in any civilization in education. Now, listen to this quote from Investor's Daily, just an observation they made: ''School funding in 40 years has quadrupled. Teachers' salaries have only increased during that same period 43 percent.''

Teachers only account now for barely half the personnel in public schools. That is because they have built an unparalleled bureaucracy. That bureaucracy starts right here in Washington, DC. There are 5,000, count them, full-time employees in the Department of Education; 3,600 of them are in Washington, DC.

Now, we may need a Department of Education, I do not want to get into that debate, but I do not have in my school district teachers who are making the $50,000 to $100,000 that these 5,000 bureaucrats are making in the Federal Department of Education.

□ 1545

This is about control, this is about bureaucracy. What do 5,000 Federal bureaucrats and 10,000 more contract bureaucrats that they have hired to hide, what do they do with education, public education today? They regulate. It is unbelievable. Talk to a teacher, talk to a principal, I beg the Members. They will tell us the scandal that has been committed by the other side of the aisle. They have passed so many rules, so much red tape, so many regulations that our teachers cannot teach.

We see here that most of our school budgets now are going for bureaucracy, administrators, regulators, and all the myriad obligations that have been mandated from Washington, because they control and they want to maintain power. They have created 788 Federal education programs, dozens and dozens, and bureaucrats. They all have their programs, so a teacher cannot have control of the classroom. Ask any teacher. A teacher is inundated with paperwork, and school boards and even State agencies are mandated to create this huge bureaucracy.

What we need is 100,000 less bureaucrats in education. That is what this battle is about. That is why we are here. That is why I am almost hoarse, because I got up the other night and tried to explain this to my colleagues and the American people.

They want to pass regulations. They want to make certain that teachers do not teach. They want to have the most expensive approach to education. They have ruined public education. We are trying to take that back. It is simple: We want the money to go to the classrooms. We voted 95 percent, that it should go to the classrooms, to the teachers, for basic education, not for the bureaucracy that has been created.

We said that we want the teacher and the parent to have control. That was the foundation of public education. My wife was an elementary teacher. I have a degree in education. I did not want to teach because of the conditions in our classrooms. That is the same reason that we have this. We need to keep control with the parents and we need to stop the control of Washington. That is what this is all about.

INTRODUCING THE REPETITIVE FLOOD LOSS REDUCTION ACT OF 1998

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

CRUMBLING AND INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE ARE THE TRUE PROBLEMS FACING PUBLIC EDUCATION, NOT FEDERAL CONTROL OR OVERREGULATION

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today on a bill I am introducing, but before I do, let me just say something. A lot of Members come to the floor and say things, and get a little carried away. I just have to make a couple of comments.

For the last 40 years, while the Democrats may have controlled the House, the history I learned showed that the Republicans controlled the other body, off and on on a number of occasions, and there are two bodies in our system. That is how legislation is done.

Second of all, let me say that at least in my State of Texas, and I cannot speak for the other States, I only represent part of Texas, I find that it is the State legislature that sets the regulations, along with the school boards.

I was in a school in my district not long ago. The teachers I talked to did not say one thing about Federal regulations. What they talked about was the fact that they had an air conditioning system that was 35 years old, and that the school was crumbling, that the foundation was cracked. If they had any gripes, it was not even with the State legislature, it was with the local school board. So every State is different and everybody's situation is different.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, the Repetitive Flood Loss Reduction Act of 1998, to reform the National Flood Insurance Program by improving pre-disaster mitigation and facilitating voluntary buyouts of repetitively flooded properties.

I am hopeful that an effective pre-disaster mitigation and buy-out program will both reduce costs to taxpayers and better protect residents of flood-prone areas.

I have drafted this legislation in consultation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Harris County, Texas, Flood Control District, one of the Nation's most experienced and innovative flood control districts. However, I want to emphasize that I consider this legislation to be a starting point to begin the debate, and I look forward to input from my colleagues, my constituents, and other interested parties, so an improved version of this legislation can be introduced in the 106th Congress.

Some ideas in this bill will be considered controversial and may need to be changed. By introducing this bill, I am not endorsing each provision, but rather, the idea that some action needs to be taken to reform the National Flood Insurance Program. In fact, it is my hope that the public will review the contents of the bill and make their specific support and objections known, so we can develop consensus legislation.

The need for this legislation was underscored by a recent report by the National Wildlife Federation, that the National Flood Insurance Program has made flood insurance payments exceeding the values of the properties involved to thousands of repetitively flooded properties around the Nation.

This report, entitled Higher Ground, found that from 1978 to 1995, 5,629 repetitively flooded homes had received $416 million in payments, far in excess of their market value of $307 million.

My State of Texas led the Nation in volume of such payments, with more than $144 million, or $44 million more than the market value, paid to 1,305 repetitively flooded homes. The Houston/Harris County area, which I represent, had 132 of the 200 properties that generated the largest flood insurance payments beyond their actual value.

This included one property in South Houston that received a total of $929,680 in flood insurance payments from 17 flooding incidents, and another property near the San Jacinto river that received $806,591 for 16 flooding incidents, about 7 times the actual value of the home.

Other areas around the country have also had the same incidents occur. Altogether, according to the National Wildlife Federation report, although repetitive flood loss properties represent only 2 percent of all properties insured by the National Flood Insurance Program, they claim 40 percent of all NFIP payments during the period studied.

Since its creation in 1968, the NFIP has filled an essential need in offering low-cost flood insurance to homeowners who live inside 100-year flood plains. The program has helped to limit the exposure of taxpayers to disaster costs associated with flooding. However, the recent report clearly points out the need to improve the NFIP to address the problem of repetitive loss property.

