Now we have the responsibility, yes, and the duty to manage the surplus which we see in the future. What a great difference in how much more fun and interesting it is to talk about managing the surplus and what we are going to do with that surplus.

Number one, of course we are going to preserve and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. The process that we are going through right here in October of 1998 shows the need for the dedication of this Congress to do that, because we are at what we hope is the final hour of the negotiations of the spending for the next year.

Had the Republicans not be in control of Congress, there would have been a lot less surplus to be allocated to preserving Social Security and Medicare. In fact, had we given in to all the requests for spending, we would not have had to have a debate on surplus, because it would have all been spent.

But in this agreement that we hope will come before this body and the other body in the next day or two, we have some really great victories.

I want to talk a minute about education. Education is important in every district in America. In the last 2 years, I have taken the opportunity to go around and talk with my teachers. I did not just talk to the superintendent. I talked with the teachers from the classroom.

I asked them about some of the issues we were debating out here. I want to tell my colleagues that I was surprised at some of their answers.

I thought, for instance, that the teachers would be for more testing. No way. They explained to me very simply how many different tests they had to do for the school district and for the State. Then they said, if we have more testing at the national level, it really interferes with what they are trying to accomplish in the classroom. It made very good sense to me. Certainly, it brought me back here with a renewed vigor to oppose more national testing.

How many times do we count the eggs? We do not have to do it 15 different ways to come up with the same answer. We need some testing. We do not need national mandated testing. I am really glad to see that that is not going to be part of next year's spending priorities.

Dollars to the Classroom, absolutely what we need. Let us get the money out there where the work is being done. The program that we passed in this House and what I think the budget will carry forth is going to put money in the classrooms of the schools around this country.

There was a desire to say we are going to put 1,000 new teachers; but when I talked to teachers, they said, well, you know, some classes can have 22. Some need to be at 18 or less. Give the local schools the decision making which they can do best. That is in this program.

We will be visiting with more of those things. I am pleased to be here to talk about our educational priorities.

□ 1830

REPUBLICAN EDUCATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a great day for American children today. The debate the last couple of weeks should have had nothing to do with show and tell. It should have had nothing to do with who better understands how important education is to the future of this country. The whole issue, of course, was one of who knows better how to bring about quality education, people on the local level, the teachers, the administrators, the parents, or we in Washington, D.C.? And as I have said to my committee so many times, if all of those programs from Washington, D.C., down would have worked, we would not have a problem with literacy in this country. We would not have a problem with drugs in this country. We would not have a problem with dropouts in this country. We would not have a problem with people graduating who cannot do math and cannot do science very well. If they had worked. They did not work. The reason they did not work was because nobody paid any attention about quality. We said one size fits all. ''Take it from us, we know better than anybody else.'' We also said, ''Let's cover numbers. Don't worry about whether you're covering them with quality. Just cover numbers.'' And so we did a lot of different things. As a new majority we said in our higher education bill, no longer universities and colleges who support pupil-teacher preparation. We want you to produce quality teachers. It does not matter whether your pupil ratio is 1 to 2, 2 to 2, 20 to 1, if you do not have a quality teacher in the classroom, it does not make any difference. So we are telling those institutions that prepare teachers, ''It is the 21st century. You must prepare them for the 21st century.'' We told them in special ed, ''Don't just say, 'We're going to continue to tell you exactly how to do it and not send you any money.'''' I am very proud of our operation in the last 2 years as far as our help to local districts to deal with the special ed costs. Keep in mind 30 years ago the former majority said, ''Here is a 100 percent mandate from Washington, D.C., in relationship to special ed. We will send you 40 percent of the excess cost.'' Excess cost, the difference between educating a regular student and a special needs student. When I became chairman, we were sending 6 percent. Now who do you think is funding our 100 percent mandate? I can tell you who is funding it, the local school district. The city of York, they have to spend $6 million. Only 49,000 people in the city of York. They must spend $6 million in special ed because it is a 100 percent mandate from Washington, D.C. and we send them $37,000. Where do they have to get the rest of the money? They have to take it away from every other child, they have to take it away from maintaining buildings, they have to take it away from pupil-teacher ratio, because we set the mandate, promised the money, and did not send the money. The last 2 years, we said, ''We're going to send you money.'' In fact, this year will be the first that the local school district will be able to reduce their expenditures on special ed so that they can put it into maintenance, so that they can put it into pupil-teacher ratio for all the other students.

Head Start. Whoever sold Head Start has to be the greatest salesperson in the world. That person certainly could have sold, no, I will not say that, I may offend somebody. But nevertheless, a great salesperson. But what they did not talk about was study after study after study said it was not doing what we wanted it to do in the early years. Why? Because the weakest part of the program should have been the most important part of the program and that was the education component. So that we should have had children reading ready by the time they got to first grade, so that they do not fail first grade and so that they do not get socially promoted. But the whole effort, and they tried to do it again this year, they said, numbers, numbers, numbers. The President said, I want more numbers, I want more numbers. We said, ''Oh, no. Not until quality becomes the most important thing.'' And so we said the large percentage of any increase will go to improve the quality of Head Start. We want to make sure every child has an equal opportunity to succeed by the time they get to first grade. Higher ed, highest Pell grants ever. In higher ed, the lowest interest rates ever. All of these things are accomplishments that we brought not because of any leadership outside of this body but because we said that we are going to change things and we are going to change things to make sure that quality becomes the issue.