There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to the provisions of Section 703 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.903) as amended by Section 103 of Public Law 103–296, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following member to the Social Security Advisory Board to fill the existing vacancy thereon:

Ms. Jo Anne Barnhart, Arlington, Virginia.

There was no objection.

SCHOOL FUNDING IN AMERICA NEEDS OUR HELP

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to an article that appeared yesterday in the USA Today written by columnist DeWayne Wickham entitled ''Cash-Short Schools Need Nike More Than Twain.''

In order to make up for shortfalls in their educational budget, the school system in Seattle has figured out a creative way to gather and galvanize funds for the school system. They have invited commercial advertisers into school grounds and school property to advertise to help make up for the shortfall.

I say to this Chamber and I say to colleagues on both sides of the aisle, what kind of message are we sending people in America? We can find money for programs throughout the budget. When it comes to children, we have to ask corporate America, and I salute our private citizens and the private sector for coming forward, but at a time when prison construction is growing at a rapid and exponential rate, Mr. Speaker and Members on both sides of the aisle, in this bipartisan fervor, what kind of message are we sending the children, schools, parents, and teachers throughout this Nation when we do not have the courage, the temerity or the will to step up to the plate and make sure that future generations of America are prepared, equipped, and ready for the challenges that we face in the 21st century marketplace.

[From USA Today, Mar. 11, 1997]

CASH-SHORT SCHOOLS NEED NIKE MORE THAN TWAIN

(By DeWayne Wickham)

The Washington Bullets do it. So do the Indianapolis Colts, Boston Celtics and New York Yankees. But if opponents get their way, Seattle's school system won't be following the lead of these and other major sports franchises. While the moguls of pro sports are lining their pockets with revenue from deals that transform sporting venues into giant billboards, Seattle's cash-strapped system is embroiled in a debate over whether to allow ''reputable'' companies to advertise their products on school grounds. Cigarette and liquor ads would not be allowed.

The system's bean counters predict that the sale of advertising on athletic field scoreboards and at selected locations inside school buildings might generate $1 million annually. That's roughly 8.5% of the $35 million funding shortfall facing Seattle schools over the next three years.

But the plan, approved by the school board in November, is under attack. Last week, it tabled a call by its school superintendent to suspend the proposal. The superintendent's request followed complaints from people who want Seattle's schools to be an advertising-free zone. Like the constitutional separation of church and state, they think this divide should be a basic tenet of our way of life. I think they need a reality check.

Schools already are overrun with advertising. The free kind. Most of it is worn into classrooms by schoolchildren. They are human ads for Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Nike and a host of other name-brand makers. Banning advertising won't stop the walking commercials that many fashion-conscious students have become. The only thing this policy reversal will do is deepen the school system's financial problems.

The projected budget deficit, a result of caps on state education aid and property tax rates, has forced the board to consider requiring thousands of middle and high school students to ride public buses to save on transportation costs. As this revenue crisis deepens, opponents remain unmoved. They say students are a captive audience, and it isn't fair to allow companies to target them, even if it would bring in some badly needed cash. But if the job of schools is to prepare youngsters for the real world, why not introduce them to it by opening the doors to advertisers? The benefit of doing so can be more than financial.

School systems that permit advertising are in a better position to influence the kinds of ads students see. They can reject moronic, tasteless ads. Conditioning advertisers to make more intelligent, less socially offensive commercials can produce some valuable, long-term rewards. Commercial ads are an important part of this nation's pop culture. Like it or not, the Energizer Bunny is probably better known to most schoolchildren than Mark Twain. But that can change.

Forced to compete for the chance to put their images before youngsters—many of whom will be making lifelong product choices—advertisers will bend over backward to satisfy the demands of educators for the highest quality commercial messages. Enter Mark Twain.

That's the kind of change school officials ought to be climbing over each other to achieve. Students who grow up with smart ads will become adults who expect no less from product promoters. That's a small but important victory against the dumbing of America.

Seattle can turn its fiscal crisis into an educational triumph for students—and advertisers. Or it can fool itself into believing that by refusing to accept paid ads, city schools will be commercial-free zones.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

DECERTIFICATION

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my feelings about certification of Mexico. I feel very strongly about this issue because I despise what drugs are doing to this Nation. It is a scourge that is ravishing our most precious resource: our youth.

Unfortunately, we know this all too well in the area of the Nation that I represent, south Texas. Daily in our papers and on the news, we see the devastation that is occurring with the impact that drugs are having on our children and our communities. It is a problem that I am committed to addressing, and one that is a priority of mine.

I know, however, that this is not a problem that I alone can solve. If we are to win the war, it will take a united effort. By that I mean efforts must be made on every level: local, State, and Federal. Just as important are the efforts we must make in our own homes. Only by joining together in combating this epidemic will we ever be able to declare victory.

That is why the issue of certification is so important to me. We are all aware that the drug problem is not unique nor internal to our Nation. It is an international crisis. As it affects us, so does it affect our neighbor to the north and our neighbor to the south. So when I say we must work together, I mean all of us, because we share borders. By doing so, and only by doing so, can we begin to turn the tide.

On March 1 the President certified Mexico, and since then we have heard from many who feel this was not a wise decision, that they are not making enough of an effort in this battle. I, however, feel that to take any action other than certification would be counterproductive, injurious, and unfair. I say this because I think it is we, in the long run as a nation, who ultimately will lose.

