''E,'' standing for education excellence; ''S,'' standing for strengthening retirement security; and ''T,'' providing tax relief for working Americans.

This tax relief portion is the fourth part that we have been eagerly awaiting on the Republican side of the aisle. We have focused on the rest and will continue to focus on a strong national security, our education system and saving our Social Security system and retirement security. We will continue to move forward and make progress on those.

Tax relief is the linchpin. Tax relief is where we go to strengthen the national economy. Tax relief is what we look to to reduce the impact and the scope and the size of the Federal Government and instead increase the scope, the effect and the size of American families, American businesses, American entrepreneurs. Tax relief is what has strengthened our economy. Tax relief is what has allowed a 50 percent reduction in the Nation's welfare caseload. Tax relief is what is allowing communities today to build more schools and to put more resources into local priorities. Tax relief is the best way to deal with the overpayment of about $800 billion in a 10-year period that the American people will pay.

We have to prevent that from occurring. We can save Social Security. We can save Medicare. We can provide for the best schools on the planet. We can defend our country and we can do all of that by honoring the notion that American families matter, that American taxpayers do count, and that the dollars that they work so hard for should be applied at home rather than here in Washington by the White House and the bureaucrats who answer to the White House.

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their attention and for their indulgence here on the House floor. We will be back tomorrow night for another special order on the same topic.

TEACHER EMPOWERMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Madam Speaker, today we consider a very important education bill. It is important because the Republican majority made it important. It is important because it is all that we have. In a year when we expect to be reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act, we have been denied that opportunity, but pieces of the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act have been put forward. The Ed-Flex Act is a piece of it and now this piece on Teacher Empowerment Act, H.R. 1995, which was considered today. The consideration of this bill today, which was kind of rushed to the floor and it was hoped that they would get enough votes to send a message to the White House that it cannot be successfully vetoed, but, of course, they failed in that effort. The President has promised to veto this bill because at the heart of the bill is an attempt to derail the President's initiative on more teachers for the classroom, especially in grades 1 through 3, where there is a need for smaller class sizes.

We did get a bill approved, an appropriation approved last year, which would permit the beginning of the process of hiring more teachers for the classroom. Virtually 100,000 teachers would be hired under this legislation; and 30,000, the process has started as of this month.

So in order to derail that for some reason the Republican majority is against smaller class sizes and they want to take away that priority, take away the targeting and they came up with this Teacher Empowerment Act, which is not a bad idea. The thrust of the bill is to provide a special initiative for the training and professional development of teachers, to improve the quality of teachers. By itself, that is a lofty goal and who could not subscribe to having better prepared teachers in our classroom?

We want quality teachers; but for some reason to get quality teachers, the Republican majority chose to sacrifice the more teachers for the classroom. The act that is designed to lower the class sizes in the first three grades has to be sacrificed, put on the chopping block, in order to take care of meeting teachers' professional development needs and training needs.

I think that for the Republican majority, it was more important to derail the initiative to have smaller class sizes than it is really to train teachers. The training of the teachers and the opportunities for professional development is secondary for them. They are pursuing an agenda, and this bill was a part of that agenda, to reach a point where all of the influence and direction from the Federal Government is wiped from the education sphere. They want to abolish the education role of the Federal Government and this, of course, takes them one step closer.

If they can take the President's initiative on class sizes and get rid of that, it is one more step toward reducing the Federal Government's role in education. So that bill was on the floor today. The Republican majority had the greatest number of votes because they are the majority. They passed the bill, but the number of defections by Democrats was not as great as they expected and the President's threat to veto the bill certainly can hold.

The bill can be vetoed until something more reasonable is done about the class size initiative of the President.

There were a lot of good things in the Teacher Empowerment Act. By the way, it is called Teacher Empowerment Act; but all the teacher organizations, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Grade Schools Group, all of the various education groups opposed it because they saw it as a sabotage operation designed to wipe out the reduction of the classroom size initiative. Now, that bill was on the floor today.

Tomorrow the major bill on the floor will be the tax cut bill, and I want to talk about the importance of dealing with the education initiative. The education investments should come before big spending tax cuts. Education investments should come before big spending tax cuts, and it is very important to note that during the whole discussion of the so-called Teacher Empowerment Act today, the one thing that the Republican majority refused to allow any discussion of was additional funding.

No new money is involved in their initiative. They want to take the money that has already been appropriated for the class size reduction and the money that already exists in various other teacher training and professional development programs and use that in a different way, mainly throw it out there to the States, let the governors decide how they want to spend that money on education. That is the thrust of what the Republicans want to do.

It takes us one step closer to their long-term objective and that is to block grant all funds available for education to the States. By block grant, I mean take away the Federal guidelines, take away the Federal priorities, take away the long-term Federal commitment to the poorest districts and the poorest schools out there.

The Federal thrust in education, since 1965, since the first Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act, in the era of Lyndon Johnson, has been to focus on those areas of greatest need, to target the Federal money to help with the problem that the States were not able to deal with and chose not to deal with and that is provide a decent education for the poorest students in the poorest schools in the poorest districts.

□ 2200

So that initiative by the Federal Government is targeted by the Republicans. They want to take it away.

