

this Congress made a huge difference so that Americans can own their own homes. Some of the most important parts of this bill deal with the fact that, heretofore, the government has occasionally created obstacles to affordable housing by adding to its cost by regulations. By the time you have complied with all kinds of regulations, the housing is no longer affordable.

This bill that we will be voting on later today, H.R. 3899, establishes a benefit for those States and localities that eliminate the barriers, the costly requirements before one can build affordable housing. This bill creates a clearinghouse within HUD for those States and local units of government to learn how to make barriers less. It establishes a rule that no Federal agency can pass a regulation that puts a barrier effectively into building affordable housing without considering all possible alternatives that will make that barrier less. For those people who have had a dream to own a home in America, this bill is a substantial improvement. I commend it to all of our colleagues.

CONGRESS MUST ACT TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on this Congress to pass legislation to strengthen our neighborhood public schools. We have heard people talk on the floor this morning about volume. Our children are told in the classroom it is the quality of their work, not the volume of the documents they produce. That ought to be true for this Congress as well. To go home without passing legislation to strengthen public education and to provide more teachers at the K-3 level, we have not put the quality in the legislation that we ought to pass. I know that because we have done it in my State. A lot of places we have not done it. A lot of places do not have the money. To say it is not needed is like saying we do not have a responsibility for our roads and a lot of other things we do.

We need to pass legislation to provide decent, safe, quality classrooms for our children. We can be accountable to the taxpayers, we can be accountable to our communities, but we can only be accountable if we do the job we were sent here to do. Our neighborhood public schools need our help now.

A MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, Republicans in Congress have a message to the President: "Don't shut down the government." Republicans have been working with the administration since

last spring to avoid a government shutdown. I think we all agree it is not in the national interest to shut down the government. But how tragic it would be if the President were to force such a shutdown to divert attention from other matters or to use it for political purposes as we head into the mid-term elections. Republicans are willing to reach an honorable compromise with the White House on remaining differences just as we did last summer in order to pass the balanced budget amendment. Although there are still significant differences between the White House and the Republicans in Congress on the remaining spending bills, these differences can be resolved. In almost every case, the administration wants to spend more, the Republicans want to spend less. Let us find the common ground, avoid a government shutdown, and move on with the people's business.

EDUCATION EMERGENCY ACROSS AMERICA

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

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, Public School 91 in my district was evacuated last Friday as a result of conditions that were deemed unsafe for children. You have got lead poisoning, a coal-burning furnace, everything you can imagine in that building which was built in 1903. It should have been closed a long time ago. But Public School 91 is not atypical of the school districts across America. In fact nearly every congressional district in America has an equivalent to Public School 91, a school that really needs to be closed or modernized or reconstructed.

We have an education emergency all across the United States. Why not bring our money back to our school districts? All money comes from the local areas, anyhow. Bring our Federal money back for school construction. One of my colleagues on the Education Committee keeps insisting that the school construction bill is tilted toward the urban areas. Well, yes, that is where most of the children in America live. The Vietnam Memorial Monument, if you look at the names on there, most of them come from the urban areas, too. All the wars that have existed, while we have not emphasized it, they come from where the population is. Schools modernization is needed all across America. Urban areas are just the beginning.

STILL WAITING FOR CONGRESS TO ACT

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 9 months ago the President and House Democrats laid out an education agenda for the 21st century. The American

people are still waiting for Congress to act.

Democrats want to help local governments modernize schools and help build and renovate 5,000 schools. The American people are still waiting for Congress to act.

The Democrats in Congress, the Democratic initiative wants to see smaller classrooms and more teachers. Yet the American people are still waiting for Congress to act.

Mr. Speaker, what is more important than education? What is more important than smaller classrooms? What is more important than more teachers teaching our children? Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the American people are still waiting for Congress to act.

AMERICAN STEEL IN A CRISIS

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, American steel is in a crisis. Yesterday the House of Representatives defeated a resolution to study the crisis. American steelworkers and their families do not need studies. They need action to stop the dumping of steel in this country. The dumping of steel is causing prices to drop, it is threatening the jobs of American steelworkers, it is threatening local economies, it is threatening our strategic industrial base, and, therefore, long-term threatens this country's ability to defend itself.

Americans need action to stop the dumping of steel. They need quantitative restrictions on allowing steel into the U.S. market. They need the application of countervailing duties. We do not need more studies. We need action. Stop the dumping of steel in this country. Save the steelworkers' jobs. Protect the American economy.

EDUCATION FUNDING

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I serve as a cochair on the Democratic side of the aisle together with the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) on the Task Force on Education. We have served for over a year and a half. That agenda was created because we were responding to the needs of the people throughout the country. One of the top things they talked about was the need for additional teachers, additional qualified teachers and to do something about our crumbling classrooms and the inadequate infrastructure. This is something that has been on our agenda for over a year and a half. This year we did not even see the education budget come to the floor so that we could debate it, so that we could ask this country to fund this program. Now we are

awaiting an omnibus bill, we know not what is in it, but I plead with the Republican majority to do as they have been saying on the floor every day, put those moneys for the teachers right in the classrooms and not fund it in any sort of circuitous way where we know not how that money is getting to our schools.

