

My colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is not here. I was going to yield the last 10 or 15 minutes of this special order to him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the Minority Leader.

(Mr. OWENS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to compliment the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA), who spoke before me, a fellow member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. I found his presentation fascinating.

I would certainly like to be a part of discussion on the items that he outlined there and hope that the committee itself officially can take up some of that discussion also. We will all benefit greatly from the kind of macrovision that he brings. And I salute the gentleman.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OWENS. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I would very much look forward to working with my colleague. I realize that it is a complex issue, and I really think that where we are beginning with a macropicture really allows us to go through a learning process in very much a bipartisan way. So thank you very much, and I look forward to working with you.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I salute the gentleman; and I congratulate him on his vision. I hope he understands also that a part of what he is talking about cannot be separated from education, what happens in our schools. He did mention the kind of training the workers will have to have, and that is what I want to talk about again tonight.

Education for the next 3 or 4 months is certainly on my agenda; and I hope to put it on the agenda of most of my colleagues, especially those who are on the Committee on Education and the Workforce. I hope that all the Members of Congress will not let the present discussion that has been launched by the President in his State of the Union address, a list of items that he gave there related to education, I hope that that wonderful list will not get lost. I hope that we will not have a fragmentation of the discussions about education to the point where we have all these tiny, separate discussions going on and there is no focus, no unity and no sense of priorities.

I want to hold on to a sense of priorities within that education list that the President offered. Some things are

more important than others. One thing is key to everything else. Unless we understand that, I think we are going to lose out in our efforts to improve the schools, those schools that need improvement; and the great majority of American schools do need improvement, some more than others.

In the inner city communities, like the ones in my district and in many other big cities, inner city schools are on the verge of collapse. They have lost their education mission already. There is a ceremony going on where the kids come to school. But, for a number of reasons, education of the kind needed to prepare youngsters for the complex society that we live in is not taking place.

So I really want to focus finally on that. I think that some of the other things I have to say are very much related; but, most of all, I want to keep the drumbeat going for the improvement of education. It must be kept on center stage.

There is a dangerous education emergency in the inner city communities of America where most African-American students attend school, and I want to send that message to my constituents and to other representatives of African-American districts and to the people who live in these districts. We have an emergency which is far greater than anything else that exists in American education.

Other schools are in trouble. There is a need for improvement everywhere. Rural schools and schools where poor children attend are probably in similar difficulties to the schools of the inner city where most African-Americans attend school. But all schools can stand some improvement.

□ 2130

The emergency must be recognized, however, in the African American community, with leaders of the African American community. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, everybody in a position which has any influence must be made to understand that our schools are falling behind at a more rapid rate every day.

The indicator of the African American education emergency, which has the highest visibility and the most obvious exposure of neglect, is the dangerous and counterproductive condition of school buildings.

I focused on construction, education and infrastructure, because that is most visible. If we cannot deal with that which is most visible and most obvious, then I have no hope that we are going to deal with the more complex in a meaningful and productive way.

There are a lot of people who want to micro-manage the schools and have an answer for every problem that exists in the schools. Most of the people who have all the answers never took a single course in education at any college anywhere or never read a book on education, but every adult in America has ideas on how to improve education.

But it is important that all of us, leaders and laymen, experts in education, et cetera, admit that there is something obvious that has to be corrected before we go forward on any other level. We cannot improve our schools with respect to the ratio of teachers to pupils in the early grades. That is one of the items on President Clinton's list, and I welcome that item, and we all should. It just makes a whole lot of sense. It is supported by a whole lot of research.

It is not the solution to the problem. Automatically children do not learn by being placed in a situation where there are fewer children with one teacher, but it does improve things a great deal.

However, you cannot have a better ratio of students to pupils unless you have more classrooms. You have got to construct more classrooms. You cannot have a situation where the teacher with the lower ratio of pupils to teacher can do anything, if the classroom that she has to teach in is unsafe, if it is poorly lighted. It is counterproductive with respect to education, and you are going to have no result from the initiative to produce more teachers and smaller classes.

There are many other problems which result in a denial of the opportunity to learn to inner-city, rural and poor children all over America. There are other problems, other than construction, other than the physical infrastructure problem. But the physical condition of the schoolhouse itself tells the story of inadequacy with a loud and clear example.

We do not have to go into abstract reasoning. We do not have to go into syllogisms, deductive or any other kind of reasoning. We do not have to use boolean algebra. It is quite obvious when a school is 100 years old; it is quite obvious when a boiler in a school has a coal burning boiler and it is 70 years old. It is quite obvious there is a problem. It is quite obvious if you have coal burning furnaces in schools, you are contributing to a pollution problem that you are teaching children every day in the classroom should be eliminated. Some things are obvious, and, because they are obvious, it is a good place to start.

So I want to start to continue the drum beat today on this theme. But before I do that, I want to talk about two other items that still relate back to the central theme of we have an educational emergency, and the place to begin to deal with that emergency is to deal with school construction and improvement of the infrastructure, to be real about it, to follow through on the President's proposal that we have \$5 billion for 5 years, which is totally inadequate, but it is a beginning, to use his initiative; to call upon the President to use the bully pulpit of the White House; to call upon the governors and the mayors in cities and states where they have a surplus now, a budget surplus, to let them take the initiative at the local and state level

and deal with this problem of construction and physical infrastructure.

