

Bill ultimately created the largest and most widely respected firearms manufacturing concern in the world. For almost 50 years, he built a business, patented numerous innovative ideas and designs, and produced products with legendary appeal and durability. His rare genius was in transforming his innovations into products that won intense customer satisfaction and, in turn, customer loyalty. Bill believed that a well-designed, well-made and reasonably priced product would always attract buyers; and the legions of sportsmen that would never hike a field with anything but a Ruger certainly proved him right.

In some ways, he was the Henry Ford or Thomas Edison of the second half of the 20th century, taking manufacturing processes such as investment casting to new levels, and beating the competition fair and square through timeless quality and efficiency. He had a love for all things mechanical and taught himself most of what he would later use as the basis of his designs. In the process, he became one of the foremost authorities on automotive design and was one of the few people in the world that actually designed and built his own automobile.

Bill Ruger did not build his company in order to sell out and retire, but rather to profit steadily from the success of its products. He believed in taking the long view and built lasting relationships with employees and customers. At a time when manufacturers are heading overseas and across our borders, Sturm Ruger proudly engineers and builds all of its products in the United States.

His success has created great opportunity for many others, including many of my constituents; and his company continues to be a vital part of New Hampshire's economy and community. The "old man," as he was called, leaves a proud legacy to many, not only in New Hampshire but in Arizona and Connecticut as well.

For people who call themselves sportsmen, Bill Ruger was a name that was as celebrated and admired as Ernest Hemingway or Jack O'Connor. Although Bill will be missed by many who take regularly to the field, somehow we will know that he will be along for many more hunts.

Bill viewed a well-crafted gun as a bond that connected families as it was passed from generation to generation. What he may have missed is how one of his creations bonds us to him as his genius and commitment to quality, durability, and affordability live on in perfectly cast steel and finely carved walnut.

That was the gift left to us by the old man. He will be missed by many friends, admirers and employees but especially by his family. I would like to extend my condolences to the Ruger and Vogel families, especially Molly and Bill Ruger, on the passing of their father, a truly great man.

NO VOUCHERS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor because a bill has just been introduced to impose vouchers on the District of Columbia. The Congress had the opportunity to impose vouchers on itself when H.R. 1 was here, the President's Leave No Child Behind bill. Instead, it defeated a voucher proposal 273 to 155; 68 Republicans joined 204 Democrats. It was not even close.

Further, there have been 20 referenda on vouchers, all of them defeated, most recently in California and Michigan. Not only were they defeated overwhelmingly by almost three-quarters of the population in each State but the people of color, minorities, voted even more overwhelmingly against vouchers. In D.C. we had our own voucher vote in the 1980s: 89 percent against, 11 percent for.

What we are asking for in the Nation's capital is the same choices in educating our children that each and every Member of this body has insisted upon already for her own district and in her own State; and do not get me wrong, I do not believe a child can be in the first grade but once. So I strongly believe in choices and alternatives to public schools. The District deserves applause for its efforts on choice because our own efforts far outdo the efforts of any Member of this body. Applause, not punishment, for the choices we have made.

What are our alternatives? First, we have more charter schools in the District of Columbia per capita than any other district. Fourteen percent of our children go to public charter schools. No other Member's district even approaches this percentage of its children in charter schools.

Second, a D.C. child can go out of her own ward to any public school in the District of Columbia. We had children every day going from the poorest wards in 7th and 8th across to more wealthy wards, Ward 3, for example.

Third, I have strongly supported the work of the Washington scholarship fund, a private organization that provides scholarships, mostly to Catholic schools, using private money. I mean that that effort using private money is precisely the way to support our children.

Fourth, D.C. closes schools where it is not up to standard and then reopens them under new leadership. We have done that with nine schools this year with remarkable results.

It is ironic that this bill would come up at this time. Today's Washington Times has an editorial: "D.C. Schools Make Headway." It is an editorial from a newspaper that has been fiercely critical of the D.C. public schools. It opens by saying: "Preliminary test data show that D.C. teachers appear to be teach-

ing and students appear to be learning," and it cites statistics. Fifty percent of the children improved in math and reading. Did they do as well in my colleagues' districts? Children in the most economically deprived neighborhoods improved 20 percent. Did my colleagues' economically deprived children do as well?

All of our charter schools are accountable. We can close charter schools, and have closed three this year, when they are not doing as well with our children. We can close public schools, and we closed nine this year, reopened them and they have done much better under new leadership. We can impose the same requirements on charter public schools as we do on other schools, and those requirements are very stiff. We cannot do that particularly to religious schools because they must not be accountable to the government in the practice of their religion.

I want to be clear about where I stand on the D.C. public schools. I am a proud graduate of the D.C. public schools, but I am not an apologist for them. I am proud of how they are improving. They are not nearly good enough; but by voting against the bill that has been introduced, my colleagues will be voting against choices others have made for their districts, not voting against choice.

We already have multiple choices in the District of Columbia, sufficient choices, so that I invite other Members to look at how to provide choices when their own people have voted against vouchers. There are other ways to acquire and to get choices. We would very much appreciate being allowed to make our own choices the way my colleagues' districts have insisted upon making their own choices.

Read today's Washington Times: "D.C. Schools Make Headway." Add to what my colleagues read. Respect the democratic choices of the citizens of the District of Columbia who are American citizens, entitled to their free choices, in the same way that my colleagues' own constituents are.

DEMOCRATIC PROPOSAL FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

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, it is not my intention this evening to use the full 60 minutes. I am more likely to use about 20 minutes, but I did want to take the opportunity this evening to talk about an issue which I think was sort of left dangling when we left here a week ago before the July 4th recess.

My colleagues know that in the middle of the night, I guess it was about 2 a.m., we finally voted on the Republican prescription drug plan; and I was extremely disappointed, to say the