Their long-term goal is to wipe out the Federal Government involvement in education. In 1995, my colleagues will recall, the Newt Gingrich program went head on in a direct attack on the Department of Education. They called for the abolishment of the Department of Education. They pursued that for a while.

It turned out that the American people did not think that was a good idea. The voters did not think it was a good idea. They retreated, and now we have no more talk about abolishing the Department of Education.

What we have is, instead of the direct assault, we have a great deal of warfare

going on where they snip away at the powers, they attack at small beachheads that they establish, and they find every way to cut into the power of the Department of Education and into the Federal role in education.

The Federal role in education, of course, is already limited. They make it appear that the Federal Government is responsible for all that is wrong in education. It is a very limited role already. Less than 8 percent of the education funding in this country, that is including higher education funding, less than 8 percent of that is provided for by the Federal Government at this point.

But that is what we had on the floor today, another assault on that small role, that less-than-8-percent role fiscally. If one got 8 percent of the funds involved across the country, then I think that the influence of the Federal Government is probably no more, also, than about 8 percent.

Control is vested in States and local education agencies for education already. But that is targeted. First, they wanted to get rid of it all together. Now they want to block grant it and turn it over to the governments. That is what was on the floor today.

No item which talked about additional funding was received in an amicable spirit by the Republican majority. In fact, the only amendment that called for fresh funds, new money, new initiative with new money was the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK). The gentlewoman wanted to offer grants, some help for sabbaticals for teachers.

If one is talking about training, then in order to hold certain people into the career path, in order to make certain that they have an opportunity for growth, somewhere they ought to encourage and help to finance the sabbaticals which already are offered in many local education systems.

It is an area that was not new, but the gentlewoman from Hawaii wanted to give more help and called for more money for that. That, of course, was voted down by a large margin and condemned by the chairman and the Republican majority. No new money is the credo of the leadership of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The Republican majority insists that we never discuss authorizing new funding. But tomorrow, we will be discussing on the floor an expenditure of $864 billion over a 10-year period for tax cuts. We cannot talk about money when we are talking about education. No new money. The government is broke.

We cannot make investments in education, but we can have big spending tax cuts. That is obvious. It is a huge, monstrous piece of big spending, $864 billion, and there is no room anywhere for an investment in education.

I think my colleagues have heard the previous speaker tonight and they heard the previous set of speakers from the Democratic side talk about this tax cut. While I am not prepared and do not intend to go into it with great deal, I associate myself with most of the remarks made by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and his associates. Their plea was that we not go forward with this monstrous $864 billion tax cut, that we look at other kinds of things that ought to be considered at the same time.

We cannot separate, in my opinion, the discussion of the tax cut, however, from the discussion of education. They did not do it. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans that talked tonight really placed education on the table for discussion. Within the parameters of the conventional wisdom here in Washington, and that sometimes includes the White House, when we talk about large amounts of money, they do not want to talk about education.

It is a direct insult to the voters. We have poll after poll which shows that education ranks as one of the number one priorities over the last 5 years and recently moved to the very top. Before Social Security, before defense spending, before all of the other priorities which are usually considered, education ranked as number one. Why are the voters being ignored? I do not know. They can ask their Congressman.

Why is it that, when my colleagues discuss education, they insist that they cannot discuss new money? Additional resources. Why is it that the American public repeatedly says, we would like to see more Federal assistance for education, but they are only answered with rhetoric about new kinds of changes in the reform programs, but none of those new changes have any resources behind them?

With the acknowledgment of the existence of a huge budget surplus, and I do not want to get into an argument about how much the surplus is or what it is going to be over the next 10 years, I just know that it is foolish for us laymen who are not involved directly in the calculation process to sit still and watch our leaders talk about huge sums of money that they are going to negotiate on and we question whether it really exists.

I have some friends who went to a meeting today to hear someone lecture about the fact that there really is no budget surplus, and we should stop discussing it.

I heard that, in 1996, when we were on the eve of an election, and we had gone through 2 years of the Republican majority insisting, not only that there was no money for an increase in funding for education, but that education should be cut, and we had proposals in 1995 that education be cut by almost $4 billion, but, in 1996, something miraculous happened.

Both parties agreed in the negotiations at the White House that there was additional money available somewhere, and instead of cutting education by $4 billion, because we were approaching an election where the polls showed that the public wanted more Federal assistance for education, and the party that stood in the way might suffer and might lose seats, suddenly there was agreement.

The Republican majority agreed to an increase in education funding of $4 billion. Instead of a $4 billion cut, we got a $4 billion increase. They found the money somewhere.

Now, I remember the argument at the time was that we would get the money from sales of the spectrum, the spectrum auctioning. The auctioning of the spectrum was going to create that money. It was not in hand. But since both parties of the negotiation agreed, it suddenly became a reality.

The $4 billion that was appropriated, it has been spent. Since 1996, they have been spending the money. So I assume that whatever assumptions they made, they lived up to those assumptions one way or the other.

I have not checked to see if we have auctioned off enough of the spectrum to add up to $4 billion, but when it came time to make the decision, the reality was what the two parties agreed upon.