But before I add my new evidence to my argument, the evidence beyond what I stated last week, I do want to take time out to do two things.

One is I want to pay tribute to RONALD DELLUMS. I am very frustrated as one of the admirers of RONALD DELLUMS, my colleague from California, who is resigning from the Congress. I am frustrated because we have had several opportunities to have statements made on the floor on behalf of Mr. DELLUMS, and all of those occasions, the first hour, the second hour, the extra half hour, the extra time made today, all that time has been crowded, and it has been impossible to get the statement in, because so many people from both sides of the aisle have wanted to come forward and praise RONALD DELLUMS.

He is a magnificent human being, he is a magnificent leader, he has been a magnificent Congressman. Certainly whatever RONALD DELLUMS decides to do in the future, he will be a magnificent person in that arena also.

He is leaving the Congress, and his life and record, in my opinion, is a profound statement, and that statement sends a message of inspiration to all ages, including school age students. If I wanted to stay on the theme of education, I could certainly do it in discussing the life of RONALD DELLUMS.

I am by profession a librarian, an educator. As a librarian, I saw how popular biographies were with young people. Probably the section of the library most popular with young people is biographies. The fiction section, of course, is very popular.

Girls, I notice, read a lot of fiction, but girls also read biographies, and boys read a lot of biographies. So, in combination, biography, the study of the life of people, was the most popular section that I saw among young people when I was a librarian. I think it is good that that is so.

I have seen the development of channels on cable television which deal with a lot of biography, the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, the Biography Channel, and I think they are very entertaining and a very good way to pass on knowledge of our history and our culture.

The biography of RONALD DELLUMS is one that fascinates me. In my next career I want to be a writer, I want to write many things of many kinds, but I never was inspired to think of writing somebody's biography until the past few days when I have heard people making statements about RON DELLUMS. I have learned a great deal more about him as a result of these statements and some of his responses to these statements that I never knew before. I had quite a bit that inspired me that I observed on my own, but I have learned so much more.

RON DELLUMS' life is the kind of life you would like to have between the pages of a book on a shelf in a library

where young people come in to read. In terms of being a role model for inner-city African American youth, I can think of no better role model than RONALD DELLUMS, an exciting role model. His life has been an adventure, an adventure of ups and downs and taking great risk and getting pretty close to the edge of the precipice in many cases.

He is a man who is an ex-marine, and young men like the whole macho nature of the Marine Corps and what that means, a guy who is a marine. He also in the crowning achievement of his career became the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services. The Committee on Armed Services is responsible for the legislation relating to the defense of the United States, the defense of the free world, the maintenance of some semblance of law and order in the entire world. That is where this marine rose to, the point that he was at at the height of his career.

How fascinating that is. He recently was given a Medal of Honor at the Department of Defense, and that, too, I am sure is an exciting story for many young people.

But we have learned from RON DELLUMS' own mouth that he was like a lot of inner-city youth out there today, on the precipice, walking on the edge of the cliff in many cases.

He was always very bright in high school and was slated to go places, and there was a chance for him to win a scholarship that would have paid for his entire college education, 4 years in college. But according to RON, in his junior year began to slack up and become interested in girls and the kinds of things and pitfalls that many youth fall into, not only in the inner-city but elsewhere, too. But he was very bright, began to take things for granted, slacked off, and he missed off on winning that scholarship that would have paid his way to college, and his parents were very poor. So he had to begin college working. And like a lot of young people out there, it was tough to work and try to go to college, so he dropped out.

There are a lot of dropouts out there, and they ought to know the story of RON DELLUMS. He dropped out. He could have just kept dropping, but he wanted to make something of his life, and he saw military service as an opportunity. This relates to something my colleague was saying before, it was an opportunity to get an education. Go into the military service, and you come out using the provisions of the GI Bill, and you get an education. You can have an education paid for.

That GI Bill was a revolutionary bill in the history of this country. They gave returning veterans an opportunity. They kept it going for quite a long time after that. So RON DELLUMS decided to join the Marines in order, really, his ultimate goal was to go to college and get an education. When he came out of the Marines, he was true to his dream and went to college and got his bachelor's degree.

While he was in the Marines, his experience there is a good example also to hold up to a whole lot of minority youth out there, African American, Hispanic, Asian, who from time to time, and I know, because I have been there, are going to face outright ugly immediate discrimination staring you in the face. Something is going to happen, and it happens all too frequently, that is going to make you seethe and boil, want to hit somebody, or give up.

RON DELLUMS had that kind of experience while he was in the Marine Corps. He had the highest score on a battery of tests that were given in his battalion. He came out with the highest score of all of the members of his battalion. So naturally there was interest in him. When they saw the score, people who were interviewing people for officers school, candidates for officer's school, wanted to interview RON DELLUMS.

