possible that this entire map can be colored solidly red with every child in America having access to additional funds generated through an education tax credit, and it will benefit all children.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, this is what we are talking about, bringing a massive infusion of new money into education. This is nontax credit money going into education for a very specific purpose. If we do a tax credit, we will see an entire map being red and dollars going to help all of our kids at the local level to make sure that we do not leave a single child behind.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, it is an exciting proposal and it is one that is just a few weeks away from being introduced. We expect it on the floor sometime in June. We are very appreciative of the President's commitment, personal commitment and obligation to help us see this legislation passed; and we will talk about it more over the coming weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here this evening, and I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) for joining me.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE PORTER J. GOSS, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI) laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable PORTER J. GOSS, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2002.

Hon. DENNIS J. HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a civil subpoena for documents and testimony issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

After consulting with the Office of General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

PORTER J. GOSS,
Member of Congress.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE DAVID L. HOBSON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable DAVID L. HOBSON, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2002.

Hon. DENNIS J. HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a civil subpoena for documents and testimony issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

After consulting with the Office of General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

DAVID L. HOBSON,
Member of Congress.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE NANCY L. JOHNSON, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY L. JOHNSON, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2002.

Hon. DENNIS J. HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a civil subpoena for documents and testimony issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

After consulting with the Office of General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

NANCY L. JOHNSON,
Member of Congress.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I plan to spend most of the time discussing the need for a Medicare prescription drug benefit. I come to the well, to the floor this evening primarily because of my concern that the House Republican leadership is talking about, certainly presenting itself to the media, that they intend to bring up a prescription drug proposal at some point over the next couple of weeks. I am very concerned that their proposal is really nothing more than a sham and not something that is actually going to benefit any significant portion of the senior population.

I thought what I would do this evening is that I would start out by sort of outlining what I believe, and what Democrats as a whole in the House of Representatives feel we should be doing about prescription drugs.

First of all, I should say that the Democrats feel very strongly that the biggest problem with prescription drugs is the cost. The fact of the matter is that whether one is a senior, whether one is over 65 or whether one is under 65, it is getting to be more and more difficult to pay for one's medicine, because of the fact that the prices keep going up every year. Double-digit inflation, essentially, we have had with regard to prescription drug prices for the last 6 years. Every year, the cost goes up by a double digit percentage point. Democrats are determined to address the cost issue and to say that whatever benefit package we arrive at has to address the issue of cost and try to bring prices down.

The other major issue for Democrats is that this plan, this prescription drug plan or legislative proposal has to be a Medicare proposal. In other words, right now we have a great program called Medicare that all seniors over 65 know that they are guaranteed certain benefits, whether it is a hospital stay or, if they are participating in part B of Medicare on a voluntary basis, their doctor bills are paid, and there is no question about what is covered essentially and is not covered, because there is a guaranteed benefit package for every senior, for everyone who is over 65 who is eligible for Medicare.

We insist that that be the case for the prescription drug proposal as well. This has to be a benefit that is added to the Medicare program and that every senior, just like with part B when seniors pay so much a month at a very minimum premium to cover their doctor bills, that they would pay so much per month at a very low premium to cover prescription drugs, and they would know that they would be able to guarantee that prescription drugs were paid for pursuant to Medicare as part of their program.

The other thing that we insist on is that this program be generous enough, in other words, that the Federal Government be paying enough of the cost of their prescription drugs so that it makes sense for one to voluntarily pay the monthly premium, like they do in part B for doctor bills. In other words, the benefit has to be significant. We have talked about as much as 80 percent of the cost. If we analogize what we have now for part B for doctor bills, what the Democrats are essentially saying is that we want a prescription drug benefit that is very similar to the Medicare structure for doctor bills, in other words, that there be a fairly low premium per month, that the deductible be as low as possible, something like what we have for part B to pay for doctor bills; that the amount that the Federal Government pays is significant, probably something like 80 percent with regard to part B to cover doctor bills; we pay a premium and when the bill comes in, the Federal Government pays 80 percent of the cost.

Well, that is the kind of generous benefit that we want to provide for prescription drugs, and that there be some point, we call it a catastrophic level, at which point if one paid so much out-of-pocket over the course of the year, that the Federal Government would cover the entire cost.

Now, let me contrast what I just said and what the Democrats would like to see with what we are hearing from the Republican leadership in the House. I want to stress that what we are hearing is not very good on any of these