

We Republicans are going to fight for rural America, even though the Democrats say, give it up.

LET US PASS H.R. 1660, A SCHOOL MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

(Mr. McNULTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, several years ago we seemed to realize that classrooms around this country were overcrowded, and we decided that we needed smaller class sizes. The Democrats proposed funding for 100,000 new teachers to go out all across the country to teach our children.

After much wrangling, and in a rare moment of bipartisanship, we finally passed the funding to provide for those new teachers. Now we have the first wave of them, tens of thousands of new teachers going out across the country. Guess what, there is no place for them to go. There are no classrooms for them to teach.

Now we have proposed, on the Democratic side, something to correct that situation, a school modernization program, so that the classrooms are available for all these new teachers. Mr. Speaker, I do not want these new teachers to be instructing our children in hallways, broom closets, and trailers. Let us pass H.R. 1660.

IT IS THE SAME OLD NONSENSE, THE LEFT HATES TAX CUTS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, how is it that creating new spending programs will not blow a hole in the deficit, but tax cuts will? Liberals accuse Republicans of fiscal irresponsibility for passing tax relief, and yet they call us extremist in every single attempt we make to hold the line on spending.

During the 1980s, in the Reagan years liberals insisted that social spending not be cut. Not only that, they insisted that spending on social programs increase at levels far higher than the rate of inflation. Then they turned around and blamed President Reagan for the deficits.

During the 1980s, tax rates were cut but tax revenues doubled. Members heard that right, tax rates were reduced but the economy boomed so strongly that revenues increased. In fact, they doubled. Yet, liberal Democrats blamed the deficits on the tax cuts.

□ 1030

It is the same old line. The left just hates tax cuts, plain and simple.

BETTER SCHOOLS NEEDED FOR OUR NATION'S GREATEST ASSET: OUR CHILDREN

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, this morning I proudly join my colleagues in signing the discharge petition H.R. 1660, the School Modernization Construction Act.

As a member of the freshman class, I have organized numerous 1 minutes and Special Orders to allow us to share with our Republican colleagues the stories from our own districts: the overcrowding, the crumbling buildings, the rapid school-age population growth. Whether they are urban, rural, or suburban, schools across our Nation need the help of Congress in addressing the infrastructure problems.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept that the only action taken by Congress this year to help our schools is a small arbitrage provision contained within the recently passed tax bill.

This provision will not provide assistance to our beleaguered school system and could result in delays in school construction and modernization projects for more than 2 years.

We can fix our highways. We can rebuild our bridges. Why do we sit by and do nothing about the infrastructure that houses our Nation's greatest assets, its children.

We need to help our school districts by providing them with interest-free bonds to build new facilities and to improve the existing structures now, not 2 years from now.

Mr. Speaker, before, one of our colleagues said who pays the taxes. I forgot, our children in public schools do not pay taxes. But their families do.

AGRICULTURE CRISIS

(Mr. EWING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, American agriculture is in a crisis, bad weather, terribly low commodity prices caused from lost markets, markets closed to our farmers, and excessive world production.

This has caused real financial stress, and it is serious. We could lose 10 to 20 percent of our family farms. The ability to produce a safe and sufficient food supply is necessary for a stable society.

What must this Congress do? We must pass the Improved Crop Insurance bill, which allows higher leverage of coverage for our farmers. That is not all. We must open market. We must make available necessary credit resources. We must improve the tax program for our farmers' inheritance tax and capital gains. We must reform our regulatory system which is such a burden to our family farmers.

Let us show our American farmers that we care and that we care about agriculture.

GET OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT; PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH WELL-EQUIPPED CLASSROOMS

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to be among the Members signing a discharge petition to bring school modernization tax credits to the House floor. I come from the Triangle district of North Carolina, where quality education is valued and where a trained work force is a necessity. Yet thousands of our students are going to school in hundreds of trailers.

The school modernization bill of the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) would address this need. I am also cosponsoring with 90 other Members the School Construction Act introduced by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), especially targeted to high growth areas like the one I represent.

Our approach is nonintrusive. We are providing tax credits to bondholders. We are not telling local authorities when or how to build. But we are saying to local communities, as they take on these obligations, that the Federal tax code will help them stretch their scarce dollars further.

Let us get our kids out of trailers and into modern, well-equipped classrooms, where teachers can teach and students can learn. Let's get our priorities straight.

HELP OUR FARMERS DURING CRISIS

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, agriculture in this country has very serious problems. It is the second year in a row that we had low commodity prices. Profits for farmers are 30 percent below what they were just a couple of years ago. We can lose maybe 10 percent of our family farms this year.

We have got to come up with some Federal help. We have got to come up with an emergency bill this year. It might be as high as \$6 billion or \$7 billion or \$8 billion if we want farmers in this country to continue producing the highest quality, lowest priced food in the world. If we lose our farmers and become dependent on other countries, we will have serious problems. Other countries will be able to dictate price and quality.