Somebody had made a mistake and had not appropriately noted on the statement recommending that he be interviewed that he was not white, and RON was told by his sergeant to go down to the quonset hut where they were interviewing candidates for officer's school, and, of course, he was thrilled and went down and reported. The officer looked up at him and said, you know, what race are you? They noticed that he looked a bit darker than most whites. And they corrected the error, the omission that had been made, and they told him, you know, we thought you were white. I am sorry, we don't need you. I am not sure they said, I am sorry. They said, we don't need you, we can't use you.

That was one of those points in his life where he could have blown up on the spot and done something outrageous and gotten into serious trouble, or he could have crumbled away into a mass of suffering and feeling sorry for himself and hating the world and given up, but he didn't.

That incident, and many others like that, of course, only gave RON greater strength. So he went on, finished the Marine Corps, finished his college career.

RON DELLUMS came to politics in a very strange way. He was not seeking to run for office, he was just known among some young people to be a person of considerable leadership ability, and one day he was sort of tapped when they were considering a person to run for the city council, and he was a person who impressed them most as being most independent and caring the least about the glory or the patronage or spoils that might come with the job. He cared only about the fact that he wanted to speak his mind.

He so impressed the people making the selection that they chose him to run for the city council, and he spent a lot of time trying to run away from that call of the people. But he finally succumbed, and he ran and he won.

A similar call came later on for him to run for Congress against an incumbent in the Democratic primary, and

he ran there and came to Congress as an African American from a predominantly white district. That is the way RON DELLUMS came to Congress.

He came to Congress as an advocate known for his stance on peace, an advocate for peace and the environment. He came as an advocate for those principles that had been enunciated in the Berkeley movement. He came and found a lot of people waiting for him with all kinds of insults and traps.

□ 2145

His office was bugged and his phone was tapped and a number of things happened because RON DELLUMS was considered a great radical. RON DELLUMS came as the advocate for peace and saw that peace and the kind of life that was needed, the kind of resources that were needed to create a just society where people could live in peace and want to live in peace was being blocked by the humongous military budget and the amount of resources and dollars going into the military. So RON DELLUMS did another amazing thing, contradictory, the peace advocate became a member of the Committee on National Security. The Committee on National Security had on it a peace advocate that they did not welcome so much, so he had to endure quite a number of hardships there also.

I could go on and on, but there are a whole lot of things that we could write in a special book just for young people as we often write biographies and shelve them in young adult section and the children's section; there are biographies written particularly for children, particularly for young people, and there are numerous examples of the kinds of problems faced by young people today that would be very inspiring for young people if they were to read them. There are numerous things that also should inspire all of us.

Adults confronted with difficulties should take a page, a few pages from RON DELLUMS's book, adults who want nice, tidy lives and see things in straight formulas should understand how this man's life is so admired and has become so productive as a result of dealing with these contradictions.

The advocate of peace who went on to the Committee on National Security. The advocate of peace who stayed on the Committee on National Security long enough to become a chairman of the Committee on National Security. The advocate of peace who would come to the floor and make a presentation reporting what his committee had decided and the votes of his committee, and usually the votes of his committee were overwhelmingly in favor of whatever had been decided and alone in the center would sometimes be the Chairman himself. The Chairman of the Committee on National Security often would have to vote, feel compelled to vote against his own committee's proposals on the floor. The authorizing legislation for defense often received a no vote from RON DELLUMS.

RON DELLUMS set us free. Those of us who always saw the military budget and the discussion of military strategy and security of the Nation as being off limits to laymen and felt we were sort of dependent on the experts, RON became an expert, an expert with the point of view of a man of peace. RON could explain the military budget in as graphic detail as any person in America. RON could discuss military strategy with the same kind of precision and sense of vision and understanding of what had to happen, what resources had to be matched with what forces, et cetera, in order to guarantee that America was prepared to defend itself. RON DELLUMS set us free and made it clear that a person who was a proponent of peace and a person who wanted to cut the military budget in order to create more resources for the education budget or for health care or for child care, that person was not unpatriotic. He sat there and talked about the defense of America first and talked about national security in terms which did not require a lot of wasteful spending that gobbled up and devoured resources that could go somewhere else.

RON DELLUMS set us free to understand the *Trident* submarine and many other kinds of submarines and the warheads on the submarine versus the warheads on the land base, versus the warheads of the air, and when we put it all together in terms of being able to defend ourselves against anyone, and how when we start adding to that we were just adding more expensive weapons that added nothing to our defense. He made us understand and set us free from the mystery and the mystique that most people like to bring and surround the whole matter of the military defense of the Nation with. RON DELLUMS was the kind of person who could come on this floor and actually change the minds of his colleagues. There are not many Congressmen who can do that. I have seen it happen over and over again. We make wonderful speeches on the floor, but we seldom change the minds of our colleagues. RON DELLUMS had the capacity.

Some people have said, some people that believe in democracy, who are not cynical about democracy, have said that the Representatives and Members of Congress are the tribunes of the people in our democracy, they are the tribunes. If we are tribunes, then RON DELLUMS was a tribune for the Members of Congress. He would summon us to do things that we normally might not have done. He could provide leadership and he could change minds and he could make those who disagreed with him always respect him.

