bad, that it is not producing youngsters who can read or write, that it is a dangerous place, their schools are dangerous places to be, that they are not being run properly, and, therefore, one change that could be made, which was the amendment that was offered today by some of our friends on the other side of the aisle which was to take billions of dollars from the Department of Education and giving it to, in fact, the places that are responsible for a poorly run system.

The Federal Government is only about 6 or 7 percent of the Federal budget that is engaged in the public school system. It is a small amount of money. The Federal Government is not running the education system in the United States. In fact, most of the emphasis is in States with local school boards. Yet there are people here who would like to talk about how bad the institution is on the one hand and yet want to take the billions of dollars from the Federal Government and send it to those who would continue a failing system. It seems wrongheaded, which seems to me to be, as I said, crazy.

Parents today want to make sure that their kids have the best possible education, that there are standards, particularly because parents are not home after school every single day in the way that that used to be the case. They just cannot be. It is economically not feasible.

I used to volunteer my time at the community school in my neighborhood. I had one of the best experiences of my life. I used to teach at that time. I used to go from school to school and teach calligraphy as an afterschool program, a writing program. No one would believe that today, but I was a volunteer in the public school system. I was a substitute schoolteacher in the public school system. I watched community schools, which we took money away from years ago, I watched them open at 7 o'clock in the morning, close at 9 or 10 o'clock at night, and see youngsters and middle school kids and high school kids playing basketball, grandmothers coming in for a program, parents coming in for programs, and this was in an inner city, in the city of New Haven. But we ended that. We did not think that that was such a hot idea.

Now we have got, as I said, mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles in the workplace, and we do not have community schools where kids can go to. Instead of focusing our time and our effort and our resources at making this existing system a better place, we are spending our time denigrating it and trying to put an end to it.

There has been an attempt by some on the other side of the aisle to try to eliminate the Department of Education. I think the American people spoke loud and clear about that, and they said no. I think that we are seeing trying not to go at decimating the Department of Education in one fell swoop, but looking at it piece by piece. As I mentioned the amendment today, which, thank God, was ultimately withdrawn, that amendment would have eliminated Federal initiatives that do work, safe and drug-free schools, school-to-work program, and a whole variety of other programs that are working.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her remarks. I also want to commend her for her leadership in another area of education which is vitally important, and that is on the issue of early childhood development. She has been a leader, and it is something that this Congress needs to focus more attention on.

□ 1800

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey, [Mr. PALLONE] will be recognized for the balance of the minority leader's hour and for the gentleman's information, that is 16 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I thank my colleague. I just want to say, I find that we are looking at another tool in the arsenal of some of my Republican colleagues when they are talking about education issues today. I think this is worth pointing out. The kind of new catch phrases and code words to hide some of this effort to try to, if you go back when we were talking about school lunch and we were talking about the whole variety of educational programs, the single biggest cuts in education in the history of the country were initiated in the last session of Congress by the majority. So they were unable, and thank God, really unable to succeed in that effort, mainly because the American public spoke out loud and clear.

But there is kind of a new tool in this arsenal, the catch phrases and code words. I just want to call my colleagues' attention to something that was produced by Frank Luntz, who is a Republican pollster, as part of a series of materials. This one is called Education: A Smarter American.

If I can just mention a couple of things here, it says ''overview.'' This was put together to present to the Republican majority as a communications tool, how to talk about specific issues, not what to do about them but how to talk about the issue.

Education: A Smarter America. Overview. ''We have been able to isolate specific words, sentences and ideas that may help Republicans sell their education legislation and undercut the President.''

I mean, that is the first item of this document. If I can give you some examples, what Luntz is trying to do is teach people, as I said, how to talk about destroying America's public schools in a way that makes it sound as if they are doing the opposite. Again, as I say, a few examples. He recommends that Members, ''talk about children in almost every sentence.'' If you listen closely to the debate on this floor, you can hear it loud and clear. Yet when it comes to putting money where their mouth is, sometimes the majority is leaving America's kids out in the cold.

As I pointed out before, it was the Republican majority, and this is not all, believe me, this is not everyone, because there are reasonable people on the other side of the aisle who in fact do believe that we need to foster a good, solid and strong education system.

They try to eliminate the Department of Education. They insist that the bipartisan budget agreement not include any money for school construction, and they have been pushing a voucher program that my colleague from New Jersey mentioned before that would siphon off needed funds for public schools.