Furthermore continued losses to the NFIP has increased the call by some of my colleagues to increase premiums and reduce the Federal subsidy for all Federal homeowners in the flood plain, not just those who suffer from repetitive flooding loss, in order to reduce Federal budget outlays.

Without long-term comprehensive reform of the NFIP, I am concerned that in the future, Congress may follow through with proposals to double or triple flood insurance premiums for all flood-prone homeowners, as was proposed in 1995 and 1996. Many of us, myself included, fought vigorously to oppose these increases, but our victory will be short-lived if we do not make changes in the program.

These repetitive loss properties represent an enormous cost for taxpayers. They are also a tremendous burden to residents whose lives are disrupted every time there is a flood. In many cases, these residents want to move but cannot afford to do so. By repeatedly compensating them for flood damage, current Federal law makes it easier for them to continue living where they are, rather than moving to higher ground.

I ask my colleagues to look at the bill and please comment on it.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to exchange special order times with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

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

There was no objection.

WHAT THIS CONGRESS HAS DONE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, a previous speaker asked the question, what has this Congress done for education, and in particular, she said, what has this Congress done for public education? She should be very proud of what this Congress has done as far as education is concerned during the last 2 years.

Just a few of the issues that we have enacted into law, which the President has already signed: The Higher Education Act, a bipartisan effort; special education, signed into law, the second largest program from the Federal Government in relationship to elementary and secondary education; the Workforce Investment Act, signed into law; loan forgiveness for new teachers, signed into law; quality teaching grants, that is the law; emergency student loans, that is law; and yes, in a bipartisan way, prohibition on Federal school tests. That is in law.

This Congress has also, for public education, dealt with school nutrition and reauthorized the school nutrition legislation, very important to schools; charter schools for public schools, $100 million; quality Head Start, again, bipartisan, and again, bicameral; vocational education; Community Services Block Grant; $500 million extra for special education; and the Reading Excellence Act.

That is only 14 programs; I might say, probably more than any Congress in the history of my term in the Congress; by far anything more than I have seen in a long, long time.

The issue is not what we have done or what we may not have done; the issue is, where is the control. We believe that if we are going to reform education and make a positive effort, it starts from the bottom up. We do not try any longer, as we have done for so many years, to say, ''Here, this is coming from the Federal Government. It is good because we said it is good. We know that one-size-fits-all. You do not know anything, on the local level. You should not make any decisions. We know it all.''

That is not the way it works, and it has not worked. We ought to admit that it has not worked. We are trying something different: passing 14 pieces of legislation dealing with elementary schools, secondary schools, public schools, for $31 plus billion in this year's budget for education.

Special education got a $750 million boost last year. It is going to get another $500 million this year. This is the one unfunded curriculum mandate from the Federal Government, a 100 percent mandate from the Federal Government.

Thirty years ago local government was promised that they will get 40 percent of the excess costs. Whatever it costs them to educate a regular student, and all of that above to educate a special needs student, we will send them 40 percent. We sent them, until 2 years ago, 6 percent. We are about up to 12 percent.

But as I have mentioned so many times, in California, the Los Angeles Unified School District, it means $60 million a year, every year. Now, if we talk about reforming schools, talk about the pupil-to-teacher ratio, talk about school maintenance, what they could do with $60 million, if we would put our money where our mouth is. That is a tragedy. In the St. Louis schools there is a $25 million increase every year, and on and on it goes.

So what we have done is tried to get money back so that they could do on the local level what they want to do to improve schools. But they cannot do it because, for instance, in Los Angeles, they have to raise $325 million from their local taxpayers to pay for our 100 percent mandate. They would have that $325 million, at least they would have $60 million more at the present time.

I tried to get this point across for 20 years in the minority, and now as a member of the majority, because that is the biggest problem facing local school districts: How do we fund the 100 percent mandate? They do not know how to do that. They do not have a tax base in order to do that. The mandate came from here.

So I am pretty proud of the fact that in the last 2 years, $750 million and another $500 million. This will be the first year that local school districts will be able to reduce their spending on special ed so they can put it into maintenance, they can put it into new teachers, they can put it into additional teachers, reduce class size all of those things. But if they got the 40 percent of the excess costs, it is unbelievable what they could do on the local level.

I would hope that no one leaves the Congress this session without being proud of what we have been able to do in the area of public education.

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

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

THE STATUS OF LEGISLATION RECOMMENDED BY THE WOMEN'S CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this afternoon in sincere gratitude and sincere regret, in my capacity as chair of this session of the Women's Congressional Caucus. In that capacity I have worked most productively with the cochair, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. NANCY JOHNSON). The work we have produced I think indicates what happens when Members work together.

I want to say a word about my gratitude, and then how what we have achieved has been quite overwhelmed by what women have been denied. I want to acknowledge the innovations that we designed this year, and the must-pass agenda. It had the help of the Speaker, gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH) and the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT).

Three of our seven priorities were passed. Two were vital to women: the reauthorization of the Mammography Quality Standards Act, which assures women that both the equipment and personnel involved in mammograms are up to standards; and sections of the Violence Against Women Act. There was a third important bill on our must-pass agenda, the Commission on Women, Minorities, and People with Disabilities in Science, Engineering, and Technology Jobs.

□ 1600

Two more bills of great importance to women I want to acknowledge. We beat back an attempt to take women out of basic training and separate them from men, and we passed an Innocent Spouse Tax Relief Act. These are very important, and I do not want to denigrate what they are.

But, Mr. Speaker, these are overwhelmed by the regret that I bring to the floor this afternoon and that regret boils down to the three Cs: Choice, Contraception and Child Care.

Mr. Speaker, if we were to ask women how they would rate this Congress, I think the three Cs would give us an F. Choice, because since the majority took control, we have had a hundred votes on choice, which should be a