In summary, I would say that in one single body RON DELLUMS carries the capacity for great passion as well as great wisdom. He was a person who felt—he is, this is not his eulogy, he still lives. He is a person that cares about whatever he undertakes with a great deal of intensity. He cares and lives with a great deal of intensity. But

he also has a great deal of wisdom behind that intensity. I can think of no more noble mixture to describe and that I think all human beings should aspire to, the mixture of great passion and great wisdom, and that is the kind of person that we have been saluting for the last 3 days here in Congress. He deserves all the accolades that he has received and many more. RON DELLUMS is a model for all Congressmen and Congresswomen.

RON DELLUMS cared about education and he made a great sacrifice when he left the arena of education and social service. He was a trained social worker. He left that arena to go on to the Committee on National Security because there was no one else to go from the peace movement. There was no one who had the peace perspective who was willing to go, so he was a social worker, he was very much concerned about education. He wrote, authored several bills related to education as well as to health care and some other items not related to defense, and he would certainly agree with the kind of proposals that I have been making here related to our education agenda for 1998.

Before I go back to that agenda directly, there is one other item that I want to also mention, and that is the fact that tonight, I came here from an exhibit called the African-American Odyssey. The African-American Odyssey is an exhibit across the street in the Library of Congress. It opened tonight and will be running for quite some time, about just that, the African-American Odyssey from the time the first slaves were brought into this Nation to the Civil War, and—not the Civil War, civil rights movement, past the Civil War to the civil rights movement. I think it is an exhibit that everybody in Washington ought to take a few moments to go over and take a look at. I think it relates very much to the President's initiative on race.

The President's initiative on race is one of his farsighted initiatives where he deliberately started a discussion of race and the implications of race relations in this Nation before there was a crisis and before there was a crisis, he wanted some basic items put on the table, he wanted Americans from all walks of life and all ethnic and racial groups to talk about race, talk about relations between groups, and I think that this African-American Odyssey exhibition and items like this have a major role in this discussion.

What has been absent in the discussion on race, the President's initiative so far, is a set of facts, pieces of history that everybody agrees to and understands on a just simple, factual basis. So much is not known about slavery, so much is not known about one of these raises that evolved from this discussion. Perhaps the race that is at the center of all of these discussions are African-Americans. Our relations with others, our relations certainly with the majority population is the most complex one. It has the most tangled roots,

the roots are more tangled than any others in terms of history.

There are many reasons why this discussion of race has to deal first of all and most of all with African-Americans and their experience here and their experience in relation to the majority, the white Americans who are in the majority. So we need to, in this effort, and I would strongly recommend this to the President, I will do it in writing soon, we need to have a grounding, a scholarly grounding as we go forward in these discussions now and for the future.

The future may be 10 years, it may be 20 years. Nobody expects to solve any profound problems related to race as a result of initiating these discussions. It is where they have directed us, it is a sense of where we can go with these discussions that is most important.

So I would urge the President to commission a group of Nobel Prize winners from all over the world. Maybe 10 Nobel Prize winners who would be charged with the job of laying out a study of the history of slavery and race relations starting back to the beginning of mankind and bring it right up to the rape of Africa where large levels of human beings for the first time were uprooted and hauled away. They were not involved in a war where it was a result of a war and losing a war; they became slaves. They were not involved in a situation where the conqueror, despite the fact that he was in power, respected them as human beings. They were not involved in a situation like the Romans and the Greeks where the Romans chose to learn a great deal from the Greeks, although they had the power to enslave them; they were involved in a situation where because of the fact that basically the European nations were Christian, they had to justify what they did by reducing these slaves to a category of being subhuman. The rape of Africa, the Atlantic slave trade and the fact that so many were transported across the Atlantic in subhuman conditions and the fact of exactly how many. If we try to find out exactly how many or anything close to a reasonable discussion of how many, and we read the books that are written and find that they are ridiculous. We cannot find anything which really has substance on some of these fundamental issues like exactly how many people were on the continent of Africa, not exactly, but approximately how many people were on the continent of Africa when the slave trade began.

If we took a certain percentage out of Africa, what did that percentage look like? If we had the same ratio in today's population terms, what percentage of Africans were hauled away and what would the numbers be like if they were percentages of populations that exist now, so we would have a better idea of what terrible thing was done to a continent, black Africa, part of a continent.

I would like to see scholars who are more or less objective, who have been

cited as being great scholars by Nobel Prize, the Nobel Prize process; I would like to see them be given the charge of assembling a body of people, other scholars and historians and sociologists like Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish scholar did a study called the American Dilemma. He did it on one person and it had a lot of value at that time. There is a great deal of value having someone who is not immersed in the situation take part in a process of really trying to lay out all of the problems and having us look at the facts, the history surrounding the problems.

□ 2200

I do not think the government should pay for this. I do not think we should get into government paying for it, because it will lead to a whole series of restrictions and political decision-making about the results and the final product that would probably jeopardize the whole project.

I think foundations, and we have many rich foundations in this country and throughout the world. We do not talk much about the fact that there are a lot of big foundations in a few other countries, but certainly in this country foundations could pay whatever had to be paid to support this process. They could finance it.

