

The previous question was ordered.
The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1145

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 366.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 254 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 366.

The Chair designates the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) as chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and requests the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) to assume the chair temporarily.

□ 1146

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 366) to amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to strengthen and improve programs under that Act, with Mr. ISSA (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act. The bill has received strong support from educators, school administrators, principals, and vocational and technical education advocates around the country. In this bill, we are protecting the role of States and local communities, and we are asking for results in exchange for the money we are already spending at the Federal level.

The gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) wrote a good bill and deserves great credit for his commitment to this issue. He produced a bill that has received bipartisan support in the committee while still fulfilling our principles for reform.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for their hard work and cooperation in bringing this bill forward today.

This bill will improve vocational and technical education by focusing on academics without expanding the Federal role in education. We streamline bureaucracy and give more money to local communities. H.R. 366 reduces the share of funds going to State administrative activities and targets more funding to the local level. We also streamline funding by consolidating the Tech-Prep program with a basic State grant.

The bill also focuses on success at the local level. Under the bill, local communities will establish achievement targets; and to reward increased academic achievement, States and local communities can receive incentive grants for success. Above all, we maintain local control. The bill continues to move away from the so-called "School to Work" model of the past and maintains our commitment to ensuring that States and local communities have the final say when it comes to the educational choices for their students.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support this legislation, which will help States and local communities strengthen and improve vocational and technical education and help ensure academic success for students. I urge my colleagues today to join me in voting "yes" on the bill.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to thank my committee chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), and our full ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), and always my partner, the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), for working together in a bipartisan way the last Congress and this one to bring this bill to the floor.

As I have said, I have my concerns about this bill, even though it is the result of a bipartisan process. I am especially pleased that the majority has brought this bill forward, in light of the President's proposal to eliminate career and technical education. I hope that we will send a strong bipartisan signal today that we in the House believe that career and technical education is critical to our students and to our country's economic future.

But, Mr. Chairman, I do, as I said, have concerns regarding this bill. First, the bill rightly strengthens accountability for State and local programs, but at the same time it cuts by 60 percent the funds that States can use for that very purpose. I support these accountability measures, but if we do not enable the States to administer them, they will be an empty promise.

I also am concerned this bill merges the Tech-Prep program with the basic State grant. I appreciate that our Republican colleagues in the committee have maintained funding for Tech-Prep activities; but as we all know, not sending Tech-Prep funding separately to the States means that eventually States will lose their focus on those very activities we consider so crucial.

Finally, I am disappointed we are not being allowed to debate most of the amendments that my colleagues and I submitted to the Committee on Rules. I support the amendments that we are debating, but there are many critical issues that we are leaving undiscussed. The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) all offered important amendments on government paying journalists to create propaganda, on dropout prevention, on school construction, and helping out-of-work manufacturing workers. But we are not debating any of those issues today, and I do not understand why.

Finally, we are not debating an issue that has long been important to me and I consider critical to our country's future, that is, the lack of women and girls in science, math, engineering, and technology. My amendment would have helped school districts increase girls' interest in studying in these careers and in these areas. A recent GAO study, Mr. Chairman, found that men still outnumber women in nearly every field in the sciences. In his recent article, "It's a Flat World, After All," and new book, "The World is Flat," The New York Times writer Thomas Friedman explained that America's historical economic advantages have disappeared now "that the world is flat, and anyone with smarts, access to Google, and a cheap wireless laptop can join the innovation fray," no matter what continent they are living on.

Mr. Friedman's and others' remedy is to attract more young women and men to science and engineering. But it will be impossible for our country to continue to lead the world in innovation as long as more than half our population, women, are steered away, intentionally or not, from studying and working in the fields from where that innovation would come.

Consider this, from Dr. Susan Hockfield, the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who recently said that squandered talent, and I quote her, "is one of the key issues of women in science and engineering." All of our children, not just girls, would have benefited if we had been able to debate this issue today, and I am sorry that we are not.

But, again, Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleagues for their hard work on this bill, and I look forward to improving it even more in conference.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.