I think one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle brought up a New York situation with regard to the voucher program and said well, you know there has been a commitment to assist 1,000 youngsters in being able to go to the school of their choice.

I applaud that effort. I do. I think that is a good thing. But that is 1,000 youngsters. We have hundreds of thousands of youngsters. If we begin to pull out money and resources from the public school system to only help a few, we then go back to what we dealt with years and years ago, which is education is the purview of the privileged and of the few, that is not what it is about. It is what public education has stood for, is to be there for everyone to take and get that opportunity that my colleague from North Carolina talked about before.

Mr. PALLONE. Just briefly, just to give you an example, I know for example in my local schools how difficult it is for them just to provide the curriculum that they would like to provide. In other words, if they do not have enough money to hire a teacher at the end of the year, they may not be able to have an advanced placement course or have a program for the disadvantaged or a sports program. You talk about starting to take the money away from vouchers from the public schools, even in a small way, even if it impacts 5 or 10 or 1 percent of their budget, that is going to mean no advanced placement classes, no tutorials for kids having a problem reading. They may have to abolish one of their sports programs, because they are on tight budgets. It is not pie in the sky where they have the opportunity to spend all kinds of money. Everything they do is watched. Most of it is subject to an annual referendum about how much they spend.

Ms. DELAURO. I wanted to make one comment, because I think this voucher program, which is going to be the subject of great debate here, in his documents Frank Luntz goes so far as to

admit that the American people are against the Republican voucher program, so he advises Members to call their program, a direct quote, ''opportunity scholarships.''

Opportunity scholarships. I mean, that is how far we have come here, where we are changing the nature of words to describe a way in which we want to wreck havoc on the public school system, and in fact take this money, taxpayer funds, out of public schools into private and religious schools. That is not the direction we should be going.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, the point is what you are talking about is truly taking money, not putting additional money in for anything. I was in a school just this past Monday, and schools have changed. I think a lot of folks forget how much they have changed. And this is just not in an upscale neighborhood or in a poor neighborhood, or even in a middle class neighborhood. This is in all neighborhoods, by and large.

These were two-parent households. They are dropping their children off at school at 6:15 in the morning. They have the gym open, where the parents were paying for prior to school opening at 8 o'clock. They were picking the children up at 6 p.m.

These folks work in textile plants. Some of them work in the Research Triangle in North Carolina, in which they make good money, so they pay the full cost of the before and after school child care.

My point in making this is a point you just made. Schools have changed dramatically. We are asking people in education to do more than just educate children.

There are a lot of folks who would like for schools to continue to have custodial care. That means you take care of them during the day and teach them when you can, but just take care of them.

It is about more than that. It is about education, it is about opportunity, and it is about giving that child a vision of where he or she can go, what he or she can be, and what the future holds.

Go visit most any school today and you will see bankers, you will see astronauts in the schools, you will see a lot of business people, because in most communities now they are starting to form those partnerships. That is why when you talk about the polling data, it says we are not in favor of vouchers, we are really in favor of the public schools. We realize they are working hard to change.

Our friend from Massachusetts talked a while ago, and I must get this personal point in, about how hard teachers work. Teachers, by and large, and I think this would be true anywhere in this country, put in 50 to 60 hours every week when school is in session. I believe that. I have a wife who works in the public school system. I have two children, one who is teaching the second grade and the other who will start. I know how hard they work. I have seen them work, because their day does not end when they leave.

They are a little bit like legislators. They carry work home with them, but they have to bring it back the next day prepared for the student, they have to prepare the lesson plan and grade those papers.

That is why I think it is so important that at the highest level, in this Congress, and I am glad the President has made it a high priority and raised that vision, and I think he has given educators an awful lot of hope and the American people a lot of hope, that we are going to pay attention to education. Even though we do not put the bulk of the money to the K–12 level, we can do a lot toward raising the vision and the hope.

We have seen business people across this country come together and say ''we want to be your partner.'' I think that is why we are seeing such strong indications of their help. I am very committed to that.

Mr. PALLONE. I just wanted to say it is interesting what you said about President Clinton, because I think he has done more to basically be an advocate for prioritizing education on the Federal level than really anybody else.