EDUCATION

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, as we face the 21st century, our education is our best national defense. Education must function as a means to prepare our children for the 21st century and the global economy. To help meet this goal, we must aim to strengthen our public schools that serve the majority of our children. Reducing class size should be our first priority. Putting those teachers in the classroom should be our first priority. This will allow teachers to focus on basics such as reading and writing in the early ages. We also need to look to modernize our classrooms. Across this country, we need to assure that our classrooms are well-equipped to meet the technology of the 21st century. We have to assure that our youngsters will have a fresh start to be able to compete in the global economy. Our schools are crumbling across this country. We need to invest in our children and in the future of this country as our national defense depends on it. Our level of education will determine our national defense. Let us also focus on providing our children the assistance that they need.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, for 40 years the liberal Congress spent all their time trying to figure out ways to spend the American people's money and build a bigger Federal Government. Now they are accusing us of being a do-nothing Congress. They are right. By their definition, we have done nothing to raise taxes, we have done nothing to build new Federal bureaucracies, we have done nothing to take power from hardworking Americans and give it to Washington bureaucrats.

However, we have balanced the budget for the first time in 30 years, we have cut taxes on hardworking Americans for the first time in 16 years, saved Medicare, reformed welfare, and reformed the IRS. At the same time we have lowered interest rates on student loans. The liberals are right. We have done nothing liberal. But we have done a lot for the future of the American people.

ON EDUCATION FUNDING CUTS

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today deeply disturbed by the Republican majority's continual disregard for the future of our children. Year after year they attack important education programs and now they refuse to provide funds for school construction and smaller classroom size.

Have you not learned? The American people believe in educational opportunities. They want their children to learn and succeed. But for many of our children, a schoolroom is not a place to learn but a place to survive. Like our roads and bridges, our Nation's schoolrooms are crumbling. In my district in New York, children are trying to learn in conditions that we should be ashamed of, crumbling walls, leaking roofs, and overcrowding. How can a child be expected to learn to read and write when the walls are literally falling down around them? Democrats are committed to making sure that every child in this country has a modern, safe school in which to learn. This is a commitment we have made to our children and it is a commitment worth fighting for.

NO GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have a message for the President: "Don't shut down the government, Mr. President. Don't shut down the government as a way to divert attention from the ethical problems now plaguing the White House."

The differences between Congress and the White House are not large. The President wants to spend more money on education bureaucrats in Washington. Republicans want to spend the money on the classrooms. Surely a compromise can be reached and the government can continue to operate. We disagree about the approach but we do not disagree about the shared goal of improved education. As a former teacher, I know that local control of schools is absolutely essential. We do understand the political reality that the President faces which forces him to support more Federal education programs, more bureaucrats at the Department of Education and more Federal control over local schools. Our message is simple: "Don't shut down the government. Work with Congress to arrive at a satisfactory compromise. Don't shut down the government, Mr. President."

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REPUBLICANS SENDING A MIXED MESSAGE TO AMERICA'S CHILDREN

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend President Clinton for his strong commitment to the education of America's children. This issue has been central to his public service, and it is central to the lives of America's children.

It is important for our children to receive a clear message from us, and I am afraid that our Republican colleagues are sending a mixed message to America's children. Children are smart. When we tell them that education is important for their own self fulfillment, for the competitiveness of our country, indeed for our national defense, they get one message. They get another message when we say it is important, but we are going to send you to a school that is crumbling, leaking, not equipped with the wiring for modernization, and we are not going to support, the Republicans are not going to support, school construction so that they can be in smaller classes.

Smaller classes net more teachers. That is why President Clinton's proposal for 100,000 new teachers is so important. It is not for administrative cost, and it is not about local control. It is about saying to local governments this money is for teachers, it is not for administration.

Stop insulting the intelligence of America's children. Support President Clinton's school construction plan and 100,000 new teachers.

THE BEST SOLUTION IS TO BUILD SCHOOLS

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, just 9 months ago I was not a Member of this body, but I remember listening to the President's statement on education during his State of the Union address, and I stand here today as a Member of the Congress probably for one reason: education. We can build prisons, or we can build schools. I think that all Americans know that the best solution is to build schools. When we build schools, we are showing our children that we have confidence in them. Oftentimes when they go astray, we say what happened to the children of the day? What is going on with the children today?

Mr. Speaker, I tell colleagues it is not the children, it is us. It is us who fail to put our money where our mouths are and put it where our most important commodities are, our children. We must, at all sacrifices, make sure that we build schools; therefore, we will not have to build prisons. Make sure that we make the class sizes smaller so that we can understand, these kids can understand, what is going on, and the teachers can relate to them.

This is what this is all about. We must not leave here until we have put money in schools as opposed to other things. We must build our schools.