demonstration program, the idea being to grant scholarships or educational vouchers to these particular students.

Bear in mind a couple of facts: One, the District of Columbia schools have the worst performance record of any inner-city school district in the country in terms of test scores and graduation rate. Only 56 percent of the students in the District of Columbia public schools graduate from those particular schools. Yet, our political opponents here in the Congress remain vehemently opposed to the notion of even trying or experimenting with school choice right here in our backyard in the District of Columbia public schools through the partnership that we are trying to create between the Congress and the District of Columbia public schools.

Despite their adamant opposition, we have a message, those of us who believe in real educational reform, we have a message for those in the other body and here in the House who have been fighting our plans to try to reform and improve the District of Columbia public schools, and for that matter, public education across the lands.

That is that voucher programs, the idea of promoting educational competition through a greater choice and the idea of giving parents the full range of choice across all competing institutions, that is an idea whose time has come. Voucher programs are moving ahead around the country, certainly in Wisconsin, where Milwaukee public schools have now expanded their particular educational choice or voucher program to include 15,000 inner-city students, and in my home State of California, which will have a statewide initiative on the November ballot providing for educational choice through a voucher system.

This is a terribly important debate going on back here in Washington. Let me tell the Members what is at stake here is nothing less than the success of the U.S. economy. According to a James Glassman article in last Tuesdays Washington Post, languishing wages, which is obviously an issue that keeps cropping up in the Republican Presidential primary, languishing wages, this idea of income stagnation in America, can be linked directly to a poor education and training system.

That deficiency begins in our primary and secondary schools, especially in our high schools, where high school test scores and a high school diploma have been watered down to the point of almost becoming meaningless in terms of predicting a student's ability to go on to a higher education institution, or to obtain a good-paying job in the workplace.

Therefore, we are trying to promote greater educational choice. We realize private schools cannot replace public schools, but we believe that the model for U.S. secondary education should be the U.S. higher education system, which is the best in the world. One of the reasons it is the best in the world is because we have robust competition between private and public universities, and that has raised the quality of both. How ironic that we have educational choice in preschool and in higher education. The only place we do not have it is in our primary and secondary schools.

Why is that? Really, U.S. News & World Report last week, I think, points up the reason why we do not have greater educational choice in this country. That is the militant opposition of the teachers unions, which have become the campaign arm of the national Democratic Party, and which are still operating based on an old-fashioned 1940's and 1950's industrial union model.

The largest union is the National Education Association, the NEA. The other union is the American Federation of Teachers. Both of these unions, according to U.S. News & World Report, are ''driving out good teachers, coddling bad ones, and putting bureaucracy in the way of quality education.'' Both of these unions are fiercely opposed to the idea of educational choice and promoting greater competition in education.

They also, of course, donate millions of dollars to the Democratic Party and their candidates. In fact, a second article in the Washington Post last week pointed out that the NEA, the National Education Association, is the largest union in the country, with 2.2 million members. They are the richest, with a nearly $800 million budget. They are also intertwined in Democratic politics, really the campaign arm of the National Democratic Party.

I will conclude, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk more about this in later special orders. I just want to conclude by quoting Stephen Jobs, the founder of Apple Computers, who said he has probably spearheaded giving away more computer equipment to the schools than anybody on the planet, but he has come to the inevitable conclusion that the problem is not one technology can solve, it is a political problem. The problems are unions. You plot the growth of the NEA and the dropping of test scores, and they are inversely proportional. He concludes: ''I am one of those people who believe the best thing we could ever do is go to the full voucher system.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. CHRISTENSEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. CHRISTENSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DEUTSCH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DEUTSCH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HUNTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR EVERGLADES PRESERVATION LEGISLATION, AND ADDRESSING TOPICS WHICH CREATE HAVOC IN THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the Congress for their excellent efforts on behalf of the Everglades in Florida, with their resounding 299 vote of support for the $210 million appropriation for our National Park, the Everglades.

Particularly I would like to thank the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Georgia, NEWT GINGRICH, for appearing in the well and debating this issue with me for the preservation of our endangered Everglades. I think Congress sent a message across America that this is a bipartisan effort to preserve and protect our environment, and I again applaud the Speaker and the gentleman from Texas, [Mr. ARMEY], and others who valiantly supported our efforts, as well as the gentleman from Florida, [Mr. DEUTSCH], and members of the Florida delegation, for their strong, steadfast belief that in order to preserve the quality of life of Florida, we must protect our natural resources, including our water supply.

I would also like to take a moment to commend the Caring Foundation in West Palm Beach, FL, headed by Larry and Betty Brown, who are dear friends of mine. They put on a performance