21st century technology and high-quality programming to teachers, students, and parents both inside and outside the classroom. It is remarkable to see how teachers like Bryan DeBates can use this technology to make this possible.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to honor Bryan DeBates. It is the perseverance and dedication of teachers like him that will lead our youth to a brighter future.

SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS H. ALLEN

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2210) to authorize the Head Start Act to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children, and for other purposes:

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, nearly 4 decades ago, a program was introduced that would forever change the lives of more than 20 million American disadvantaged children and their families. The achievements of Head Start have become so legendary that I thought it was secure. I was wrong.

Instead of directly funding community-based Head Start programs, the School Readiness Act would allow some states to receive ''block grant'' funding. States could then use their own untested standards, avoid federal quality oversight, diminish services, weaken the role of parents, and shift money to shore up sagging state budgets.

I have seen examples of the positive impact of Head Start throughout Maine. At a meeting earlier this year, for example, a Head Start father movingly told of his struggle with illness and unemployment; he firmly believes that his children are thriving despite this hardship primarily because of their enrollment in Head Start.

At the same meeting, a graduate of Head Start credited her own success—being the first in her family to gain an advanced degree—to the program.

Another Mainer wrote to me about her son, whose many medical problems at birth led his doctor to predict he would be severely mentally disabled. Enrollment in Early Head Start provided the early intervention that vastly improved his prospects.

National studies confirm that Head Start works: the gap is narrowed significantly between Head Start children and other children in vocabulary and writing skills; once in kindergarten, they continue to make substantial progress in language and math skills. Head Start graduates are less likely than similarly situated children to repeat a grade, require special education, or be charged or convicted with a crime. They are more likely to complete high school and college and earn more as adults than those who did not have the benefit of this program.

Head Start benefits all Americans in the long term. Numerous studies show that for every dollar spent on Head Start, taxpayers save $4 to $7 in the future due to lower education, crime and welfare expenses. Yet, the President's budget for Head Start does not even keep up with the rate of inflation, let alone provide enough funding to serve all eligible children.

If it ain't broke, why does the Administration want to ''fix'' it? The track record of Head Start and those who benefit from its services are evidence that there is no need to restructure the program. We should instead address its real financial needs: to fully fund this program to provide the greatest assistance for low-income children and their families.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the Democratic substitute which will expand access to the program for more eligible children, improve teacher and program quality and strengthen the overall program. H.R. 2210 would simply undermine a program which has been a major success.

OFFSET OF FEDERAL TAX REFUNDS FOR STATE AND LOCAL TAX DEBTS

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to be introducing legislation that would establish a federal tax refund offset program for state and local governments. Specifically, this program would require the federal government to withhold refunds from those individuals and corporations that still owe state or local government tax obligations.

Today, the reverse situation exists. A number of states allow their own state agencies, local governments and the Internal Revenue Service to submit a list of delinquent taxpayers. The state then matches these delinquent accounts against taxpayers who may qualify for a state tax refund. If a match is found, the state reduces the refund by the amount of the delinquency and remits the funds to the claimant. These programs have proven to be low-cost and highly effective. Congress recognized the effectiveness of these programs and directed the Internal Revenue Service to establish a similar program to cover claims by other federal agencies, as well as for past-due child support obligations. In 2000, Congress expanded the program by directing the Treasury Department to accept claims by states for income tax obligations.

The legislation I am introducing today builds on these successful programs by permitting local governments to participate. The local governments could submit their outstanding tax debts to the Department of the Treasury for an offset against any federal tax refund, just as federal agencies and states do now. This legislation would also permit a claim to be made for any legally enforceable tax obligation owed to the state or local government.

In an era of tight state and local government budgets, it is patently unfair to have the taxpaying citizenry bear the costs and burdens of those who do not pay their fair share. As President Kennedy recognized, ''[t]o the extent that some people are dishonest or careless in their dealings with the government, the majority is forced to carry a heavier tax burden.'' (April 20, 1961) The legislation that I am introducing today will provide a means to help distribute that burden more equitably.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

REGARDING THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY STABILIZATION ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I rise today to introduce the ''Middle Rio Grande Emergency Water Supply Stabilization Act of 2003,'' a bill amending the Flood Control Act of 1948 with respect to the Middle Rio Grande Project to authorize programs for water conservation and control of phreatic vegetation, and for other purposes.

On June 12, 2003, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Federal District Court's opinion determining that the Bureau of Reclamation ''has the discretion to reduce deliveries of water . . . comply with the Endangered Species Act.''

This lawsuit affirmation rekindled the passionate debate about how we use our water resources, about the sustainability of our current water practices, and whether we are using our water wisely.

This is a very difficult situation for everyone involved. Some have painted the situation as a crisis, as a people versus fish issue. Others state that this ''crisis'' should be taken as an indication that it is time to recognize the bottomline of the matter: water is a scarce commodity in New Mexico and should be treated accordingly.

In an effort to find a common-sense approach to sustainable water management in New Mexico and the west, I engaged in extensive discussions with the major stakeholders in the San Juan/Chama water dispute, and shared my concerns directly with United States Department of Interior Secretary Gale Norton, the person ultimately responsible for enforcing the 10th Circuit ruling.

As a result of these conversations, I am introducing legislation today that will address our outmoded water principles and practices.

First, the bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to contribute to a long-term solution for the Middle Rio Grande River in the State of New Mexico by preventing, reducing, or eliminating wasteful depletion of waters. This would entail the establishment of a water supply stabilization program at the local level. Under this program, the Secretary would provide financial and technical assistance to promote and encourage the adoption and implementation of water conservation measures within the Rio Grande Basin in New Mexico.

To accomplish this, the Secretary would enter into cost sharing and other agreements with the State and other entities including organizations, municipalities, Indian Tribes and Pueblos, and individuals, who use agricultural or municipal and industrial water from the Rio Grande River and its tributaries in New Mexico, including water supplied directly or indirectly from the Middle Rio Grande Project or the San Juan-Chama Project. These collaborative agreements will result in localized decisions regarding sustainable water management along the Rio Grande.

Second, the bill encourages the implementation of water conservation measures that will improve water quantity and water quality conditions needed to support a sustainable, living