

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am sure our colleagues will no doubt remember this very famous photograph. This is the photograph where Speaker GINGRICH and President Clinton shook hands on July 11, 1995, and pledged to this Nation that they would reform the campaign finance system under which we govern.

Mr. Speaker, since that time, President Clinton in the State of the Union asked the House of Representatives to pass campaign finance reform by July 4. The House of Representatives stonewalled.

Yesterday, President Clinton again asked the House and vowed he would fight for campaign finance reform, and yet we have heard nothing from Speaker GINGRICH. In fact, we have heard nothing from Speaker GINGRICH on this subject, except that he believes we need more money in campaigns and not less money. But he will not schedule campaign finance reform for the House. He will not lead an effort to reform this system. He has continued to stonewall this.

Mr. Speaker, we need more than this from the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The people's House and the people deserve campaign finance reform. Mr. Speaker, I say to Speaker GINGRICH, "Live up to your pledge. Live up to your handshake. Give the people the reform we need."

SCHOOL CHOICE IS THE ANSWER

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

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, if we were a manufacturer that produced an inferior product, what would we think if we had to face real competition for the first time? My guess is that we would feel the same as those government-owned schools which are absolutely terrified by school choice.

Mr. Speaker, they are terrified by school choice because they know that kids whose parents do not have the money to move or to send their kids to a private school have no choice but to send their kids to another government school where they have to pass through metal detectors, where there is no order in the classroom, and where the idea of standards and accountability leave them lagging behind their international peers.

Government-owned schools have a complete monopoly, plain and simple, and all monopolies fear competition. I can 100 percent guarantee an inferior product of any human endeavor if producers are shielded from competition, if producers are not forced to innovate and improve.

Mr. Speaker, just look at the Communist legacy in every single case, especially education. The bureaucrats who just love their government-owned schools and want to protect their monopoly will do so at just about any

cost, regardless of whether kids have to receive an inferior education and blighted futures.

Mr. Speaker, it is wrong and I have lost patience with those who refuse to do best for the kids. School choice is the answer.

SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION

(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, what are government-owned schools? Public education. And public education in this great Nation of ours has always been the great equalizer, for it is in fact public education that affords the child of a garment worker, like myself, the same opportunities as the children of university professors, political figures, and business leaders.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would work as hard as they can to see the destruction of public education in this country. Today on this floor they will propose to cut Goals 2000, cut Whole School Reform, cut Safe and Drug Free Schools, vital initiatives that in fact, yes, have proven to work.

That is why Democrats are fighting against these Republican efforts. These initiatives help to make our schools safer. They get parents more involved in education. They help school districts to buy new textbooks and train teachers, and they help our students to meet the high standards to ensure that they are learning the basics in reading and mathematics and writing.

Mr. Speaker, that is the direction that we should be going in. I urge my colleagues to support and strengthen fundamental school reform and support our public education system.

EDUCATION REFORM MUST BE A TOP PRIORITY

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Alexis de Toqueville wrote in his famous work, "Democracy in America" that, "In America, there cannot be enough of knowledge, for all knowledge benefits those who possess it and those who do not."

Now, Alexis de Toqueville is quoted all the time, but there is a very good reason for it. He is often right on the mark, so insightful, and so remarkable in his judgment. And de Toqueville's commentary here on the value of knowledge, about how education is important to everyone, is an example of his wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, education is an issue that is important to those with children and those without. If a generation of American schoolchildren is receiving an inferior education, that is a serious problem of concern to us all.

Of course, the reality is that some of our Nation's schools are excellent, some undistinguished and some simply a disgrace. But it is the general trend toward mediocrity, the systematic dumbing down of curricula, textbooks, and standards that I find more alarming.

Mr. Speaker, I know that millions of parents agree, and that is why education reform must be a top priority.

REPUBLICANS SHOULD JOIN WITH DEMOCRATS TO ADDRESS CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning just to speak briefly about campaign finance reform and the need for this House to address that issue before we go home this fall.

Mr. Speaker, whatever business we do in this House requires that the American people have some faith and confidence in what we do and what action we take. Credibility is something that is lacking as long as the American public senses that we do not have the will to address the issue that is foremost on their minds, underlying all of the other issues which we will debate and are to debate, and that is whether or not we can do away with the perception that money, soft money or hard money, has way too much influence in the way that business is conducted in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans want to say that this is the responsibility of somebody else, but I tell my colleagues that it was Democrats in the 105th, 102d, and 103d Congresses that brought this issue to the forefront. It was President Bush that vetoed campaign finance reform when it passed, and it was the Senate, led by the Republicans, that stopped it.

Mr. Speaker, there are some Republicans in the House that now want to move forward on this issue. But if they had the majority on their side, and the Republicans are the majority, we would be moving forward on that issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, the responsibility lies with the Republican side of the House to join with the Democrats and deal with the issue of campaign finance reform.

CONGRESS SHOULD EMPOWER PARENTS, NOT BUREAUCRATS

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

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, in today's newspaper we learned that the Journal of the American Medical Association is publishing a national study that found when teenagers feel connected to their parents and to their schools, they are less likely to suffer emotional distress, consider suicide, engage in violence, smoke, drink, use drugs, or have early sex.