

The High Hopes/GEAR UP Program began as the 21st Century Scholars Act (HR 777) which I introduced in the House of Representatives in May, 1997. It was given a truly long term lease on life by Sara Goldsmith who was an AAAS Fellow in my office at the time. Sara made it the primary goal of her Fellowship to secure at least 100 cosponsors for this legislation. By the time her Fellowship ended a year later, she had secured 120 cosponsors with strong representation from both sides of the aisle. This gave us the credibility and the impetus we needed to succeed in our efforts to move the bill through the other venues that must be cleared before a bill become law. Thank you, Sara.

The 21st Century Scholars Initiative was initially designed to provide low income children with the assurance that financial aid would be available for them to go to college, and to connect them with the mentoring and support services they need to succeed. As the legislation gained steam in the House, it captured the imagination of the White House, and a strong partnership emerged between my office and the office of Gene Sperling, Director of the National Economic Council. Our staffs, principally Bob Shireman of the NEC, Claudia Pharis, my Chief of Staff, and Pauline Abernathy of the Department of Education, worked to incorporate into the bill, provisions of interest to the Clinton Administration. What emerged from this process was the High Hopes 21st Century Scholars Program which continued the commitment to providing assurances regarding financial aid, and greatly improved and strengthened the mentoring and support services provisions of the bill. These four people, Gene Sperling, Bob Shireman, Claudia Pharis, and Pauline Abernathy, also deserve our thanks.

The next hurdle was the markup in the House Committee on Education and the Workforce of HR6, the Higher Education Reauthorization bill. Our objective was to add the High Hopes 21st Century Scholars Initiative to the HR6 as an amendment in Committee. Led by Lydia Sermons, then my Press Secretary, who was followed by Rebecca Kirsznner and Philecia McCain, my staff had launched a major communications campaign that had penetrated every office in the House of Representatives, the education advocacy organizations affected by the program, the higher education community, and through the media, the general public. Thank you, Lydia, Rebecca, and Philecia. By the time we reached markup, the support for this program was broad and deep, and the amendment which attached the bill to HR6 passed in Committee by a strong bi-partisan vote of 24 to 18. It should be noted that this incredible 6 vote margin was created with the cooperation of four of my Republican colleagues on the committee: Congressman GREENWOOD, SOUDER, MCINTOSH, and SCARBOROUGH. Committee staff, David Evans, Sally Stroup and Marshall Grigsby, and my legislative Director, Neil Snyder, were particularly helpful at this stage, and to them, I also extend my thanks.

Passage of the Higher Education Act by the House was virtually unanimous. We then faced the high hurdle of gaining Senate approval. There were already provisions in the Senate bill which addressed some of the same concerns addressed by the High Hopes 21st Century Scholars Initiative, however, the underlying program, called the National Early

Intervention and Scholarship Program, or NEISP, served a much smaller population through a much different delivery system. As designed, it was not able to address the targeting, motivational, and institution building objectives of the High Hopes program. Senators JEFFORDS and KENNEDY, the NEC and Treasury Department team, my Chief of Staff, and the staff of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor worked intensely over an extended period of time to iron out the differences between these two programs and forge a compromise for incorporation into the Senate bill that retained the best and most crucial features of each. Our hand was strengthened in this process by the fact that my staff orchestrated a process that resulted in bipartisan letters of support for High Hopes signed by over 150 Members of Congress being sent to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee. In addition to the people I have already mentioned, special recognition at this stage goes to the other members of my staff, particularly Michelle Anderson, my Executive Assistant, and to Jennifer Smulson and Marianna Pierce of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor.

Next came the House and Senate conference where all the differences between the House and Senate bills had to be resolved. The NEC and Treasury staffs remained involved, as did my Chief of Staff, but importantly, at this point, we added the strong, committed, and vocal leadership of Congressmen SOUDER and ANDREWS to the process, both of whom served as Members of the Conference Committee. Their staffs, Amy Adair and Audrey Williams respectively, were highly responsible, professional and focussed in their commitment to provide strong representation for the bipartisan interests of the House of Representatives in preserving the integrity of the High Hopes Program. That mission was accomplished in Conference, and what emerged from the Conference Committee for presentation to the House of Representatives as the GEAR UP Program is very true to my original vision, to the vision of the President, and to Senator JEFFORDS' vision that all American children be surrounded with the expectation that they can and will go to college, and be provided with the support and encouragement they need to get there.