A couple things in the tax bill that the conferees approved yesterday that help farmers: estate tax relief so farmers do not have to sell their farms to pay taxes, above-the-line health deductions so farmers and other self-employed can be like everybody else and not have to pay taxes on what they pay for health insurance; an increase in the amount allowed for first-year depreciation so if farmers buy machinery, they

can deduct it in the year of purchase rather than a depreciation schedule where the deduction is reduced by inflation; "FARRM" IRA accounts so, in good years, farmers can put some money aside as a reduction in income and pay taxes on it when they use it in future low-income years; AMT, doing away with it so farmers are not forced to pay taxes when there is no profit. Mr. Speaker, we need the tax relief for farmers. We need to help expand exports. We need to stop other countries from dumping their surplus on our markets. We need a better risk insurance program for crops, and we need an emergency supplemental. We need to help our farmers.

WE NEED TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY WITH FEDERAL BUDGET AND SURPLUS

(Mr. HINCHEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, in 1981, then President Reagan pushed through the Congress and then signed a tax cut bill that, in the words of then budget director Dick Stockman, gave us budget deficits as far as the eye could see. Those budget deficits in 1993 approached \$300 billion a year and a national debt approaching \$5 trillion a year.

The Clinton budget resolution of 1993 corrected all of that. We are now moving into a situation of budget surpluses, and we have begun to pay down the national debt. Now, because of that, the Republicans are again proposing another tax cut similar to the one in 1981 which would duplicate that process all over again. It is a serious error which we need to ensure does not take place.

With this tax cut, if it passes and it were to be signed, there would be no money for education, no money for social security, no money for Medicare. Let us make sure we behave in a responsible way with this Federal budget and ensure the future of our children and the security of our parents and grandparents.

ADMINISTRATION MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR LOSING UNCLEAR SECRETS TO CHINA

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, apparently the other side thinks we need a 25 percent tax increase. I would disagree with that. I think we need a tax reduction.

But yesterday, in Georgia, someone won \$116 million for buying a \$2 lottery ticket. That seems like a great exchange. It is. But that is not nearly as good as the deal the Communist Chinese received when they obtained billions of dollars of nuclear weapons se-

crets from our own Department of Energy.

Well, it is not about selling out to the Communist Chinese; it is about the Clinton administration's poor management of our Nation's most important secrets. They knew that the Chinese were obtaining nuclear secrets at the same time they were receiving illegal campaign contributions from the Chinese, and they did nothing.

The administration must be held accountable. We need to eliminate the Department of Energy and transfer all nuclear funds to the Department of Defense where at least they have a culture of keeping secrets.

BRING SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION LEGISLATION TO THE FLOOR

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, today millions of Americans will go to work and conduct business on the World Wide Web. Millions of Americans will send e-mail messages to each other. Millions of consumers will buy goods and services over the Internet.

But next month, millions of American children will go back to schools that are out of the 1950s where they get half an hour a week on a computer if they are lucky. What is worse than that, there will be students going to schools that were built during the Civil War. There will be children taking gym class in the hallway, children taking reading classes in broom closets.

America's schools need to be modernized. We certainly can take just a piece of the largess of the Federal surplus and invest it back into a quality public school system.

I stand before my colleagues as one of the proud cosponsors of the Democratic school construction legislation. I just signed a petition which said bring that bill to the floor. Give us a vote so we can modernize and improve America's schools.

IT IS TIME FOR RESPONSIBLE TAX RELIEF FOR WORKING AMERICANS

(Mr. COX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, the average middle-class American family earning the median income around \$39,000 a year or so pays over 40 percent of its gross income in taxes. Meanwhile, Washington is taking the highest share of our whole economy in taxes in over two centuries of the Nation's peacetime history.

The tax relief bill passed by this House will help working Americans. But it will first lock away 100 percent of Social Security taxes for retirement security and set aside \$2 trillion for Social Security and Medicare over the next 10 years. It will pay down the na-

tional debt, \$227 billion more in debt relief than the Democratic minority proposal.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for responsible tax relief for working Americans.

SUPPORT SCHOOL MODERNIZATION LEGISLATION

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, that we even have to debate the need for school modernization defies logic. Some congressional issues are simply nothing more than common sense, and this issue is one.

For years now, Democrats have been trying to enact a meaningful school modernization initiative. When I came to Congress in 1997, I joined these efforts and cosponsored legislation to address this crisis. But we have been consistently blocked by the majority. America's children are ultimately the victims of this disregard.

It boils down to two crucial points, crumbling schools and overcrowding. Quite simply, our schools are run down and out of room. Conditions are so poor that we would have to spend \$112 billion to make the basic repairs needed.

The Public School Modernization Act of 1999 would help local communities meet that \$122 billion backlog in school modernization needs documented by the nonpartisan General Accounting Office.

Ultimately, it is about ensuring that our children get safe, clean, and modern schools.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the pending business is the question of agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal of the last day's proceedings.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any further votes on suspension motions postponed from yesterday.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 366, noes 56, answered "present" 1, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 367]
YEAS—366

Ackerman	Baker	Barr
Allen	Baldacci	Barrett (NE)
Andrews	Baldwin	Barrett (WI)
Archer	Ballenger	Bartlett
Bachus	Barcia	Barton