So if we have a combination of top scholars recognized all over the world, being able to buy the best expertise available, they could pay for a staff of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and write a total history. It may be encyclopedic and be quite long and take 5 or 10 years, but write a history that more or less every civilized human being everywhere in the world could respect because of the process that produced it.

From that history we could make some deductions. We could begin to see the truth. We could see a little part of that truth by going to visit this exhibit that I just mentioned.

It is a beginning of opening the eyes of a lot of people who take for granted a lot of myths about slavery and the process of slavery, the process of arriving to the point where a Civil War had to be fought, the role of the abolitionists. There are a lot of young black men who ought to know the role of the white abolitionists and other whites, including the white soldiers who gave their lives on the battlefields in the process of setting them free, of setting their ancestors free, and of standing for the principle that all men are created equal at a time that they could not do it for themselves.

That is one thing ought to bring us together and lessen the animosity among young blacks who feel that they have been victimized, is understanding the history that the whole flame of freedom and the whole insistence that every man is created equal.

What we see in the movie, "Amistad," the principle that John Quincy Adams sets forth, it was not self-evident at all because a great deal

of propaganda and a great deal of rationalization, including bringing the Bible in and the myth of Ham, and Ham being cursed by Noah and told that his descendants had to serve everybody else. All of those myths can be laid to rest if we had a really factual history of slavery from the beginning, a history of the freedom struggle here in this Nation that began with whites insisting that the institution of slavery was an evil institution.

The African-American Odyssey talks about that. It is a presentation at the Library of Congress which will have parts that will go on line. We can get it on the Internet. There are certain parts of this African-American Odyssey that will go into any school, college, library anywhere in the country because they have put it on line and we can get it from the Internet.

The Library of Congress is proud to announce it. This is paid for by gifts from Anheuser-Busch, the Philip Morris Company, Citibank, Fannie Mae Foundation, Home Box Office, James Madison Council, Library of Congress. In addition, a major gift from Citicorp Foundation to the National Digital Library of the Library of Congress allows this 5-year effort to transmit portions of the African-American Odyssey and some related rare and unique items from the Library's vast African-American collections to the classrooms, libraries, and community centers on the Internet electronically.

I think that if we interject this profound note into the discussions that are going on as a result of the President's initiative on race, it will lift up the discussions to new levels. I am not criticizing what has happened before. There are a lot of important things happening in small ways.

By the way, on the Internet there is a site called Promising Practices, and on that site one can find out what is being done in the race initiative, the President's initiative on race.

They also have a section which, from day to day, lists the kinds of activities that are going on related to the initiative; and another section called Promising Practices, which delineates results that have been reported, the kinds of things they recommend all over the country.

So this discussion of race and this understanding of race relations is not unrelated to my discussion of education in general.

Because I am now going to conclude by discussing the collapse of the school system in New York City literally. School construction, the dangerous nature of going to school in New York right now, February, 1998, and how the danger has mushroomed and why we are in a state of paralysis because people making decisions in New York City are not the same people whose kids are in those schools.

There is a difference in race. There is an element of racism combined with incompetence and bureaucracy that make its impossible to move forward

on providing a decent place to study for the schoolchildren in New York City.

Even when the money is available, the evidence is that they cannot move. Nobody has a sense of urgency. There are not enough people in leadership who really care, so millions of dollars are sitting there waiting for something as simple and obvious as a conversion of a coal-burning furnace to a gas-burning furnace which does not pollute.

Mr. Speaker, we have 300 schools that have coal-burning furnaces. Of the 1,100 schools in New York, 300 have coal-burning furnaces. That is the statistic given to me. Some say 274, some say 284.

Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) like to speak? I would be happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York very much for yielding.

I want to, first of all, compliment the gentleman. I was listening to him a few minutes ago as he talked about education.

I also heard him talk about our distinguished colleague, Congressman RON DELLUMS; and I just, when I look at the gentleman's career and I look at that of RON DELLUMS' and I look at other congressmen and women who came before I did, it is sort of a sad day to see him go. And I know the gentleman from New York feels the same way.

But as I listen to the gentleman's comments, and I listen to others, there is one element that I wanted to add, tack on to it, and I really appreciate the gentleman giving me this opportunity.

When I was a student at Howard University here in Washington, RON DELLUMS was one of my heroes. We were at Howard protesting all kinds of things, and a lot of us saw government as not something we wanted to get into. We felt that it would be very difficult to go into government and not have to sacrifice our feelings, our concerns and our convictions.

RON DELLUMS was someone who was a hero for us. When we saw this man come into the Congress, a man who stood tall, who refused to bow to anything that was not consistent with his conscience, it made us feel good.

He also, as the gentleman well knows, is a man who is, like the gentleman from New York, consistently pursuing excellence, always standing up for what he believes in, always synchronizing his conduct with his conscience.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take this moment to not only compliment the gentleman from New York for all that he has been doing, and he has been certainly a tremendous leader in the area of education. I have long followed his career, and I want to thank the gentleman for constantly pounding the podium, constantly standing up for children and constantly

making the case known about African-American people as they struggle through very difficult times.

I was pleased to hear the gentleman talk about the exhibit, because that is very important, too. As was said a little bit earlier, we have to make sure that all Americans know the story of African-Americans and know the story of all the people and what part they played in creating this country.