I watch him, and I have watched over the years how he has approached it. I think a lot of it just comes from his own background, having grown up in not a wealthy background by any means. I think his father had actually died before he was born or when he was 6 months old, and he had a rough time.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Without the public schools, he would not have had the opportunities.

Mr. PALLONE. Exactly. He went from public school to very good universities. He was a Rhodes Scholar. He is really sort of the example of how everything can open up and, given equal opportunity, that people really can achieve great things, can become the President of the United States.

I think all the Democrats are saying is we want that to be true for the next generation and generations to come. We do not want that opportunity to be lost, because it may very well be if we do not continue to prioritize the public schools.

I think that is really what may be the reason why so many of us in our party feel so strongly about these education initiatives, because we have seen it ourselves.

You and I were talking earlier about how many Members of Congress went through public schools and how oftentimes we will see those very same Members get up, sometimes on the other side of the aisle, and talk about vouchers or ways that we think will actually drain public school resources.

Sometimes I just wish they would look at themselves in the mirror as an example at how they got here to these hallowed halls, so-to-speak, and it was mostly through public education.

So do not tear it apart. Try to come up with ways that will improve it. That is really all we are saying. I mean, we keep saying it over and over again. We worked on it a lot with the budget in terms of higher education and providing more opportunity and more money that is available, and now we are saying we have to do the same thing with the secondary schools, with preschool, all the way to high school graduation.

Ms. DELAURO. We have to give parents the sense and the confidence that the teachers are accountable, that their kids are learning, and they have a role and a responsibility. We can do that. That has been the way of the public school system in the past. We do not have to take the resources out and, again, as I said before, make education the purview of the few and not the many.

Parents want to know there are standards that are being met. They want it better for their kids. It is what everybody's parents here wanted for their kids.

My dad could not speak English when he came to this country and he suffered for that, because at that time he was in a school where his classmates and teachers laughed at him because he could not speak the language and he left school. Sure, he did fine and did OK. He worked very hard so that I could get an education and I could realize my dreams. But, my God, would it not have been an easier road if we had an understanding, like we try to do today with the great diversity of our public schools, which has made it as strong as it can possibly be.

That is what we need to be about. That is what the great strength of this country is about; it is diversity. That is what its schools need to foster, and make each and every piece of that effort as strong as it can possibly be, and not leave a shell where the public school system used to be.

As I said, this is not a partisan issue. This is a national issue, and we need to try to come together so that we can recognize where there are things that are wrong, agree that they need to be changed, and put our mind and our resources to making the change for the betterment of our country and for our kids.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. If the gentlewoman would yield, I could not agree more. One of the things we need to keep in mind as we are talking about our schools as they change, et cetera, is the public school system that we now see and that has served us well does not go to the founding of this country.

Truthfully, in a lot of States, particularly the southern States, we are talking about the turn of the century. If you dropped out of school, there was a job in business, somewhere in industry, and a place you could be plugged in.

Today we are asking the public schools to have 100 percent graduates,

we are asking them to be at a much higher level than they ever have been. So schools are changing. This is a tremendous challenge, and they need all the help to get there, because our economy changed, and as our schools change, they meet some very difficult tasks. All of us can cite some examples that why we made it was because of the public schools, and there are a lot of examples in the Halls of this Congress on both sides, and it is true all across the country.

□ 1815

AIR SERVICE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I am going to share some time with my good friend from the other side of the aisle, but before I do that, I have seen the previous speakers here kind of quote figures on the other side of the aisle and say that some folks do not believe in public education.

I have to tell my colleagues, I am a product of public education. I taught in the public schools for 16 years. I think one of the real issues that these folks missed in this presentation was that people want to make choices for their kids, and I do not think that it is something that we want to decide in bureaucratic offices in Washington, how our kids should be taught, how our money should be spent.

One of the things that we think might be a good idea is to send our money back to where those local schools are and let those local school boards and those local folks who run schools and State organizations decide what is best for those kids in those areas.

One other thing. I heard people talking on the other side of the aisle, saying we want to deflate school because of vouchers. Vouchers give parents a choice, and if public schools are lacking, it is not up to the Congress to give people the confidence in the public schools. It is the public schools themselves that have to build confidence so that parents believe that their children are getting a good education, that they have the opportunities, and when they graduate from that school they are going to have the same opportunities somebody else has.

