

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order in honor of the late but great Congressman Frank Tejeda.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon in strong support of the President's education initiative. Working together, the Congress and the White House can ensure that every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old work the Internet, and every 18-year-old attend college. These are lofty goals. However, if we can fulfill them, we will help ensure that the 21st century, like the current one, is America's century.

Last night the President spoke of setting world-class educational standards. I wholeheartedly support this goal. Setting high standards means challenging our teachers and students to be the very best they can be. It means challenging business to support education. It means challenging legislators at every level to ensure that our schools have the resources they need to provide every child in America with a world-class education.

Mr. Speaker, I want to work with my colleagues on the Committee on Appropriations, Democrat and Republican, to ensure that the Federal Government lives up to its commitment to education.

In the President's State of the Union, the President announced the America Reads initiative, which will harness the volunteer spirit of our citizens and the knowledge of our Nation's educators to ensure that every fourth-grader can read on his or her own.

I am proud that a college in my district, Pace University, is one of the 60 colleges that has already pledged to place work-study students in tutoring programs. This initiative epitomizes the types of activities we all should encourage and support: students working their way through college by helping to improve the lives of their neighbors' children.

My home State of New York is well on its way to setting rigorous academic standards for all children. New York's plan will challenge every school to graduate every student with a diploma that businesses and colleges will recognize as proof of a rigorous education. Those local schools that struggle at first will be given a helping hand and a chance to improve, but no one gets a free pass. I would encourage other States to look at New York's plan as they work on their own State's standards.

Mr. Speaker, some of the greatest support for higher standards comes from teachers and parents, but they cannot turn things around on their own. They do need the Government's help to ensure that every school is prepared for new challenges that await them. Sadly, however, too many of our public schools are in no condition to meet these challenges.

I would hope that my colleagues would check the physical conditions of schools in their own area. I did, and found too many examples of unsafe conditions and serious overcrowding. Last year I released a GAO report, along with my colleague in the Senate, CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN, that confirmed what too many students and teachers already know: that some of our Nation's schools are literally falling down. The problem is especially severe in New York City, where two-thirds of the schools reported that their environment is inadequate for learning. Right now, not far from this Capitol building, there are public schools that were temporarily closed because they are unsafe.

Mr. Speaker, the Nation's adults are letting our children down. That is wrong, and it must change. Last year I introduced the School Infrastructure Improvement Act, which would have provided interest subsidies to schools to make needed repairs. I also offered an amendment in the Committee on Appropriations to provide \$150 million to make urgent repairs in the most dilapidated schools around the Nation. Local communities can sometimes find it just too tough to do it on their own and they need our help.

In response, the President has announced that his budget will include \$5 billion to help finance \$20 billion in school construction and repair over the next 4 years. This money can also be used to help link our schools to the Internet so that one day soon every 12-year-old will be able to walk into his classroom or school library and link up with the Library of Congress or a local university, or a national newspaper, or a student on the other side of the world. I am working closely with the President on this initiative and plan to introduce legislation to help make it happen.

The President's education vision also includes affordable college for every student. His plan includes a series of monumental student aid initiatives that will ensure that cost is no longer an obstacle to a college degree.

His \$1,500 HOPE scholarships, available for 2 years of college, will put a community college degree within reach of every family. More than 4 million lower- and middle-income students would be helped by these scholarships. Families can opt instead for an annual \$10,000 tax deduction to help send their sons and daughters to college. In addition, families could begin saving for their child's future college education while they are still young by opening a tax-free education saving account. These education IRA's will create investment capital for business now, and provide tax free withdrawals for college tuition down the road,

when high school graduation rolls around. And as a mother of three grown children, I know that that time arrives before you know it.

I strongly support these targeted tax cuts to make college more affordable. In addition, the Federal Government must maintain its commitment to grant-based aid for those families and students struggling just to get by each day. The President recognizes this. That's why he has proposed to increase Pell grants from \$2,700 to \$3,000—the largest increase in Pell grants in two decades. Over 3.6 million students now eligible would receive a much needed \$300 grant increase, and an additional 130,000 families could take advantage of the Pell program.

Practically everyone in this body went to college. That same opportunity should exist for all Americans. These proposals will help give them that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the President's education plan will make it clear once and for all that he is, indeed, the Education President. I hope that when the dust settles and the 105th Congress adjourns next year, this Congress will be known as the Education Congress. I will certainly do what I can to make that happen.

THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, we are here today really to talk about a very important issue. That is the issue of the balanced budget amendment and how Social Security relates to that issue.

TRIBUTE TO THE GREEN BAY PACKERS

Mr. Speaker, before I begin on that issue, I would like to take just a moment to pay special tribute to my idea of some real American heroes, the world champion Green Bay Packers. I would like to express our personal thanks to the players, Coach Holmgren, General Manager Ron Wolf, President Bob Harlan, and thousands of faithful friends all across this country and the Packers as a whole who have now reestablished themselves as world champions in the football world.

There is more to this than just the football world, and I think that is important. While winning the Super Bowl is exciting, far more credit should be given to the Green Bay players, who serve as role models for young people in our communities in Wisconsin. Parents can help their children understand the importance of living their values by pointing to role models who are also on this Green Bay Packers team, such as Reggie White. Reggie's success on the football field has not distorted his Judeo-Christian values. The fame he has earned as minister of defense has not led him to an immoral lifestyle. Instead, he has used his reputation and resources to help those in need. He has set his goals high and worked hard to reach them. He has kept his worldly fame in perspective, and has used it to share an eternal view.