If both the White House and the Republican majority leaders are saying now that we have a huge surplus that could accommodate, over the next 10 years, an $864 billion Republican tax cut, and the President has said, well, he will entertain some kind of tax cut, not that much, I assume the surplus is real, and the tax cut possibilities are real, and they are going to go forward. It would be ridiculous for us to sit out the process and not get involved.

Education ought to be put on the table so that it becomes a part of the discussion. The doors of opportunity are open for education to be discussed in terms of new resources and new appropriations. If the blind men who are in charge here insist that they do not see that as a possibility, some of us who are not in charge must sound the alarm. We must tell the American people, do not sit still and accept a big spending tax cut while there is no new investment in education.

I hope that my party will rally behind me soon and that they will see the folly of allowing a huge amount of surplus over the next 10 years to get committed to something, and it is going to happen. There are going to be some commitments of that surplus over the next 10 years. We sit still, and we let education be left out.

At this point, the forecast for education being included is quite dismal. We have a bill which has been set forth by the administration for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act. In their reauthorization proposals, they do not propose any great increases in the funding for the ongoing programs. In fact, there is sort of an understanding that we are going to live within certain budget guidelines. There are ceilings that have been set. The

budget caps, as they call them, will not be taken off.

That may all be true in conventional wisdom, but if the surplus exists, it is folly to assume that they will not in the final analysis be negotiations of some part of the surplus being committed to programs.

Certainly, it would be folly to sit still and not commit any part of the surplus to programs and let it all be used for big spending tax cuts.

The forecast for education right now may be dismal; but if we put on our thinking caps, if we sound the alarm for the general public, the people who in, poll after poll, show that they think education is important, if we let common sense enter into this matter, then we can go forward beyond the Republican plot to have Ed-Flex and Teacher Empowerment and other kinds of block granting drain off the funds, and we would not make any progress in terms of new resources for education.

There have been some dramatic changes now in the fiscal environment. Those people who said there was no money available 2 months ago cannot insist that there is no money available now in light of the facts that have been revealed.

Even the budget agencies, the Congressional Budget Office, they all admit there is a surplus. There is an argument about how much of the surplus is from Social Security funds and ought to be reserved only for Social Security, the lock box theory. There is an argument that there are certain amounts of money available and will be available beyond the Social Security surplus and that that should be budgeted.

Either way, either set of assumptions that are accepted, there is an acceptance of the fact there is going to be additional money available. Why not put education on the table? Why must we accept what the Republican majority has offered us on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and on the floor today?

What they offered us today was a perverted Robin Hood operation. They were going to take only existing funds and scramble them and use them for other purposes instead of having any new funding. When they do that, what they are doing is taking money away from the traditionally targeted programs, which are designed to help the poorest students in our poorest schools, and redirect that money away from the poorest schools, stealing, pilfering from the poor to take care of other sectors, and making that the hallmark of their education reform program.

Going to the public and saying this is our answer to their request or their demand for more Federal assistance. We give them the same money in new forms, and we hope that they will be fooled by it.

But I hope that common sense will not allow us to be fooled, that we will insist that education appropriations be put on the table alongside any tax cut spending, alongside any spending for shoring up Social Security, alongside spending for health care. Probably there is going to be a package which contains all of those elements.

Now, on May 26, I introduced a bill which deals with one aspect of education which I think is critical. In the light of the large amounts of money that were being made available in the surplus, now is the time to discuss it.

Not all the problems of education will be solved by new construction and modernization of our schools, although that was on the agenda today. We did discuss the need for more technology in our schools and the need for teachers to be trained to utilize technology and how important that was. It, the modernization process, requires that we have money to repair the schools and take care of the old wiring and make certain that they can be wired. In some cases, some schools cannot be rewired.

□ 2215

They are going to have to build new schools. So construction and modernization ought to be a part of this agenda.

It was totally ruled out before because of the budget caps. And if we take the ongoing budget as it is, common sense and conventional wisdom says there is just no money. But if we accept the fact that there is going to be a surplus, and we talk about large amounts of money, like $864 billion for a tax cut, then we can also talk about taking this opportunity to plan to spend over the next 10 years, or 5 or 10 years, money that is necessary to provide adequate schools, safe schools, schools where there are no health hazards, as well as schools that can be modernized to the point where they can make use of modern technology.

Schools can take advantage of the fact that we have an E-rate, which provides a reduced rate for people who make use of technology on an ongoing basis. The on-line services, the telephone services, 90 percent of that in the poorest of schools would be paid through this E-rate fund provided by the Federal Communications Commission. A lot of things are happening that we need to catch up with by providing more funds for construction and for modernization.

Now, on May 26 I called on my colleagues to join me in the cosponsorship of H.R. 1820, which is an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act. And this amendment would be germane certainly, because there is already a provision, Title 12, under the Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act, which calls for money for repairs and construction. So we can add, if we ever get around to reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act, we can certainly add that to the package. Or if we do not get around to reauthorizing the entire act, it is in the law. It is the law right now. We can amend it to provide for this injection of necessary funding for school construction.

