

559 to 2,061—nearly a four-fold increase in just five years. In 2001, 199 of the 273—or 84 percent—of all “super labs” found in the U.S. were in California. The next most common state was home to just 17 “super labs.”

My hometown of Sacramento is particularly hit by Meth. Many of you may remember when an out of control trucker deliberately drove his big rig into the side of California’s state capitol building. The driver was on meth.

The Sacramento Sheriffs department alone spends more than \$1.3 million each year fighting meth—roughly 75 percent of their entire anti-narcotics budget. In 2000 the Sacramento Sheriffs dealt with 27 clan labs, in 2001 that was up to 44.

The CLEAN-UP Meth Act addresses three areas where our state and local officials really need help.

First, the Environment.

The CLEAN-UP Meth Act authorizes \$30 million for cleanup and remediation of our federal, state and local parks, forests and farmlands. All too often, the environment is the first victim of a meth lab.

It also authorizes \$30 million to train law enforcement and other first responders in how to safely enter and clean-up a lab, as well as how to meet the OSHA requirements for working in such a hazardous environment.

Finally, it authorizes \$1 million for the EPA to conduct a study of meth waste’s impact on the environment.

It is important to address environmental concerns as 4 pounds of waste are created for every 1 pound of meth. In 2001, 12,013 super labs, labs and waste or dump sites required clean-up and remediation.

Second, Health and Education.

H.R. 3782 will provide \$20 million to local schools and education groups to provide anti-drug—and especially anti-meth programs.

An additional \$10 million is provided to local health care groups for the treatment of both meth abusers, and those abused by meth producers and users. One quarter of that money is specifically set aside for programs helping children found in the toxic environment of meth labs or abused by meth users.

Finally, the bill authorizes \$1 million for the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on the impact of not only meth use, but also meth production on community health. We need to help stop the use of this deadly drug that 9.4 million Americans admitted to having used at least once in 1999 and that in 2000, 7.9 percent of high school seniors said they had tried.

Finally, Law Enforcement.

With meth growing so quickly, many local law enforcement agencies, district attorneys and other members of the law enforcement community are not prepared to deal with its spread into their community. It is all well and good to find the offenders, but you need to know how to catch them—and perhaps most importantly—prosecute them to get them out of the system.

This legislation authorizes an additional \$20 million under the COPS program for training of

state and local prosecutors as well as sheriffs and police officers in the prosecution of meth law violations. And one quarter of these funds are set aside for rural communities that are often hardest hit but lack the resources to attack this emerging threat. One example of this rapid growth: DEA arrests for meth production and distribution between 1993 and 1999 shot up from 1,944 to 8,618—an increase of more than 400 percent.

Speaking of training, the bill provides \$10 million to expand the great Clan Lab training program run by the DEA in Quantico, Virginia. They do a great job down there, and we need to support them.

Regarding criminal penalties, the CLEAN-UP Meth Act tightens criminal laws used to prosecute the promoters of “raves,” the for-profit parties aimed at young people that are often the places where our children our first exposed to these dangerous drugs—too often with the full knowledge and consent of the promoter.

In conclusion, no matter what you call it—meth, crank, crystal, or whatever—this drug is an emerging threat across the country. And it threatens not just those who use it, not just those who know someone who use it, but all Americans who drink our water, breathe our air, send their kids to school or work our lands. It hits rural and suburban areas, perhaps even harder than it does our cities. You cannot just sit back and say it is someone else’s problem. That is why I am grateful that this Administration, so many of my Republican and Democratic colleagues, and members of the law enforcement community is focused on the emerging meth threat. And why I am pleased to have so many of them supporting our efforts to CLEAN-UP Meth as I reintroduce this important legislation today.

INTRODUCING THE TEACHER RECRUITMENT ACT OF 2003—H.R. 5133

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to re-introduce H.R. 5133, the “Teacher Recruitment Act of 2003” to expand the eligibility of individuals to qualify for loan forgiveness for teachers in order to provide additional incentives for teachers currently employed or seeking employment in economically depressed rural areas, Territories, and Indian Reservations.

Rural and small town schools educate a significant number of America’s students. Nearly forty percent of America’s school-age children attend public schools in rural areas or small towns with populations of less than 25,000. Forty-nine percent of the nation’s public schools are located in rural areas and small towns and 41 percent of public school educators teach in rural community schools. Rural

school districts are often the largest single employer in their area and rural schools serve as the social, recreational, and cultural foundation of their communities.

Although rural and small schools educate nearly 40 percent of America’s students, they receive less than 25 percent of the total federal, state, and local spending on public education. Rural and small schools tend to be located in areas with low property values and few industries, making it more difficult to raise additional revenues. Additionally, because federal grants are awarded based upon student population, rural districts often receive insufficient grant funds to accomplish the stated purpose.

Rural schools face formidable challenges in recruiting and retaining quality teachers. Compared with teachers in central city schools and urban schools, rural teachers tend to be less educated, slightly less experienced, younger, and less likely to belong to a minority group. Chronically low salaries and benefits exacerbate the difficulty in attracting quality teachers to rural and small town schools. For example, in the district that I represent, the U.S. Virgin Islands, teachers have not received a substantial raise in over seven years to offset the rising cost of living. There has been no state subsidized programs towards teacher certification, advance education, or teacher training. Adding to the need to expand the Teacher Loan Forgiveness program is the lack of substantive incentives on the local level to incite teacher recruitment and retention within and outside of the rural communities. Similarly, there are many challenges associated with preparing teachers to work with Native American children and parents, and often teachers have not been properly prepared to address these challenges. Consequently, teachers who are less than qualified are working on American Indian reservations, and the retention of qualified teachers remains a challenge.

If “The Leave No Child Behind Act” is truly meant to reform our nation’s education, we need to pass legislation that adequately addresses the deficiencies in our educational system. To effectively implement the provisions of “The Leave No Child Behind Act,” we must attract and keep quality teachers. The American Federation, which represents of 1.2 million members, has urged the support and passage of amendments to expand eligibility for loan forgiveness to those who are teaching in schools in need of improvement, as defined in “The No Child Left Behind Act.” The “Teacher Recruitment Act of 2003” would expand the eligibility of individuals to qualify for loan forgiveness for teachers beyond that available under section 428J of the Higher Education Act by providing additional incentives for such individuals to teach in economically disadvantaged or depressed and underserved rural areas. Under this bill, teachers may qualify for up to 100 percent student loan forgiveness. The “Teacher Recruitment Act of 2003” is a good step toward the continuing challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers in rural areas and I urge its passage.