

life. To my mind, the article reveals more about education and whether a child grows up wanting to read books than all the useless conferences on education that go on in this town. Oprah relates an incident that happened to her as a child that made quite an impression on her. Although she is an avid reader today, her mother was not, and she recalls:

I remember being back in the hallway when I was about 9, and my mother threw the door open and grabbed a book out of my hand and said, "You're nothing but a something, something worm. Get your butt outside. You think you're better than the other kids."

Mr. Speaker, this kind of attitude has harmed the education and future prospects of many children in America. They are not told that books and an education are the ticket to future success.

During all the talk about education reform, let us remember that attitudes and values placed on education are what matters most. Loving parents and teachers who teach the importance of learning matter, plain and simple.

#### SAFE SCHOOLS FOR OUR CHILDREN—A COMMITMENT WORTH FIGHTING FOR

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, this month our Nation's children will return to school, but for many of these children a schoolroom is not a place to learn but a place to survive. Like our roads and bridges, our Nation's schools are crumbling.

In my district in New York, children are trying to learn in conditions that we should be ashamed of, crumbling walls, leaking roofs, and overcrowding. How can a child be expected to learn to read and write when the walls are literally falling down around them?

Earlier this year the Republicans killed our plan to provide \$10 billion to help rebuild our schools. The Republicans seem to think that it is OK for children to study in trailers and closets.

Democrats are committed to making sure that every child in this country has a modern, safe school in which to learn. This is a commitment we have made to our children, and it is a commitment worth fighting for.

#### PLO CHAIRMAN ARAFAT MUST KEEP HIS WORD AND CARRY OUT AGREEMENTS

(Mr. SNOWBARGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, again this morning the world is horrified by terrorist violence in Israel. Once again, terrorist bombers have murdered civilians at a Jerusalem marketplace.

When I traveled last month with several of my colleagues to Israel, we met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and PLO Chairman Arafat. In our meeting with Mr. Arafat, we questioned him about the Palestinians' authority, failure to crack down on terrorists, and their continuing incitements and encouragement of violence against Israelis. He claimed to be doing all that he could to prevent terrorism.

But this assertion rings hollow when we contrast the Palestinian Authority's actions or the lack of them with the chairman's words. The Palestinian Authority is obligated to cooperate with Israeli security services but it refuses to extradite known terrorists, and officials of the Palestinian police are themselves implicated in terrorism. It has agreed to refrain from inciting violence and try to prevent others from doing so, and yet key Palestinian officials unleash violent assaults against Israelis, Jews, and Americans.

And Arafat himself has praised terrorists as martyrs. This leads me to question what his words are actually worth. Israelis want peace. They want it so their children can be safer from constant threat of terrorist violence.

Mr. Speaker, we must tell Mr. Arafat that unless he can keep his word and carry out his agreements he has already made, he cannot expect people to take him seriously as a partner in further negotiations.

#### IMPROVE OUR SCHOOLS AND GIVE EVERY KID IN THE NATION A SHOT AT THE AMERICAN DREAM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility as Members of this body to help ensure that every child in this great Nation has a shot at the American dream. Education has always been a critical part of that dream because it is education that opens the doors to opportunity in our society. It is our responsibility to make sure that every American child is taught to read, to write, to compute, and taught all the other skills necessary for them to compete in a global and in a modern economy.

We need to make sure that the kids in Portland, ME are held to the same high standards as the kids in Portland, OR, and that a high school diploma earned in Albany, NY means as much as the diploma that is earned in Albany, GA.

Republicans have vowed to defeat Democratic initiatives and to reform our schools and to ensure that all of America's children receive a quality education and that, in fact, we have high standards that are adhered to in this country. My Republican colleagues even want to get rid of the Department of Education. However, Democrats are united in this effort. We are going to

continue to fight to improve our schools and to give every kid in this Nation a shot at the American dream.

#### DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER ON EDUCATION

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, do not make education a partisan issue. We have now proven that Republicans and Democrats can work together when we are doing something the American people want. We have ended up with a balanced budget, the first time in 31 years. We have ended up with tax cuts, the first time in 16 years. We have been able to work together as Democrats and Republicans because we were doing something the people want. Now we need to work together in education.

My wife was a teacher. My daughter, Juliana, is a teacher in Grand Rapids, MI. My daughter-in-law, Diane, is a teacher. We need to get back to some of the old-fashioned dedication where parents are interested in what their kids are doing in school, and spend time with their kids as well as attending school meetings. We need a renewed respect for teachers in their schoolrooms.

Look, when great people are interviewed and they are asked what was the greatest effect on their lives, they say, my parents, teachers that helped me and inspired me.

We need to get rid of 30 years of liberalism in the classroom. Republicans and Democrats need to work together, not to have the Federal Government manage education, but to develop an environment that encourages parents to be more involved in the decisions that affect their children's educational lives.

#### GET OFF THE TEST ISSUE AND BACK TO EDUCATION

(Mr. GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Michigan, and I agree education should not be a partisan issue. In fact, the bipartisan budget agreement, the education tax cuts to help parents prepare to send their kids to college, increased Pell grants, HOPE scholarships, put our money where our values are. That was bipartisan although it was not part of the original budget package until Democrats talked about it. But now he is right; we need to focus our attention on kindergarten through the 12th grade, public education.

Voluntary national standards should be adopted by the States. Many States are already doing it. Texas has already