First, let us look at the facts. Last year Mexico seized 30 percent more marijuana than in 1995, 78 percent more heroin than in 1995, 7 percent more cocaine than in that same year, and arrested 14 percent more drug traffickers than this in 1995. Those are substantial numbers, showing the improvement that has been made. They are impressive numbers. What these figures tell me is that Mexico is making the effort, that Mexico is cooperating. Why then do we want to send back a message that says, nice try, but you failed?

In addition, Mexico has greatly improved its record on extraditions. During 1996 Mexico extradited a record number of individuals. Two of these

were Mexican nationals wanted in the United States for drug-related crimes.

Additionally, Mexico expelled drug kingpin Juan Garcia Abrego. These facts speak for themselves, showing that diligent efforts are being made by the Government of Mexico.

In my hand I have a letter from the Ambassador of Mexico responding to the charges that have been leveled against our neighbor to the south.

I would like to quote the following:

> Mexico is aware that much more needs to be done by us and other countries in the fight against drugs. This is a permanent fight, not just an annual exercise. While there have been failures and setbacks, they are mostly due to the magnitude of the problem and the power of the enemy, not to a lack of political will by our country.
>
> The reason why we fight against drugs is not to get a grade or a certification from anyone. We fight against drugs because we want to preserve our institutions, because we want to protect our youth, and because we are convinced that we need international cooperation to effectively deal with this gigantic problem.

Decertification will also result in severe economic, social, and cultural ramifications along our Nation's border. When bad things happen to Mexico, bad things happen to us in south Texas. When Mexico goes into a recession, my counties go into a recession. When illegal immigration increases due to crises in Mexico, then it increases in my 11 counties.

□ 1715

When the peso drops, retail and real estate sales drop. When friendly relations with Mexico are strained, the people of my district also suffer. To turn our backs on our neighbor is to jeopardize the progress they have made. We need to recognize their commitment and the work they have done to date.

Again, let me reiterate, on March 1, the President certified Mexico. Then we have heard from many who feel this was not a wise decision.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I appreciate the opportunity to have been able to have given my first 5 minutes.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to proceed out of order and present my 5-minute remarks at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DIAZ-BALART). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

UNFAIR GOVERNMENT COMPETITION WITH SMALL BUSINESS

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, when the White House Conference on Small Business met in 1995, it listed unfair government competition with small businesses as one of its top concerns and most serious problems. This is not a new problem. In fact, during the Eisenhower administration in 1955, the administration felt it necessary to adopt as official U.S. policy the following statement:

> The Federal Government will not start or carry on any commercial activity to provide a service or product for its own use if such product or service can be procured from private enterprise through ordinary business channels.

Yet every day in almost every congressional district, big government agencies are competing with small businesses. This is why I have introduced H.R. 716, the Freedom from Government Competition Act. This legislation is supported very strongly by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Coalition for Fair Competition, and numerous other professional associations, too many to list at this time.

In addition, H.R. 716 already has more than 20 cosponsors from both parties and Senator CRAIG THOMAS has introduced a companion bill in the Senate. This legislation will require that Federal agencies get out of private industry and stick to performing those functions that only Government can do well. At the same time, it will allow our great private free enterprise system to do those things it does best, providing commercial goods and services in a competitive environment.

Under the Freedom From Government Competition Act, Federal agencies will be required to identify those Government activities that can be performed more cost effectively and efficiently by the private sector. After these areas are identified, the private sector will have the opportunity to compete for providing those goods and services. In 1987, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that 1.4 million Federal employees were engaged in so-called commercial activities. The Heritage Foundation has estimated that if we contracted out those commercial activities to private industry, we could save taxpayers at least $9 billion a year.

In addition to saving taxpayers money, the Freedom From Government Competition Act will help spur the growth of private businesses. This, in turn, will increase our tax base. In other words, we can reduce Federal spending and increase the revenues taken in by the Federal Government at the same time without raising taxes.

With a debt of almost $5.5 trillion, this is the kind of legislation we need to actively pursue. H.R. 716 is a modest proposal. It does not require the Government to contract out everything. I realize that the Government performs a number of functions that only the Government should do. In fact, this legislation specifically exempts those functions which are inherently governmental. If the Government can do something cheaper and better than the private sector, then it will be allowed to continue to do so under this legislation.

Nonetheless, all too often Government agencies are involved in activities that it cannot do well. In the end, this winds up hurting small businesses costing taxpayers hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars and hurts the economic growth of our private sector.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, we should pin a medal on anyone who can survive in small business today. Everything we do in big government seems only to benefit extremely big business. I have nothing against big business. However, big businesses seem to get almost all of the tax breaks, the big government contracts, the favorable regulatory rulings and all sorts of incentives such as free land or other inducements. We do very little for small businesses, and this is why so many of them are going under or are in a real struggle to survive. This is one thing we can do for small businesses. This is a small step in the whole scheme of things. However, this legislation will go a long way toward helping our small businesses survive.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government were the answer to all of our problems, then the Soviet Union would have been heaven on Earth. But our Founding Fathers felt that most problems could be solved through the private sector and that Government should only do those things that the people could not do for themselves. The Freedom From Government Competition Act will return this great country to the type of governing system that our Founding Fathers envisioned. I hope my colleagues will help me stop big government agencies from competing with small businesses and join me in supporting the Freedom From Government Competition Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. HULSHOF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 412, OROVILLE-TONASKET CLAIM SETTLEMENT AND CONVEYANCE ACT

Mr. GOSS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–19) on the resolution (H. Res. 94) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 412) to approve a settlement agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.