I am just going to read from my own letter to my colleagues, and I have a big heading on top which says that, ''In the Year 2000 We Launch the March Towards a New Cybercivilization. We are spending $218 billion on highways and roads in 6 years. Let us invest half this amount, $110 billion, in 5 years, to build, repair and modernize schools.''

Let me repeat that. ''In the Year 2000 We Launch the March Toward a New Cybercivilization.'' A cybercivilization, meaning the digital world is taking over. The computers are taking over. They are everywhere, infused in our life, and they are probably going to have a greater influence and a greater presence in our lives as we move on.

Recently, there was a lot of discussion of the fact that one individual now, his net worth is $100 billion. This tops all the millionaires and billionaires throughout American history. The name of that individual is Bill Gates. Now, Bill Gates is worth, they say, at least $100 billion, and his company is worth far more. Now, Bill Gates does not own any gold mines, he does not own any oil wells, he does not own any uranium mines. All the kinds of things that used to make people rich are not associated at all with Bill Gates.

What does Bill Gates have that allows him to accumulate $100 billion as an individual and a company worth far more than that, Microsoft? Well, Bill Gates is where he is and has the kind of gigantic assets that he has through the application of brainpower. It is all about the brains that were used to develop the software in harmony with the computers and then to capitalize on the Internet.

He has been accused of some unscrupulous actions and so forth, but that is irrelevant in terms of the basic thrust of what happened here. What happened here is that brainpower, marshaled repeatedly, directed, concentrated on certain objectives produced results. And the same thing is happening over and over again in numerous high-tech companies. We are ahead of the rest of the world because we did not have any central committees making rules which said that we can only focus our brainpower on natural resources. We are only going to concentrate on mining and oil wells and so forth.

People who had the know-how to launch the cyberrevolution went ahead and launched it, very young people who are in charge. The guys who used to be called nerds, or probably similar people are still called nerds in high school and college, the nerds triumphed with brainpower. It is all about very educated people concentrating their resources and being able to generate wealth. So there is a direct association between brainpower and wealth.

We are definitely moving into a cybercivilization, and it is ridiculous for us not to recognize that and to shape our public policy in a way which

accommodates the fact that we are moving into a cybercivilization. There are some nations, like India, who recognize this. And public policy has produced in India large amounts of people, personnel, who are in the computer programming arena, who are in various stages as computer programmers and document technologists. Out of proportion to other similarly situated nations, India is producing people in the area of information technology with information technology expertise.

But let me just get back to the appeal to my colleagues that I sent out on May 26. ''In the year 2000 we launch the march toward a new cybercivilization. We are spending $218 billion on highways and roads in 6 years. Let us invest half this amount, $110 billion, in 5 years to build, repair and modernize schools. Please join me as a cosponsor for H.R. 1820, an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act which mandates a worthy Federal investment in education for the children of America.

''Public opinion polls consistently show that our voters consider Federal aid to education as the Nation's number one priority. We must now move beyond paltry pilot projects in our response to this long-term public outcry. H.R. 1820 commits the Federal Government to make the contribution most suitable to its role.

''Through direct appropriations we must make capital investments in school infrastructures, offer leadership in the building of schools, and then leave the details of the day-to-day operations to local and State authorities.''

I have no problem with local and State authorities being in charge of the implementation, but the resources need to come from the Federal Government because most States and local governments cannot commit the kind of resources necessary to modernize our school systems the way they should be.

''H.R. 1820 proposes to help all schools by authorizing, on the basis of school-aged children, a per capita distribution of the allocations for the purposes of modernization. Security, by the way, should be added, repair, technology and renovations, as well as new school construction.

''H.R. 1820 deserves national priority consideration for the following reasons: One, the best protection for Social Security is an educated workforce, able to qualify for high-tech jobs and steadily pay dollars into the Social Security Trust Fund.

''Two, the effective performance of our military in action, utilizing high-tech weaponry, requires an educated pool of recruits.

''Three, the U.S. economy will continue to be the pace setter for the globe only if we maintain a steady flow of qualified brainpower and updated know-how at all performance levels, theoretical, scientific, technical and mechanical.

''Invest in education and all other national goals become reachable.''

Invest in education and all other national goals become reachable. Invest in education and we have a great possibility, a greater possibility. I do not think Social Security is about to go bankrupt. There are a lot of scare tactics applied to discussions of where Social Security funds are now and where they will be 50 years from now. But one way to assure that Social Security funding will be there is to have a workforce out there paying into the Social Security fund. Whatever else we do, and I do not rule out having general appropriations for Social Security, but whatever else we do, we should keep the payment of funds into the Social Security treasury from working people, people who are working.

And if we do not have people who can qualify for the jobs that are going to be available 20, 30, 40 years from now, if we do not have people that have the know-how to do the high-tech jobs, the likelihood is that we are going to contract out a lot of our work to other countries that do have the population and the workforce with the know-how, and they are going to pay money into their Social Security fund, and we will have our Social Security fund deprived of the payment by workers into the fund. That is the first source.

So the best protection for Social Security is an educated workforce. We ought to have a discussion of education on the table when we consider what to do with the huge surplus that is anticipated over the next 10 years. Instead of being a projected $864 billion in tax expenditures, we should say some portion of that money should go for education.