Department of Education Secretary, Richard Riley, and Leslie Thornton, his Chief of Staff are also unsung heroes of this process. The staff resources and informational support they provided were invaluable in the development of the concept, and I understand that Secretary Riley mentioned High Hopes in every public speech he made while Congress was working on the legislation.

But I have saved the best and most important recognition for last. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues in the United States Congress, both the Senate and the House of Representatives. I particularly need to thank Senators KENNEDY and JEFFORDS again, and to thank as leaders of the process in the House, Congressmen GOODLING, CLAY, MCKEON, and KILDEE. The brilliance of the American system of government, a strong spirit of bipartisanship, and an underlying commitment to creating opportunity were all evident in the way we rallied in support of the High Hopes/GEAR UP program. An ingrained belief in and commitment to fairness undergirds the American character. Congress-

man SOUDER offered as his motivation for supporting the program, that we cannot both, in good conscience, continue to dismantle our systems of social and economic support, and at the same time fail to provide people with the support they need to become self-sufficient. This attitude augurs well for the reduction of educational disparities in our society, and for the emergence of a Nation in which a higher percentage of our people are fully engaged in creating and enjoying its prosperity.

Education is the great equalizer. Our democratic society cannot sustain itself if we continue to create a larger and larger dependent population through our failure adequately to educate our people. It is important to America's future that we field our best team in the globalized, high tech economy of the next century. We can only do that if we make sure that everybody gets a chance to play.

SALUTING EFFORTS TO HONOR
FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

HON. ROBERT A. WEYGAND

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues today the fine work being done by one of my constituents to honor an often overlooked American patriot. Everyone knows his work but few know him. No matter where we hear it played, at the beginning of sporting events or during times of national mourning, the Star-Spangled Banner is an important part of our nation's life. The patriot that penned the words to our National Anthem, however, remains largely unknown.

Virginia L. Doris of Warwick, Rhode Island knows that patriot is Francis Scott Key. She has devoted a great deal of her time over the last several decades to right what she views as a mistake of history and make sure that more of her fellow Americans learn about Key. Along with an extensive amount of research into Key and his life, Ms. Doris has spent a great deal of time working to establish a national day of recognition of Francis Scott Key. In that regard, just this year she was successful in convincing the members of the Rhode Island General Assembly to designate August 1 of each year as Francis Scott Key Day in Rhode Island. Several years ago, she was successful in having the period between August 1978 and August 1979 as Francis Scott Key year in Rhode Island.

As part of her effort to bring public attention to Francis Scott Key and his role in the history of our nation, Ms. Doris commissioned—at great personal expense—a portrait of Key which was painted by Mario Ahumada, a gifted artist at the Rhode Island School of Design. Ms. Doris feels great connection to her work and she speaks very highly of Mr. Ahumada's dedication to the project and the final work.

Over the last several weeks, we have spent a great deal of time, both as members of the House of Representatives and as citizens, discussing the intent of our Founding Fathers as they drafted our Constitution. It may serve us well to listen just a bit more carefully to Francis Scott Key's words as he describes some of the events that paved the way to the establishment of our nation. I am sure my colleagues will join me in my admiration for Ms.

Doris' unwavering dedication to honoring the author of our national anthem.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. WES
FREELAND

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of a great community leader and a good friend, Mr. Wes Freeland. This year, after more than thirty years, Wes is stepping down as Kalamazoo County Administrator. Though his career with the county may be drawing to a close, his service to our community will continue as Wes takes a position with the Kalamazoo Foundation.

Under his steady hand and trusted leadership, Wes guided the county's finances through good economic times and bad. He has played a role in guaranteeing our region's growth and helped paved the way for many more years of financial stability.

Wes will continue to play a leading role in helping to shape the region. The Kalamazoo Foundation is dedicated to supporting our community by providing a wide variety of resources to support education, housing, and economic development.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all of my neighbors in Kalamazoo County join me in thanking Wes for his many years of support, dedication and leadership. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Wes for his great work and wishing him all the best in his new position.

KEEP KIDS SAFE AT SCHOOL ACT

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Keep Kids Safe at School Act along with 41 of my colleagues. I am pleased that, during this time of polarized political climate, Members from both sides of the aisle have come together to formulate sound policy to safeguard our children.

Last spring, a fifteen-year-old Rio Linda High School student from my district was brutally raped and murdered by a custodian after school. This tragedy could have been prevented had school authorities used a database that could detect the employee's prior interstate criminal history. Although a thorough California check was conducted, an interstate background check would have detected the man's prior convictions—including rape—from neighboring states.

