

done this. Education is a national concern, but a State and local responsibility. But Congress needs to help. Congress needs to provide assistance to those parents and those teachers and those principals and those people who are working every day to provide that quality education.

The Republican majority was convinced last month, or in July, that college education was helped. Now the American people need to convince this Congress we need to work on public education, kindergarten through 12th grade.

We talk about national tests today, but we are not talking about really quality education. Let us get off the test issue and get back on just talking about education.

□ 1030

#### THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROCKMART, GA

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

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the city of Rockmart, GA, which I am proud to represent, on its 125th anniversary, which it celebrated just last week on August 26, 1997.

Rockmart has a distinguished history as the birthplace of social, economic, and religious trends that have spread across northwest Georgia. Sam Jones, the internationally known 19th century Baptist evangelist, lived in Rockmart. The last survivor of the Revolutionary War in the South, Micajah Brooks, was buried in Rockmart following his death in 1863 at the age of 101½ years.

Rockmart is renowned for the slate and bricks it has exported across the world. Rockmart bricks can be seen on the bricks of London, England, and even occasionally wash up on the shores of Florida.

Rockmart's rich traditions are continued today by its citizens who have the privilege of living in one of the most friendly and beautiful communities in the entire country. The Rockmart of today combines the charm of smalltown America with economic opportunities with an envied quality of life that continues to grow on a daily basis. It is a fortunate person indeed who can claim Rockmart, GA, as their home, and it is a fortunate Member of Congress who has the honor of representing such a beautiful, all-American community in the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### SOFT MONEY MUST BE BANNED

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, as Congress reconvenes this week after suc-

cessfully passing a balanced budget deal, we have a major piece of business that we need to finish, campaign finance reform. Yet when the Republican leadership was asked what was on the agenda for the rest of this year, campaign finance reform was nowhere in sight.

So far this Congress, the Speaker has delayed over and over, refusing to bring up campaign finance reform, refusing to schedule a vote in the first 100 days, refusing to schedule a vote and accepting the President's challenge by July 4. Now he wants to end this year without dealing with campaign finance reform.

Well, many of us feel it is not too late. In fact, the only way to affect the 1998 elections and change the campaign finance system is to pass campaign finance reform now.

We have proposed ending soft money, abolishing soft money. Surely all of us can agree with all of the political hearings that have been held in Washington that there is a need to end soft money. This is a simple thing to do.

The only way we can affect the 1998 elections is to end soft money, and we are going to begin that battle this week.

#### SPEND EDUCATION DOLLARS IN THE CLASSROOM

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

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quickly go on record before I talk for a minute about education to say AL GORE has some interesting things in the news today in respect to what my Democratic colleague just indicated on campaign finance reform.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the concept that no one knows more about the educational needs of a child than his parents and his teacher. No one knows more about the educational needs of a community than local school boards.

To most of us, this is just common sense. It is obvious. But it is apparently not obvious to those who for decades have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into a Federal education bureaucracy that has done little, if anything, to improve education in the classroom.

It is time to turn that around. It is time to focus our attention on what goes on in the classroom and the community and not what goes on in Washington, DC.

I support the initiatives in Congress that give parents, teachers, and school boards a stronger voice in the education of our children. Initiatives like the Dollars for the Classroom resolution, which puts children first by calling for 90 percent of Federal education dollars to be spent in the classroom and not on the perpetuation of a Federal bureaucracy.

#### AMERICANS DESERVE A VOTE ON SOFT MONEY

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in rising and asking for a vote on campaign finance reform. I understand the desire of many Members of this House to go home and talk about the things that have been accomplished to date, and no doubt there is much that has been accomplished.

But we have unfinished business, Mr. Speaker. Education obviously is one piece of that business, but when we do it, we need to speak with a credible voice. We are not going to speak with a credible voice unless the American people really believe that the people here are voting on their interests, the interests of the American people, and not on special interests. We can do that if we address campaign finance reform. We should talk about it in the most comprehensive terms, but we should at the very least talk about doing away with soft money.

No matter what party may have had grievances in the past, no matter what individuals may be called into question, the only way that this body gets any bit of comprehensive faith and trust from the American people is if we take on the issue, we debate it, we deliberate, and we vote on campaign finance reform before we go home this session. It is the American people's business; it is our business to see to it.

#### FIRST SURPLUS IN 30 YEARS ANTICIPATED

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

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to encourage my Democrat colleagues who are calling for campaign finance reform to start with the Vice President and the hearings today, and let's make sure the laws on the books today are being adhered to.

I rise today with good news for this country. CBO put out new numbers yesterday, and it is more likely than ever that next year, 4 years ahead of schedule, for the first time since 1969 we will have a balanced budget. For first time since 1969, it is going to force Washington to deal with something they haven't dealt with in 30 years, and that is a surplus. For first time since 1969, next year we start looking at a budget surplus.

We need to remember, however, that even after we reach a balanced budget, we still have a \$5.4 trillion debt. In order to address this issue, we have introduced the National Debt Repayment Act. It would require that one-third of the surplus be used to reduce taxes further, and two-thirds go to pay down the Federal debt; and in paying down the