In this particular piece of legislation, the bill I have introduced, I only want $110 billion out of the total that is projected. Even if we have to take the $110 billion away from the tax expenditures, that is $110 billion from $864 billion. The parameters for the discussion have been set by the majority party. They have said we can talk big money, we can talk in billions, we can talk $864 billion, so let us use that as a reference point and say why spend on tax cuts the full $864 billion? Let us negotiate at least $110 billion over a 5-year period to build schools and to modernize schools. Invest in education.

There may be additional money we will want to invest in whole school reform, which, despite the fact that the authorizing Committee on Education and the Workforce did not come up with the program for whole school reform, we get high praise for some of the whole school reform efforts that are going forward. There are many other places where we may need some investment in education, but a large capital expenditure is needed for school construction and modernization.

And a capital expenditure of this kind is only a one-time expenditure. It is not something we would saddle the budget with forever. It would not be ongoing. We would take care of the problem, we would invest in building schools, and then we will have a result from that investment, a return on that investment later on.

I think any businessman, if he had a surplus and there was clearly identified needs in the area of capital investments, would make those investments in order to be able to realize that return in the future.

The General Accounting Office told us in 1995 that we needed $112 billion at that time. That was 4 years ago. We needed $112 billion just to keep the infrastructure at a level which would accommodate the amount of schoolchildren attending school at that time. We now have many more children attending school. I think we have close to 53 million children out there in schools, and what I have just projected, an expenditure of $110 billion over a 5-year period, would be only an expenditure of $416 per year per school-aged child. An expenditure of $416 per child per year over a 5-year period.

So we are talking about a relatively small amount of money to invest in education and guaranty the workforce that we need for tomorrow. And that is an appeal I made to my colleagues on May 26 to cosponsor. And I recently developed another appeal in light of the changed circumstances; that we now know that there definitely is additional money available. I projected it before and I said we should get ready for it and we should put on the table a reasonable package which includes school construction.

□ 2230

I am all for the President's call for an expenditure of a part of the surplus on Medicare. I am all for his call of an expenditure of the bulk of the surplus on shoring up Social Security. I am not against that, but I think it is a great mistake, a great blunder by both Democrats and Republicans not to put education on the table and make it part of the package. But circumstances recently have changed so favorably until I do not see how we can ignore the great window of opportunity that is now open.

So I prepared another letter which I have not sent out yet, I will send it out tomorrow, I start with the following heading. ''Democrats must respond to the overwhelming change in the fiscal surplus negotiating environment.'' I repeat. ''Democrats must respond to the overwhelming change in the fiscal surplus negotiating environment.''

''Republicans have now ratcheted up their demands for a mega-billion-dollar tax cut. The Democratic President has now indicated that he will entertain a tax cut at some level.'' So it is definitely on the table.

''Missing from the end game negotiating table is a Democratic scenario for school construction and modernization.'' At this moment, that is not on the table. None of the speakers tonight have talked about education being part of the mix. I heard discussions of defense, additional expenditures for defense that ought to come out of the

surplus and a few other items, but no one talked about education although education if you want to consider the national security of the country as being important, the first item you ought to look at is the quality of our education, including such practical and immediate problems as the workforce required by the military. The military requires recruits that are highly educated, people who must have had enough prerequisite education in order to be able to go into the military and learn how to deal with a high-tech military, high-tech equipment, procedures, et cetera. You need well-trained people in the military as much as you need them in the area of information technology.

So the first step toward shoring up our military should not be new expenditures for equipment like aircraft carriers and B–2 bombers and smart bombs but to make certain that the people who guide those smart bombs and who prepare the maps and the intelligence before you drop the bombs do not make a mistake of the kind we made with the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia. Or you have people who are smart enough with their high-tech equipment not to be fooled the way we were fooled with the Yugoslav dummy equipment, wooden weapons and all kinds of things that made us believe that we were bombing their military into ineffectiveness when actually we were hitting very little of their military equipment. I do not know why we fell for that trick because we pulled that on Hitler when we were projecting openly exposing equipment in the south of France to make it appear that we were going to launch an invasion of the mainland of Europe from the south, toward the south of France, instead of at Normandy, and the Germans fell for that and we are proud of the fact that we pulled that off. Why we would let Yugoslavia pull the same kind of trick on us with respect to equipment that we thought we were bombing, I do not know, but it points up the need to have better training and a better educated military, set of military personnel from the bottom to the top.

Let me continue. As I said before, ''Missing from the end game negotiating table is a Democratic scenario for school construction and modernization. H.R. 1820, an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act, authorizes a direct appropriation which is only one-half the amount authorized and appropriated for transportation. Not $218 billion but $110 billion, or $416 per child per year for 5 years. All of the Democratic proposals for school reform and education are worthy, but nothing proposed is equal to the number one priority ranking that the voters have assigned to education. A construction and modernization initiative of this kind fills the vacuum.''

