

will complement the Administration's \$19.4 billion school construction initiative by targeting resources to growing states. My bill is fully paid for using the offset others would use to fund the misguided Coverdell private school voucher scheme.

The simple fact of the matter is that our growing states need help to build quality schools in which to educate our children. This Congress must do its part to assist the states that have the greatest needs. My bill targets resources to the states that will experience the greatest growth over the next decade. The Etheridge bill will provide more than \$100 million each to the top 17 fastest growing states; slower growing states will qualify for lower amounts. My state of North Carolina will qualify for about \$360 million in school construction bonds under this legislation.

No child in America should be forced to attend class in a trailer, a closet or any other substandard facility. The Etheridge bill will help address this problem, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this bill.

IT'S OUR MONEY, NOT THEIRS!

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, processing salmon on a cannery slime line was probably the best job preparation I ever received for my stint in the U.S. Congress. Making laws is never pretty either.

Standing boot deep in fins, fish heads, and entrails, trying to keep up with the conveyor belt, my team routinely exceeded our production goals. In the end, we made a fine product, and our Alaskan employer succeeded in running a good business—despite the bloody mess.

That was my first job out of college. I paid my way through school as a lifeguard, a farm hand, a referee and umpire, a night clerk at an apartment complex, and as a retail worker. During holidays, I filled in for a vacationing heating and air contractors' assistant, and conducted public opinion polls for local governments and community boards.

Upon graduation I worked a few more jobs before being asked, at a relatively young age by local leaders, to fill a vacancy in the state Senate. In addition to the cannery job, I worked as a carpet layer, in food service, as a legislative researcher, a corporate and political speechwriter, and press secretary. I later ran my own marketing business for six years too.

But, throughout all my work, entrepreneurial and investment experiences, I've been confronted with the same disappointment—high taxes.

Each time I forked over more of my earnings to the government, I pledged to myself that, if I ever got the chance, I'd work even harder to put the priorities of wage-earners ahead of the tax collectors.

This month, millions of Coloradans will labor through the time-consuming and stressful task of preparing tax returns to answer the government's deadline of April 15th. The average family will endure a local, state, and federal tax burden of an incredible 40 percent of income for 1997.

This year, Americans will spend a combined 5½ billion hours working to comply with our tax system. Meanwhile, the 114,000 employees of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are toiling too. They must, in order to churn out and process the 8 billion pages of forms and instructions taxpayers will need in order to stay above the law.

This is why, in my first year in Congress, I cosponsored and voted for two of the most important pieces of tax legislation in decades: The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, providing the first net tax cut in 16 years; and the IRS Restructuring Act, getting us a step closer to reining in one of the most abusive federal agencies, and setting us up to scrap the entire tax code in favor of one that is fairer, flatter, and simpler.

Indeed, this is one goal I will be pursuing further this month along with my friends at the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)—the nation's largest small business advocate. I've been a proud NFIB member myself for many years.

On April 15th, NFIB will sponsor national "It's our Money, not THEIRS" Day. The plan is to gather one million signatures on petitions calling upon the president and Congress to "abolish the IRS Code as of December 31, 2000, and to propose to the American people for our consideration a simpler, fairer tax code which will reward work and savings."

Paying taxes is never pretty. Some would say the tax code is a bloody mess. Thanks to the NFIB, taxpayers will have a chance to send a forceful tax message to the government: "Fish or cut bait!"

To volunteer for April 15th Day, or to obtain petitions, call me, see any other NFIB small business member, or call toll free 1-888-NOT4IRS.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHILD NUTRITION AND WIC REAUTHORIZATION AMENDMENTS OF 1998

HON. MATTHEW G. MARTINEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Amendments of 1998 on behalf of the Administration. For the first time in nearly 20 years, the Executive Branch has transmitted to the Congress a bill to reauthorize our Child Nutrition programs and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. This legislation is cost-neutral over five years, simplifies and streamlines program operations, provide access to qualified participants, helps to ensure program integrity and improves food safety. I am happy to sponsor this bill and strongly encourage my colleagues to support it as well.

The Child Nutrition Programs and the WIC Program are absolutely critical to our Nation's future. There is no question of the need to reauthorize the expiring programs and, where we can, improve access, eliminate unnecessary paperwork, and reduce the chance for abuse. I believe the Administration bill moves us toward these goals and is an excellent starting point as we begin our efforts to reauthorize these programs.

Among the many improvements in the legislation, the bill would:

Give authority for an after school program in the Child and Adult Care Food Program for at risk youths between the ages of 12–18; this is a critical provision as so many children need a positive and supportive after school option since the highest instances of juvenile crime occur during the hours immediately following the end of the school day and the dinner hour;

Require schools to make every effort to establish adequate time for kids to eat school lunches in a "child friendly" atmosphere ensuring good nutrition;

Authorize Nutrition Education and Training grants based on \$.50 per child per year with a minimum of \$75,000 per state;

Give authority for USDA to pay for the cost of removing any foods that have been found to be unhealthy or contaminated;

Require that food service operations of participating schools be inspected for health and safety;

Increase the number of sites and children that can be served by non-profit sponsors in the Summer Food Service Program;

Improve management of the WIC program with changes in how states can manage "spend forward" funds and require documentation of income for WIC participants;

Tighten penalties on vendors who violate the rules for participation in the WIC program.

There are a number of other provisions in the bill that I will not discuss at this point, but are designed to improve program operations. On whole, the bill represents a balanced and thoughtful approach to improving the programs at a time when budgets are very tight and tough choices must be made about where to spend our limited resources.

There is one provision of this legislation regarding the WIC program which I cannot support and another for which the Ranking Member and I are concerned. First, the bill would require that the Secretary of Agriculture propose regulations to verify the income of WIC participants. I cannot support this provision because I believe it would drive legitimate recipients out of the program and would add to the administrative burdens on WIC clinics when it is not at all clear that much improvement in accountability would be obtained. Recent testimony before the Education and Workforce Committee reinforces my belief that this provision is not necessary and should not be included in the final bill which Congress sends to the President. Second, the bill would terminate the Secretary's authority to administer the very small segment of child nutrition programs, which certain states do not presently administer for a variety of reasons, at the USDA Regional level. The Ranking Member and I are committed to closely examining this proposal as we proceed through the reauthorization process and ensure that, if enacted, it will not jeopardize the nutritional meals and snacks which children presently receive under these programs.

I am looking forward to working with the Department of Agriculture, and Under Secretary Shirley Watkins, and my colleagues here in the Congress to enact the positive features of this legislation and other beneficial provisions as we work to improve our child nutrition programs through this reauthorization.