So I take this moment not only to salute RON DELLUMS, but I also salute the gentleman from New York.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his remarks and would like to certainly say that RON DELLUMS used to frequent special orders when he first came to Congress and was first frustrated. He spoke repeatedly about defense issues, Armed Services issues. The things that he was not allowed to say in the committee and could not get time to say on the floor, he came to say them in special orders.

So I am here because I am inspired by his record; and I hope that, on the matter of education, we will achieve the same results so that somewhere down the line we are going to make a breakthrough to the conscience of Americans and they will understand as much about the fact that education is the number one national security issue as we now understand about certain more obvious defense issues.

I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that it is not only a national security issue, what happens with education. As my colleague, my Republican colleague, was talking about before, the workforce is going to be determined by the quality of education that we produce today. The workforce of tomorrow will be determined by that effort now.

It also is important for us to understand that we are subjecting our children to conditions. And I say we because, regardless of where you live, you may have a suburban school which is perfect, but if you are a decision maker here in Congress then you are part of the problem, too. Any Congressman who does not wake up to the fact that we have an education emergency in our inner-city communities, that emergency begins with something as basic as buildings, as basic as bricks falling from school buildings and striking children.

I talked about Yanahan Zhao last week. Just a week ago last Wednesday, I talked about Yanahan Zhao who was killed after bricks fell from a scaffolding that was being repaired by careless contractors who allowed that to happen.

I talked last week about East New York Transit Technical High School. That is a high school building where the back wall, the whole wall, a wall that weighs 10 tons and was 500 square feet collapsed into the school yard. And

the only reason large numbers of children were not injured or maybe killed was that the wall collapsed on Martin Luther King's birthday when school was out. It was a holiday.

I talked about that was only the beginning. I gave some examples from across the country where other kinds of accidents are happening that are endangering children and teachers in schools, and I invited all of my colleagues to begin the process of collecting examples of mishaps that have endangered children or injured children or certainly that have taken the lives of children.

There are many that never get reported. There are many that may get reported in the local paper and we may never know about nationally, but I think we do ourselves a great favor. It would be very useful for all of us to start collecting examples of where we fail children in the most basic way.

We can debate a long time about whether we are teaching them reading properly. There is a great debate whether we should use the whole word method or phonics. There are debates about the importance of technology versus the importance of fewer teachers. There are all kinds of debates raging around instruction and pedagogy which will not be settled easily.

But, Mr. Speaker, we can see a building where the ceiling has fallen in many classrooms. We can see the walls on the top floors of many schools. We can look at the age of many schools that are 100 years old and know the problems they are going to have.

We know they have lead pipes in the plumbing and that if the children are drinking water and the pipes have not been changed and they have lead pipes, that may be a danger.

We know if they have been built in the last 50 years that they have large amounts of asbestos in the walls for various purposes, not just the roof but also in the insulation.

We know certain things are directly related to the age of a building, and we know that certain buildings cannot be wired with new technology because the facts are the wires will not take it. We know these things are happening.

So let us document it for ourselves. Let us document it for all of those who do not believe it.

The sight in New York is more obvious. We have The New York Times, which goes all over the country, which reports the most dramatic local news when children are killed by bricks falling; and the New York Times, along with other local papers, reports another incident that took place this Monday. Those who are skeptics and do not believe it, listen: Seventy-five children, three teachers and a custodian were stricken with nausea, dizziness and headaches; and 1,250 people were evacuated as carbon monoxide and other poisonous gases from a 70-year-old coal-fired furnace drifted through an elementary school in Queens.

□ 2215

This is a report from the New York Times dated yesterday, February 3. Seventy-five children, three teachers and a custodian stricken. Every child was traumatized. They had to be marched out of the school. There were ambulances and fire trucks. Every child experienced that, I assure you; whether they vomited or fainted or were clutching their throbbing heads and churning stomachs or not, they still were affected in a very negative way by this experience. So it is impacting everybody.

The cause of the fumes were still under investigation on Monday night, but the board of education suspected human error. On the morning of chaos that raised questions about the safety of coal-fired furnaces in the city's schools and about funding and priorities and rehabilitating an aging, often crumbling school system, the pupils of PS 127 and its staff of 100 were evacuated twice. First they had a terrible smell that took the kids out, but it did not smell bad enough and it was not obvious enough, so they took them back in. But on the second time when they came out, there were ambulances and fire trucks, and many had to be treated at a hospital.

I talked about Yanahan Zhao as one of those heroes that we do not want to see repeated. We do not want to see any more children killed as Yanahan Zhao was killed. I do not want to see any other kid like Jodyann Sibbles, 10 years old, a fifth-grader who said that the school smelled like rotten eggs, or any of her colleagues who found themselves, her fellow students who found themselves vomiting. Francine JOHNSON who stood with her daughter Yolanda, I do not want to see children like that who think that they might have been killed. Her mother said maybe she was overreacting, but carbon monoxide can kill you.