This kind of initiative is a response worthy of what the voters have demanded. In poll after poll, you have said education should get more assistance from the Federal Government. You do not want to hear an answer that we are going to have a Teacher Empowerment Act which takes old funds away from poor schools and redirects them, spreading them out over the whole country to train teachers better but no new funds are going to be allocated. You do not want to hear that kind of response to an overwhelming demand that the Federal Government play a greater role in providing assistance to education.

Here is a response worthy of it. Lay these responses alongside of the $218 billion that we approved for highway and transportation last year, $218 billion over a 6-year period. That is about 50 some billion dollars a year for the next 6 years. We approved that. The authorization committee came forward with it. It was not the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee was driven by the energy of the authorizing committee. Today we had the authorizing committee, Education and the Workforce, refusing to even ask for additional funding and take to the Appropriations Committee the priorities that have been set by the American people.

So we are asking for a worthy response, $110 billion over 5 years. Lay that aside the highway and transportation bill of $218 billion over 6 years and then lay that aside of the new request from the Republican majority for $864 billion over 10 years. If you get dizzy considering billions of dollars, I can understand but at least let us look at the comparisons and understand the framework in which we are operating.

I have had people say to me, ''When you talk about $22 billion a year for school construction over a 5-year period which all adds up to $110 billion over 5 years, that is mind-boggling.'' It may be mind-boggling, but we live in a mind-boggling era and we are a country of more than 250 million people. There are more than 16,000 school districts out there, and there are 53 million children out there. When you look at the number of children and you look at the amount spent per child, we are talking about $416 per child per year. Maybe that can help you understand the mind-boggling figure of $22 billion per year over a 5-year period which adds up to $110 billion. And then lay the $110 billion alongside $218 billion for highways, lay that alongside $864 billion for a tax cut, and you are able to comprehend maybe what is going on in Washington.

Do you want to stand by and let your government leaders make the blunder of a tax cut expenditure of $864 billion while schools receive zero from a surplus that does exist, or we assume exists? Democrats risk also being upstaged on this because I do not think the majority party is as dumb as some people consider it to be and I do not think this whole process is going to go forward without the majority party waking up to the fact that the people out there are still demanding that the Federal Government do more for education.

Between now and the next election in the year 2000, I expect some movement on the part of the majority party, and I hope the Democrats are not going to be victimized by an October surprise like the one we had in October of 1996 when the Republicans agreed to an increase in education funding of $4 billion. After the Republicans had gone for a period from 1994 to the fall of 1996 calling for the abolishment of the Department of Education, wanting to cut school lunches, they attacked education vigorously, they cut Head Start, they cut title I, they went into 1995 and shut down the government because the President would not agree to those kinds of cuts, after all that had happened, in the fall of 1996 they decided to appropriate $4 billion more for education and they went out and told the public, ''We are the party which supports education.'' And they had enough people to believe that to win back the majority. I am convinced that that was a major item, a major part of their winning in 1996.

''Democratic refusal to support a meaningful dollar investment in school construction and modernization could weaken our ties to our labor allies and leave open an opportunity for Republicans to capture more labor union support.''

I have talked before about the way we treat the working people in this country. People look at requests for new money for education, for items like school construction or items like whole school reform or any items related to education, they look at it and say, ''Well, that's for minorities, that's for people in the inner cities,'' but most of the working families in this country cannot afford to send their children to private schools. So we are talking about the public school system. And a refusal to direct funding into school building repair and modernization is an abandonment of the public school system and working families are out there who are going to suffer as a result.

''We cannot emphasize too much the fact that the fiscal negotiating environment has undergone a rapid, almost revolutionary sea-change since the announcement of the long-term multitrillion dollar surplus. To adapt to this change and at the same time respond to the number one priority of the voters, we urge you to review your position on H.R. 1820 and sign up for cosponsorship now.''

I am trying to get this new letter out. I have some sponsors that we did not have before. The minority whip the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) now is a cosponsor of this bill. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) on the Appropriations Committee is a cosponsor. We hope that we can have new momentum that will be generated among those skeptical Democrats who did not want to be associated with an

appropriation figure which seemed unreal. It is not unreal anymore. I hope I do not have to repeat why it is not unreal. I think that every one of my colleagues, Republican or Democrat, can see that $110 billion alongside $864 billion is not an unreal projection of what should be available for school construction.

Now, one final specific item about this particular bill, H.R. 1820. We propose to appropriate the money on the basis of the number of school aged children in each State. This is a bill that would not be targeted, means-tested and that the utilization of it would have great flexibility for security purposes, for repair, for modernization, for technology, for construction, for renovation. There would be great flexibility and it would be appropriated according to the number of school aged children. If you look at it in terms of the blanket call for $110 billion, it may seem kind of irrelevant to you, but let us look at what each State will get if you take the number of school aged children projected for that State for this year and you apply that to the formula.

