percent increase in the last 6 years. They did this of course in hopes of meeting NCLB's unrealistic goal of having 100 percent proficiency in math and reading in all schools. And there are other studies as well with similar conclusions.

In 2005 the Fordham Foundation compared the State proficiency scores to NAEP scores, with striking results. The NAEP tests have generally been maintained at standards over the year, and so it's a good barometer.

In the Fordham study, of the 20 States that have reported gains on their tests in 8th grade reading proficiency, mark this, only three showed any progress at even the basic level for NAEP. That means 20 States are saying that since No Child Left Behind things are going better. But if you compare it to NAEP, really not. Only three.

Furthermore, in a new study released today by the foundation, researchers note that in at least two grades, twice as many States in the U.S. have seen their tests become easier, not harder, since NCLB was put into effect. And that's my point here. All the studies are showing that since NCLB went on the books, States are racing to the bottom when it comes to trying to establish their tests, the exact opposite of what this administration tried to do.

I think all of us should be startled, at the very least, by this. Appropriately, we should be outraged. You know, if Washington is forcing our schools to basically lower their standards, putting our children's education at risk, we must act now in this House to reverse the trend. And with NCLB reauthorization coming up now, now's the time to do it.

To that end I've submitted a bill, the LEARN Act, Local Education Authority Returns Now. It's H.R. 3177. And what it will do is very simply, it would allow States to opt out of the Federal NCLB system completely, and, at the same time, allow the States to retain their funding.

I think, to me, it's very obvious that States have grown tired of Washington dangling money over their heads and holding them accountable. And I thank the Speaker for allowing us to address the issue of the reform that is needed in the area of NCLB and talking about the LEARN Act.

HONORING RICK DIEGEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to honor a colleague, ally and a dear friend, Rick Diegel.

On October 1 of this year, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the union to which I proudly belong, said goodbye to long-time political legislative department director Rick Diegel.

Rick Diegel, who has been one of the most influential labor voices on Capitol Hill, is a true champion for American workers, not just organized workers, but all workers and their families. I have known and relied on his good counsel for more than 10 years.

Under Brother Diegel, the IBEW has become a respected leader on policies that affect American working men and women as they try to provide for their families.

Brother Diegel represents the true spirit of public service. A Vietnam veteran, he served in the U.S. Air Force from 1964 to 1968.

Before he came to Washington, Brother Diegel was active in politics in his native Texas. And for the record, I don't hold against him the fact that he is from Texas. In the 1970s, he served three terms as mayor pro-tem of the City of Ingleside.

As a member of Corpus Christie IBEW Local 278 in 1969, he worked for several contractors in Texas as a journeyman wireman and foreman. So, yes, he has worked with the tools.

He was elected business manager in 1977, a post he held until his appointment in 1983 to COPE director at the international office here in D.C. He became director of IBEW's political legislative department in 1998.

One of Brother Diegel's greatest achievements has been his success in helping IBEW brothers and sisters get elected to public office, where they work to advance policies that work for working families. And his success has been amazing.

More IBEW members have been elected to office than any other organization, labor or otherwise. And he has worked to create an office within the AFL–CIO to promote the election of working-class brothers and sisters to local, State, and Federal office throughout the Nation.

I hope that effort continues to bear fruit. The more that we can bring the issues of average working Americans to the forefront, the more we can take back the machinery of government from those who would use it to benefit the narrow interests of the wealthy few.

It is through the leadership of Rick Diegel and the efforts of likeminded brothers and sisters across the Nation that we can ensure that the American Government is working for the people, all people.

It is with great sadness that I say goodbye to Rick and his wife, Theresa. But I will remember Rick's kindness, his compassion, and his dedication and strive to live up to those ideals in my work on the Hill.

Congratulations on your retirement, Rick, and good luck. And as the Mexican saying goes, may you have love, success and now the time to enjoy them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WOLF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PROTECTING THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are certain principles that do not divide us by whether we've Republican or Democrat or an independent and that is, of course, the precious Bill of Rights, and the idea that we live in a country that is so unique and so different and so many people aspire to find just a simple taste of the democracy that we enjoy.

And yet, after 9/11, all of us gathered together realizing that if we allowed the terrorists to terrorize us, change our way of life, they had won.

Unfortunately, we have seen a number of legislative initiatives and as a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I take no back step to securing America. But I understand that our values of democracy and the protection of the Bill of Rights should be the anchor of this society. And if we terrorize ourselves by taking away our rights, the terrorists have won.

And so I stand here to emphasize certain basic principles as we look to revise the FISA law, and that is, of course, the law that clearly intercepts, undermines the fourth amendment; the right to be in your home and to be protected against unreasonable search and seizure.

I'm delighted that you will be hearing, over the next couple of days, along with a markup coming up, the principles enunciated that emphasize the protection of the values of America. And so we simply believe, as I believe, in joining with a number of colleagues to emphasize that we believe that we live in a dangerous world, but we also should be guided by principles. Those principles should ensure that Americans do not have to be surveilled in their homes when they are communicating with fellow Americans. We should not be suspect of our telecommunications companies to think that they are in cahoots, collaborating with our government to spy on us.

We realize that there is a difference when we talk about foreign-to-foreign communications, that there is a need for surveillance. And I'm here today to emphasize that we should stand and fight for the protection of the fourth amendment, to protect you in your homes and, at the same time, you can be protected against terrorists, because terrorism depends upon making sure that you have the information.

And when you have a court that is made available under the existing FISA law that was established in 1978 that understands the necessity and the urgency of the law enforcement officers that come to them, then you should support the idea of court intervention whenever someone determines