I do not want to see children subjected to bureaucratism of the kind that has appeared in today's paper where you have officials of the board of education using very strange language. If you want to know exactly what I am talking about, listen closely to these statements. The officials say that the incident was the result of human error and not caused by the age of the furnace or the crack in it that was discovered during the investigation. The furnace is 70 years old and fumes were escaping, and they have some explanation about a new man that was putting the coal in, left a door ajar, and that interfered with the way the fan was blowing the air, et cetera. But during the investigation they discovered that there was a crack in the furnace and they said, no, there is a crack in the furnace, but do not worry about it. That is not the cause. Why would not a crack in the furnace, where the furnace is 70 years old, not be a possible cause?

These same school officials admitted that they had made a mistake last month when they investigated the

school heating system, and they put in a request for funding for a heating system upgrade. They did not put in a request for a new boiler. The money is available to replace the coal-burning furnace, the boiler that burns coal. All they put in for was an upgrade of the radiators and the ventilation system, not the boiler.

The spokesman for the board of education says that now they are going to put the school on the list to have a boiler replacement. What reason does she give? Parents are alarmed. It is not that they made a mistake, not that they were callous, it is not that they are guilty of child abuse and neglect, they do not care enough to use the money available in the right way. No, parents are alarmed, and since parents are alarmed, rather than just make repairs, they decided to go ahead and do the full conversion. Almost half of the students stayed home yesterday because the parents felt the school is still not safe despite the fact that it is now open again.

The city council has agreed this year to fund 21 boiler conversions in 279 city schools that are still heated by coal-fueled furnaces. Those numbers continue. Another 63 conversions are being funded with State bond money and board of education funds. Not all the schools have been identified.

The board of education officials say there was no serious health problem at this school, PS 127, as a result of the exposure to carbon monoxide which was three times the acceptable levels on the school's first floor. Seventy-five children, four adults were treated at area hospitals for headaches, nausea and symptoms. The board of education said there was no serious health problem. The air quality returned to normal, they said, with a level of carbon monoxide measurable three parts per million, well below the acceptable level of 34.

It has not been mentioned at any time by any official of the board of education that if a furnace has a crack in it or if there is something wrong with the ventilation system, the employees make mistakes and more carbon monoxide comes up into the school than should come from the basement where the boiler is, that children may be harmed if it happens on a small scale every day, and you cannot detect it because it is not so dramatic and obvious. I would not want to send my child back to that school until the coal-burning furnaces were replaced or something happened to remove that danger.

It is highly probable that if the boilers, all three of them, this is one of three boilers, all are 70 years old, that there is enough carbon monoxide or other pollutants escaping on a small scale every day to cause harm to the health of the children because children are very susceptible to pollutants. They are the most endangered. So if you have that condition, you do not have to talk about three parts per mil-

lion, well below acceptable levels of 34, if you know seepage is there.

I do not think any member of the school bureaucracy would want their child to go to that school. I do not think any person with any common sense would want their child to continue to go to that school. Yet this is the kind of condition which probably exists in all of the coal-burning schools.

The efficiency of a coal-burning boiler that is 70 years old, and most of them are about that age, is such that you know you have the leakage. Even the most efficient coal-burning boiler is spewing pollutants high into the air which fall back and create other problems like the high rate of asthma in New York City.

Let me just close my argument. These things are happening in a city that has the money to make the repairs and to convert the boilers. There are three sources of money. The school, the City Council of New York City several years ago appropriated \$1 billion to start the process of converting the coal-burning furnaces to oil or gas, less polluting substances. They made the money available. The board of education has no explanation as to where the money went.

We had an environmental bond issue at the State level, and part of the money raised from a more than a billion-dollar environmental bond issue was dedicated to the conversion of coal-burning boilers in the schools to updated, more efficient boiler systems. The power authority, the New York power authority, was given money even before that to start the process of converting the boilers in the schools. That money came from a consent decree which showed that one Exxon was not doing some things properly. They had to agree to compensate for it by making a lot of money available for some projects designated, related to energy. So the power authority was given the authority to spend money to convert the boilers. The money is there.

For some reason they say it costs \$1.3 million for the conversion of each school heating system; 1.3 million seems like a lot of money to me but I will not quarrel with that at this point. If you divide 1.3 million into the amount of money that has been appropriated, I told you a billion before came from the city council, 28 million came to the school construction authority from the State environmental bond issue in fiscal year 1997, another 50 million in fiscal year 1998, this year, and the power authority had a large amount, several million before that. With all these millions, if you divide them by 1.3, you will find that the number of schools, eight schools, they are working on eight schools, they have not fully converted any, eight schools.

So I close by saying the fact that bureaucrats who do not feel any sense of urgency are in charge of the schools impedes the process of improving the

infrastructure even when you have the money. Nothing is more important, and we feel that there is a state of emergency and that we do what is necessary to take control from these bureaucrats and upgrade our school infrastructure as rapidly as possible.

REPUBLICAN AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, this evening I wanted to come before the body tonight and talk a little bit about the freshman Republican class, that group which was elected in 1996 and has now finished 1 year serving here in Congress and is embarking on the second year. I recently became elected President by that body, and tonight is one of those opportunities where I wanted to talk about our agenda and some of the things we are trying to accomplish here in Washington as a new freshman body.