So I would join with my friends on the other side of the aisle who just gave this presentation, yes, I think public schools are important, but I think parents ought to have choice and I think vouchers ought to be part of that decision. If a parent wants to send a child to a school, he ought to have the choice to do that. So I would say that there is room maybe for more bipartisanship than just the presentation we just saw.

One of the reasons that I have asked for this time tonight is to discuss really an area of economics, far away from education, but to educate people about what is going on in this country especially with competition of major airlines, and competition with a country that has sometimes been a bitter competitor for us, and that is Japan.

Japan entered into an agreement in 1952 that basically limited airline transportation between the United States and Japan between four airlines, two of those airlines from Japan and two airlines from the United States. One of those airlines from the United States has subsequently gone out of business. The other airline has been enjoying most of the air routes between the United States and Japan over the last almost 40 years plus, and as a consequence, the old story, at least out in the countryside where I am from in rural Illinois, about the farmer standing out in his field and somebody coming and saying, ''How do you get to Wright's Corners?'' And the old farmer scratches his head and says, ''Son, you can't get there from here.''

That is a problem, especially in the Midwest. If one wants to fly to Japan from some place like Chicago or Indianapolis or St. Louis or Kansas City or even Atlanta, GA, one cannot get there from there. So what we are saying is there ought to be a change.

What is happening today, there are discussions, high-level discussions between the United States and Japan on changing the way that we put in the regulation on air traffic between the United States, the number of flights between the United States and Japan. The airline who has the sole, not the sole monopoly but a major monopoly of air traffic between the United States and Japan, the American carrier says, well, it is open skies or nothing. In other words, absolutely free regulation, or we stay the same way.

Well, probably we are not going to get to open skies, or at least immediately. Open skies is certainly something that we would like to have, open competition. Open competition means that if one is going to fly as a business trip from Chicago to Tokyo or Chicago to Osaka, instead of paying $4,000 a ticket we may pay less than $3,000 a ticket. That means more people can go, more competition. We have a better infrastructure, interface in business and economic relationships between this country and Japan, and Lord knows we could use that.

However, what happens when we limit the number of flights, especially from the interior of this country, we just cannot get there, so one has to take a train or take another flight to Los Angeles where there are 80-some flights a week, or one has to go to Seattle or San Francisco, or one has to fly to the east coast to get a flight to the Far East, which means one would have to go west.

So it is an issue of fairness. We need to open the skies. We need to have these negotiations take place, but it cannot be all or nothing. What we are looking for is the ability for us to start to open the doors, to allow a place like O'Hare Field, which has one of the largest airfields, at least in capacity and the number of flights that happen in this country. It is No. 1 in this country for domestic passengers, flights in and out and the number of passengers, but we are 30th in the number of trips overseas. So what does that mean? That means that we have less visitors coming from Japan.

If we just had one more flight per day, whether it is a Japanese carrier or an American carrier, out of the Midwest, out of Chicago, an average visitor from Japan spends about $1,500 while they are a guest in this country for a week or 10 days. If we had one more flight a day, that would mean over a year's time we would have almost $15 million more business.

When we start to talk about trying to balance the trade between the United States and Japan, we send a lot of dollars to Japan. We have a lot of Japanese sound equipment and electronic equipment and automobiles. The best thing we can do is try to bring some of those dollars back, and the best way we can capture those dollars is having Japanese tourists come back not just to Washington, DC or New York City or Los Angeles, but yes, to the Midwest and to the South as well.

If we start to open up airline availability so that those people can fly into the Midwest and the mid-South, then we could start to get more people involved, we can start to bring more dollars from Japan here, and certainly even start to balance that imbalance in trade.

One of my colleagues who serves on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and is involved in airline jurisdiction is my good friend from the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LIPINSKI]. I would like to yield to the gentleman at this time and hear his comments.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. It is an honor for me to participate in this special order with the gentleman, but before I get into my comments, I would appreciate it very much if my colleague would yield to a fellow Chicagoan, the gentleman also from Illinois [Mr. DAVIS] on this subject.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, it would be my honor.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I certainly want to thank my colleagues for putting together this opportunity to talk about the needs of the Midwest.

I rise today to join my Illinois colleagues in urging the Clinton administration and the Japanese Government to use this historic opportunity to put an end to the limits on direct air service between Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and Asia. It is imperative that current negotiations with