

gets back home to the folks in our home communities before it stays here in Washington, because if it stays here very long it is going to get spent. We are committed to seeing that it goes back to the people of this country.

We have also accomplished with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act the lowest student loan rate in 17 years. We have increased to historically high levels the Pell grant to make college more affordable.

Let us talk about secondary education. We have increased, by the President's request, on special ed, funding by about half a billion dollars. Think of all the schools that could be rebuilt in this country if we would fully fund special ed and free up those dollars that they can use for school construction.

How about dollars to the classroom? We passed that because we believe that we ought to get more dollars back to the classroom, back to our children, back to our teachers. Maybe we could afford to pay our teachers higher salaries. Maybe we could invest in technology and buy more computers, get those dollars back to the classroom and out of the Washington bureaucracy.

That is a fundamental difference. It is an honest difference with our friends on the left, but when they talk about the things that have not been done here I think the American people need to know about the things that have been done; things that are historic, things that are changing the way that this city operates.

There are a lot of challenges ahead of us. As we look down the road, we want to continue on the path. We have to win the war on drugs to make sure that our schools are safe and drug free, and that our children's minds and ambitions are not ruined by the scourge of illegal drugs.

We need to continue to improve our schools by getting more of that Federal money back home, back into the classroom, and seeing that those dollars are spent in the way that the local communities determine.

We need to save Social Security. We have made a commitment to spend 90 percent of the surplus, any surplus projected, to save Social Security not only for those who are receiving benefits today but for those who are paying in and expecting benefits in the future.

We are going to continue our fight to make government smaller and more efficient and improve the take-home pay of every working American.

These are honest differences that we have with our friends on the left, and they can get up and they can rant and rave about a do-nothing Congress but I want the American people to know, this may be a do-nothing liberal Congress but this is a Congress which has done a lot for the future of the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BECERRA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

LIBERTY AND LEARNING, EACH LEANING ON THE OTHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, long ago, James Madison spoke of one of our most fundamental American propositions. That was liberty and learning, each leaning on the other. We cannot have a healthy democracy or any democracy without quality public education.

It is our job to show that education can rely on democracy. Let us put 100,000 new teachers in our classrooms.

This Congress has been one of the least productive in recent memory. While urgent, unmet needs confront American families in areas like education and health care, this Congress just dithers with inconsequential suspension bills and ideological dead letters like tax cuts that drain away the budget surplus.

In the State that I represent, Indiana, Indianapolis specifically, 29 percent of public schools are in serious need of repairs and 67 percent have outdated or inadequate facilities.

Back in January this year, Congressional Democrats and the administration laid out an extensive agenda to improve the quality of public education in this country. The Republicans spent the entire year blocking that agenda, preferring instead to focus on scandals that divert public attention. Now we are asking that as a bare minimum Congress begin providing funds to hire new teachers and to fix up our crumbling schools. By hiring new teachers, we will be able to reduce class sizes.

Research in Indiana and the State of Tennessee shows that reducing class size to 15 students in the early grades improves student achievements, particularly among low income and minority students in urban areas.

Public school enrollment in Indiana is expected to grow by almost 6 percent in the next decade. We desperately need more teachers to handle this growth. When I look at the overcrowding in the Indianapolis public school system, I can say the students there sure could use more teachers.

The need is overwhelming but this Congress has turned a blind eye to that need. Only now, confronted with extraordinary demand by the voters for better education, are the Republicans grudgingly coming forward to agree to more school funding. Even now, though, they are dragging their feet. Rather than funding new teachers, the Republican leaders want to spend the money on other things like school administration.

Mr. Speaker, we need teachers, not administrators; classrooms, not office complexes. Even worse, they tried to revive their anti-public school agenda. They want to use the District of Columbia as a guinea pig for experimenting with school vouchers. The D.C. public schools already are in distress but the Republicans want to drain away their funding and put it into private schools.

The proposition about dollars for classrooms was indeed another cruel hoax. My State of Indiana, under that proposal, stood to lose \$8.3 million in the process of a so-called block grant back to the State of Indiana.

Instead of spending our taxpayers' money on private schools, we must invest it wisely in public schools, where the vast majority of our children get their education.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to get back to the business of helping to secure greater success for American families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

WILL THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS IMPROVE EDUCATION OR IS IT AN ELECTION YEAR PROPOSAL?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask a question: Will the President's education programs improve education or is it an election year proposal?

Last night I shared my thoughts on school construction. I will review them quickly. The school construction program, as proposed by the President, takes half of the money and designates it to 100 urban poor districts, but does