This group is 34 Members strong, and over the 3-month break that we took recently, from which we just returned, the 34 Members of the Republican freshman class endeavored to spread out across the country in our respective districts holding a number of town meetings and visits and so on. I wanted to talk about some that I had occasion to conduct and also those that had been reported back to me, and other Members perhaps will be here.

The 34 Members also have been involved in putting together a number of projects and proposals that we are trying to push through this Congress. One of those which we unveiled just 3 weeks ago entails a Republican freshman tax relief package. It is spearheaded by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS), and this package has four basic provisions that I would suggest that the House ought to consider quite seriously, and in fact these proposals are becoming the basis for further discussions of tax relief that are occurring in the Committee on Ways and Means, by the chairman, and being supported with the effort of our Speaker and other Members of leadership.

The first of those provisions is a provision that involves 100 percent deductibility of health care programs or the benefits that small employers provide for their employees. Under today's current tax structure, section 106 of the Internal Revenue Service code, section 106 provides for a 100 percent deductibility of health insurance benefits for large employers, but small employers, the small entrepreneurs, those individuals who provide the majority of jobs and entrepreneurial spirit of our country, have not achieved that parity yet. That has been a long-term stated goal, but at this particular point in time, again taking a look at where the real strength of our economy comes from

and where the expected growth is likely to occur, it is quite clear that this benefit, this tax advantage, ought to occur to all entrepreneurs in America, all those who would propose to create economic activity, create opportunity to create jobs in fact for our country.

This second provision of the bill is the elimination of the marriage tax penalty. The notion that families should suffer additional tax burdens simply due to their decision to become married is one that is particularly onerous and seems in many ways to be un-American certainly and really violates our strong regard for the strength of the American family as the most basic central and essential social unit in our Nation. Eliminating the marriage tax penalty is a goal and an objective that we take quite seriously, and we will be pushing for it quite vigorously in the coming months until we achieve success in arriving at moving the legislation forward and eventually putting it on the President's desk.

□ 2230

The third provision is one that involves education. Currently, there are many States throughout the country that are setting up educational accounts where parents are able to pre-pay college tuition for children. Now, on a State level, and certainly at the Federal level there are significant number of advantages that are companion with that goal and objective, too, but in many cases seems to be isolated.

This provision is one that, in fact, broadens the number of choices of educational institutions that families might choose for their children in setting dollars aside now while their children are very young and allowing these funds to grow in a way that is unmolested by our tax code to that point in time when they would decide to go ahead and go to college and get accepted at the school of their choice. That is an important provision of the overall tax bill that we have moved forward.

The fourth provision is one that really moves us toward our goal of encouraging savings and investment. The Republican Congress last year provided significant advantages for those who do save money and savings on earnings, but the tax on interest earnings still, in our opinion, is prohibitive.

And there is a lot more that this Congress can do to relieve the tax burden on savings and investments and the earnings of those investments in a way that will allow our economy to grow, to encourage more and more people to put more money into savings, and to providing capital for other entrepreneurs and others who are in the business of creating wealth, creating jobs and moving our country forward economically.

Those four provisions outline the proposal that we have put forward and is one that has been warmly received here in Washington but, more impor-

tantly, has been warmly received by the taxpayers throughout the country and throughout the districts that are represented by those Members who have put the plan forward and others who have joined us in the effort.

I want to tell my colleagues about some of the things that I had heard over the three months that I traveled throughout my district in the eastern plains of Colorado. There were a number of news stories that occurred over that time period suggesting that, it was some polling data actually, that revealed that young people in America have somehow lost interest in citizenship and the whole concept of their role as citizens in our country.

Here are some articles I brought with me, one from the Washington Times that says that college freshmen have the blahs, survey indicates. Academic civic apathy reached record levels. Student poll finds soaring apathy levels. College freshmen aiming high for marks in income but developing a philosophy of life can wait. This article in The New York Times.

The National Report further highlights this apparent trend that some pollsters seem to have found that young people are interested in other things but not civic virtue in contemplating their roles as actual leaders of our country.

USA Today reports that money, not learning, is freshmen's top goal, a freshman in college. And it talks about how the research again confirms, according to USA Today, that young people are not focusing on their eventual roles as leaders of the country and do not think in patriotic terms.

Los Angeles Times, freshmen get high marks in apathy and so on. And there are several more here too from Boston. Boston Globe, college freshmen called more detached.

I have to tell my colleagues that I found just the opposite in my travels, to the places I went. I spent a lot of time visiting local schools and talking with lots of young people. I want to talk about one person in particular, who I have had a chance to get to know. She lives in Limon, Colorado, which is a small town out in the eastern plains of my State.

Amanda King is her name. She is 16 years old. I had a chance to go visit her school and spoke with a number of her classmates and acquaintances and teachers as well. They are very proud of her. She is one who has been involved very directly in the political process and one who does take her role as citizen quite seriously.

Her goal is to go on to college and, in fact, to learn about government, to learn about political science, and to learn about the political system that allows each and every individual, including individuals her age, to play a meaningful role in moving our country forward. When I asked her what her goals and objectives are, what she wants to do with this degree at some point in time and how she wants to