This senseless crime has shaken the small, normally peaceful Rio Linda community—a suburb just north of Sacramento. However, this tragedy provides us all with a lesson. Crime has no face; it doesn't discriminate; it can affect us at any time; it can shatter our safest havens; and it crosses socio-economic boundaries.

My bill would help to prevent this tragedy from occurring again. The Keep Kids Safe at School Act amends the current National Child

Protection Act of 1993. Under the National Child Protection Act, Congress established an interstate identification network which allows for a voluntary background check on child care providers and volunteers.

Already this system has caught dozens of potential child predators in California, Texas and Florida alone.

In California, the background checks have served as a measure which produces results. Between July 1995 and July 1996, 27,564 background checks were conducted at the state and federal level. Of those cases, 606 applicants were found to have a criminal history. Of the number of applicants denied credentials, 95% of the denials were based upon the information discovered in the background checks.

School employees, even those who don't provide care or supervise our children, have access to our children every day. In the morning before school, for example, cafeteria workers may be the first to greet our children. In the afternoon, long after the teachers are gone, custodians or other maintenance workers are on school grounds while our children participate in extracurricular activities.

Parents deserve to feel at ease when they drop their children off in the morning. And kids have the right to feel secure in order to maximize learning. According to the FBI, 19 states don't have laws in place that conduct background checks on all school employee. And four states don't administer background checks for any school employees.

The Keep Kids Safe at School Act is far from a Big Brother policy. It simply builds on an existing law which has proven results for day care workers and encourages states across the country to use this same voluntary system for those employed by our schools.

In addition, this legislation will work as a deterrent to potential child predators. Those with a criminal history won't think twice about applying knowing that they'll get caught. This bill sends a clear message to child predators—our commitment to protecting our children is real. The Keep Kids Safe at School Act will help prevent other tragedies.

The implementation of the Keep Kids Safe at Schools Act will save states and communities time and dollars. Background checks will not only detect child predators, but will provide other criminal history which could save schools thousands of dollars by preventing theft or other crimes.

This is a common sense proposal. The Keep Kids Safe at School Act will deter predators, save schools money and protect our children—period. Let's close the loop-hole, and give our states the tools they need to safeguard our kids—support the Keep Kids Safe at School Act.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
LINFIELD SCHOOL

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, in 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports through an executive order as part of a national campaign to help shape up Ameri-

ca's younger generation. In 1966, the Presidential Physical Fitness Award was initiated by President Johnson and is a prestigious accomplishment.

On October 1, 1998, the Linfield School in Temecula, CA, was designated as the 1997–98 President's Challenge State Champion School for Category II schools in California. The State Champion Award is presented to schools with the highest number of students scoring at or about the 85th percentile on the President's Challenge, a fitness awards program for children ages 6 through 17. The Linfield School had more than 82 percent of their student body score at or above the 85th percentile in the fitness program.

The five assessments of the President's Challenge measure four components of physical fitness: a one-mile run/walk for heart and lung endurance, curl-ups for abdominal strength and endurance, a "sit and reach" stretch for muscular flexibility, pull-ups for upper body strength and endurance, and a shuttle run for agility and explosive power.

On behalf of the residents of the 43rd congressional district, I congratulate the Linfield School for this award and commend them for recognizing that physical activity is an important component of health and development for future generations.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER JOSEPH
A. SPATA

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding Naval Officer, Commander Joseph A. Spata, who has served with distinction for the past 25 months for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Financial Management and Comptroller.

It is a privilege for me to recognize his many outstanding achievements and commend him for the superb service he has provided to the Navy, the Congress, and our great Nation as a whole.

As the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, I want to thank Joe in particular for the tremendous assistance he has given me and my staff since August 1996. In his position as Deputy, Appropriations Matters Office, Joe has provided us with timely and accurate support regarding Navy plans, programs and budget decisions. These invaluable contributions have enabled our Subcommittee and the Department of the Navy to strengthen our close working relationship and to help ensure that we maintain the most modern, well trained and well equipped naval force attainable for the defense of our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, as with so many of our men and women in uniform, Joe Spata and his wife Eileen have made many sacrifices during his naval career. As they embark once again on that greatest adventure of a Surface Warfare Officer's career, command at sea of U.S.S. *Moosbrugger* (DD 980), I would ask my colleagues to say thank you to Joe Spata for his yeoman's service in working with our Committee, to wish him every success as Commander, and to pray that he always have fair winds and following seas.