Alabama would receive $341 million for school construction per year. This is the first year. Each year for 5 years, Alabama would receive $340 million. California would receive $2.7 billion a year for 5 years. Florida would receive $1.1 billion. Hawaii, $92 million. Iowa, $233 million. It would be money which is real enough to deal with the problem that the General Accounting Office has cited. We are talking about expenditures which would make a big difference in terms of school construction and school modernization and repair, et cetera. We are talking about an investment in education which would be a capital investment, the value over 30, 40, 50 years, versus the $864 billion projected for a tax cut expenditure over a 10-year period.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD these two items, my Dear Colleague letter of May 26, 1999, and my Dear Colleague letter of July 14, 1999 in their entirety:

IN THE YEAR 2000 WE LAUNCH THE MARCH TOWARD A NEW CYBERCIVILIZATION—WE ARE SPENDING 218 BILLION DOLLARS ON HIGHWAYS AND ROADS IN SIX YEARS

LET US INVEST HALF THIS AMOUNT—110 BILLION—IN FIVE YEARS TO BUILD, REPAIR AND MODERNIZE SCHOOLS

DEAR COLLEAGUE: Please join me as a cosponsor for H.R. 1820, an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act which mandates a worthy federal investment in education for the children of America. Pubic opinion polls consistently show that our voters consider Federal Aid to Education as the nation's number one priority. We must now move beyond paltry pilot projects in our response to this long-term public outcry.

H.R. 1820 commits the Federal government to make the contribution most suitable to its role. Through direct appropriations we must make capital investments in the school infrastructures. Offer leadership in the building of schools and then leave the details of the day to day operations to local and state authorities.

H.R. 1820 proposes to help all schools by authorizing a per capita (on the basis of school age children) distribution of the allocations for the purposes of modernization, security, repair, technology and renovations as well as new school construction.

H.R. 1820 deserves national priority consideration for the following reasons:

The best protection for Social Security is an educated work force able to qualify for hi-tech jobs and steadily pay dollars into the Social Security Trust Fund.

The effective performance of our military in action utilizing hi-tech weaponry requires an educated pool of recruits.

The U.S. economy will continue to be the pace setter for the globe only if we maintain a steady flow of qualified brainpower and updated know-how at all performance levels—theoretical, scientific, technical and mechanical.

Invest in education and all other national goals become reachable.

SEC. 12001. FINDINGS.

(1) There are 52,700,000 students in 88,223 elementary and secondary schools across the United States. The current Federal expenditure for education infrastructure is $12,000,000. The Federal expenditure per enrolled student for education infrastructure is 23 cents. An appropriation of $22,000,000,000 would result in a Federal expenditure for education infrastructure of $417 per student per fiscal year.

(2) The General Accounting Office in 1995 reported that the Nation's elementary and secondary schools need approximately $112,000,000 to repair or upgrade facilities. Increased enrollments and continued building decay has raised this need to an estimated $200,000,000,000. Local education agencies, particularly those in central cities or those with high minority populations, cannot obtain adequate financial resources to complete necessary repairs or construction. These local education agencies face an annual struggle to meet their operating budgets.

(3) According to a 1991 survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators, 74 percent of all public school buildings need to be replaced. Almost one-third of such buildings were built prior to World War II.

(4) The majority of the schools in unsatisfactory condition are concentrated in central cities and serve large populations of poor or minority students.

(5) In the large cities of America, numerous schools still have polluting coal burning furnaces. Decaying buildings threaten the health, safety, and learning opportunities of students. A growing body of research has linked student achievement and behavior to the physical building conditions and overcrowding. Asthma and other respiratory illnesses exist in above average rates in areas of coal burning pollution.

(6) According to a study conducted by the General Accounting Office in 1995, most schools are unprepared in critical areas for the 21st century. Most schools do not fully use modern technology and lack access to the information superhighway. Schools in central cities and schools with minority populations above 50 percent are more likely to fall short of adequate technology elements and have a greater number of unsatisfactory environmental conditions than other schools.

(7) School facilities such as libraries and science laboratories are inadequate in old buildings and have outdated equipment. Frequently, in overcrowded schools, these same facilities are utilized as classrooms for an expanding school population.

(8) Overcrowded classrooms have a dire impact on learning. Students in overcrowded schools score lower on both mathematics and reading exams than do studetns in schools with adequate space. In addition, overcrowding in schools negatively affects both classroom activities and instructional techniques. Overcrowding also disrupts normal operating procedures, such as lunch periods beginning as early as 10 a.m. and extending into the afternoon; teachers being unable to use a single room for an entire day; too few lockers for students, and jammed hallways and restrooms which encourage disorder and rowdy behavior.

(9) School modernization for information technology is an absolute necessity for education for a coming CyberCivilization. The General Accounting Office has reported that many schools are not using modern technology and many students do not have access to facilities that can support education into the 21st century. It is imperative that we now view computer literacy as basic as reading, writing, and arithmetic.

(10) Both the national economy and national security require an investment in school construction. Students educated in modern safe, and well-equipped schools will contribute to the continued strength of the American economy and will ensure that our Armed Forces are the best trained and best prepared in the world. The shortage of qualified information technology workers continues to escalate and presently many foreign workers are being recruited to staff jobs in America. Military manpower shortages of personnel capable of operating high tech equipment are already acute in the Navy and increasing in other branches of the Armed Forces.

SEC. 12003. FEDERAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF GRANTS.

(a) AUTHORITY AND CONDITIONS FOR GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To assist in the construction, reconstruction, renovation, or modernization for information technology of elementary and secondary schools, the Secretary shall make grants of funds to State educational agencies for the construction, reconstruction, or renovation, or for modernization for information technology, of such schools.

