The bill would make several technical modifications to the 1997 legislation. It would repeal the provision that restricts ownership of qualified zone academy bonds to financial institutions, it would change the formula used in determining the credit rate, it would provide for quarterly allowances of the credit to coincide with estimated tax payment dates and permit credit stripping in order to improve the marketability of the bonds, it would require a maximum maturity of 15 years, rather than a maximum maturity determined under a formula, it would change the formula for allocating the national limit to make it consistent with the formula used in allocating the limit on qualified school construction bonds, and it would provide an indefinite carryover of any unused credit.

B. SPECIALIZED TRAINING CENTERS

The bill also includes a provision designed to encourage corporate contributions to specialized training centers located in empowerment zones or enterprise communities. A specialized training center is a public school (or special program within a public school) with an academic program designed in partnership with the corporation making the contribution. There is a limit of $8 million per empowerment zone and $2 million per enterprise community on the amount of contributions eligible for the new credit. The limit would be allocated among contributors by the local official responsible for the economic development program in the zone or community.

QUALIFIED SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BONDS

The bill would also permit State and local governments to issue qualified school construction bonds to fund the construction or rehabilitation of public schools. Interest on qualified school construction bonds would in effect be paid by the Federal government through an annual tax credit. The credit would be provided in the same manner as the credit for qualified zone academy bonds.

Under the bill, a total of $11 billion of qualified school construction bonds could be issued in 2000 and in 2001. Half of the annual cap would be allocated among the States on the basis of their population of low-income children, weighted the State's expenditures per pupil for education (the Title I basic grant formula). The other half of the annual cap would be allocated among the hundred school districts with the highest number of low-income children and that allocation would be based on each district's Title I share. Before making the allocations described above, $200 million in 2000 and 2001 would be reserved for allocation by the Secretary of the Interior for schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The following chart shows the aggregate amount of qualified school construction bonds and qualified zone academy bonds that could be issued in each State under the bill. The total includes amounts allocated to large school districts in the State. An additional $750 million is reserved for allocations to other school districts not in the largest 100 districts.

[In thousands of dollars]

State	Estimate Allocation
Alabama	$373,179
Alaska	45,552
Arizona	321,189
Arkansas	191,361
California	3,029,203
Colorado	203,299
Connecticut	195,615
Delaware	46,746
District of Columbia	113,625
Florida	1,337,671
Georgia	606,081
Hawaii	49,685
Idaho	55,825
Illinois	1,125,357
Indiana	326,773
Iowa	135,205
Kansas	154,208
Kentucky	344,582
Louisiana	596,956
Maine	76,808
Maryland	351,517
Massachusetts	402,027
Michigan	1,001,250
Minnesota	266,123
Mississippi	327,445
Missouri	386,832
Montana	62,924
Nebraska	82,857
Nevada	90,274
New Hampshire	44,910
New Jersey	526,789
New Mexico	185,062
New York	2,750,541
North Carolina	390,043
North Dakota	46,746
Ohio	948,239
Oklahoma	270,223
Oregon	191,113
Pennsylvania	1,007,919
Puerto Rico	636,673
Rhode Island	81,320
South Carolina	261,777
South Dakota	47,922
Tennessee	396,843
Texas	2,149,680
Utah	84,796
Vermont	43,847
Virginia	317,458
Washington	285,098
West Virginia	177,753
Wisconsin	418,781
Wyoming	43,236

DAVIS-BACON REQUIREMENTS

The bill includes a provision that would extend the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements to construction funded under the new program. In order to ensure the marketability of the tax-subsidized financing, the Davis-Bacon requirements would be enforced by the Department of Labor and not through disallowance of tax benefits.

The bill also requires governments participating in the new program to give priority in awarding contracts to contractors with local workforces and to require a priority for local workers for new hires. The bill contains modifications to the Workforce Investment Act to ensure the availability of skilled local workers for the construction.

REGARDING THE STATE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

HON. DAVID D. PHELPS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking my colleague Mr. BERRY for gathering us here to talk about the state of agriculture and the dire need for quick action on the Supplemental Appropriations measure. There is perhaps no more timely or pressing issue facing our nation's farmers and the legislators who represent them in Washington, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

The importance of agriculture to the families and economy of Illinois' 19th District cannot be overstated, and I am proud to serve on the Agriculture Committee, where I look forward to helping to shape our nation's agriculture policy. Every one of the communities I represent is deeply impacted when agriculture experiences tough times, and these are some of the toughest in recent memory.

The pork industry is still reeling from a crisis, and prices are low for other commodities that are critical to my district, such as corn and soybeans. The Natural Resource Conservation Service in Illinois and many other states is facing a major budget shortfall that will likely necessitate office closures or furloughs and has already resulted in the suspension of CRP technical assistance services that countless farmers depend upon. Farmers are experiencing undue delays in receiving disaster assistance and other USDA payments, and Farm Service Agency offices throughout the country are understaffed and overworked.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the urgency of this situation and hope we can work together to find both short- and long-term solutions to the problems that plague our agriculture community. It seems clear to me, in fact, that one short-term solution has already been found, in the form of a supplemental appropriations bill that includes $152 million for USDA. This money will allow the Department to increase loan capacity by more than $1 billion at a time when conditions in the agriculture economy have increased demand for USDA's farm loan programs by 400%. The funding will also provide desperately-needed temporary staffing assistance for FSA offices.

Unfortunately, it has been two months since the President submitted his supplemental spending request, and over a month since both houses passed their bills. Farmers are already in the fields planting crops and USDA is receiving 150 applications for loan assistance every day. Meanwhile, conferees have only this week been appointed to begin crafting a final supplemental measure, and there is no indication that this risk is being undertaken with the urgency it requires. We simply must pass this legislation now. America's farmers are counting on their representatives in Congress. We cannot let them down during this time of crisis.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. BERRY for demonstrating his commitment to American agriculture and urging us to speak out on this important issue.

THE SMART IDEA ACT OF 1999

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation that makes the point that Congress doesn't need to pit the needs of disabled children against the needs of non-disabled children in meeting our commitments