(2) FORMULA FOR ALLOCATION.—From the amount appropriated under section 12006 for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall allocate to each State an amount that bears the same ratio to such appropriated amount as the number of school-age children in such State bears to the total number of school-age children in all the States. The Secretary shall determine the number of school-age children on the basis of the most recent satisfactory data available to the Secretary.

SEC. 12006. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title, $22,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2000 and a sum no less than this amount for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

Sincerely,

MAJOR R. OWENS,
Member of Congress.

DEMOCRATS MUST RESPOND TO THE OVERWHELMING CHANGE IN THE FISCAL SURPLUS NEGOTIATING ENVIRONMENT

Republicans Have Now Racheted Up Their Demand For A Mega-Billion Dollar Tax Cut.

The Democratic President Has Now Indicated That He Will Entertain A Tax Cut At Some Level.

MISSING FROM THE END-GAME NEGOTIATING TABLE IS A DEMOCRATIC SCENARIO FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND MODERNIZATION

H.R. 1820, An Amendment To The Elementary And Secondary Education Assistance Act Authorizes A Direct Appropriation

Which Is Only One Half The Amount Authorized And Appropriated For Transportation—Not 218 Billion Dollars, But 110 Dollars Or 416 Dollars Per Child Per Year For Five Years.

All Of The Democratic Proposals For School Reform And Education Are Worthy But Nothing Proposed Is Equal To The Number One Priority Ranking That The Voters Have Assigned To Education—A Construction And Modernization Initiative Fills This Vacuum.

Democrats Risk Being Upstaged By A Republican ''October Surprise'' On School Construction and Modernization.

Democratic Refusal To Support A Meaningful Dollar Investment In School Construction And Modernization Could Weaken Our Ties To Our Labor Allies And Leave Open An Opportunity For Republicans To Capture More Labor Union Support.

We cannot emphasize too much the fact that the ''fiscal negotiating environment'' has undergone a rapid, almost revolutionary sea-change since the announcement of the long-term multi-trillion dollar surplus. To adapt to this change and at the same time respond to the number one priority of the voters, we urge you to review your position on H.R. 1820 and sign up for co-sponsorship now.

Enclosed is a copy of the original ''Dear Colleague'' letter along with additional information indicating the amount of funding your State would receive through a simple formula based on the number of school aged children residing in each state.

To Co-Sponsor H.R. 1820 please call Sudafi Henry or Beverly Gallimore at 225–6231.

Yours For Education Excellence,

MAJOR R. OWENS,
Member of Congress.

NANCY PELOSI,
Member of Congress.

I would like also to enter into the RECORD the School Construction Funding by State, the formula here which describes the amount of money that each State would receive out of an appropriation of $110 billion over a 5-year period.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING BY STATE (H.R. 1820)

State	Total Number of School Age Children (ages 5–17) [1]	Funds estimated (In millions)
Alabama	789,333	$341,126,043
Alaska	142,903	61,758,389
Arizona	895,218	386,886,363
Arkansas	478,837	206,938,986
California	6,347,098	2,743,025,343
Colorada	761,718	329,191,668
Connecticut	579,428	250,411,399
Delaware	129,860	56,121,596
District of Columbia	72,431	31,302,505
Florida	2,586,883	1,117,973,226
Georgia	1,454,483	628,583,918
Hawaii	214,232	92,584,643
Idaho	259,691	112,230,659
Illinois	2,296,551	992,500,445
Indiana	1,106,627	478,250,990
Iowa	539,958	233,353,649
Kansas	515,347	222,717,512
Kentucky	724,726	313,204,835
Louisiana	878,063	379,472,486
Maine	224,438	96,995,370
Maryland	943,128	407,591,627
Massachusetts	1,064,414	460,007,798
Michigan	1,894,530	818,759,030
Minnesota	942,066	407,132,663
Mississippi	554,803	239,769,213
Missouri	1,042,745	450,643,106
Montana	171,598	74,159,507
Nebraska	330,989	143,043,516
Nevada	331,047	143,068,582
New Hampshire	225,490	97,450,013
New Jersey	1,443,241	623,725,462
New Mexico	371,207	160,424,529
New York	3,249,139	1,404,180,402
North Carolina	1,392,729	601,895,692
North Dakota	122,404	52,899,337
Ohio	2,101,841	908,352,624
Oklahoma	651,067	281,371,625
Oregon	608,229	262,858,327
Pennsylvania	2,140,017	924,851,146

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING BY STATE (H.R. 1820)—Continued

State	Total Number of School Age Children (ages 5–17) [1]	Funds estimated (In millions)
Rhode Island	175,805	75,977,646
South Carolina	706,248	305,219,198
South Dakota	150,843	65,189,819
Tennessee	969,365	418,930,472
Texas	4,013,816	1,734,650,861
Utah	497,578	215,038,284
Vermont	108,620	46,942,305
Virginia	1,197,604	517,568,520
Washington	1,085,679	469,197,893
West Virginia	305,065	131,839,941
Wisconsin	1,018,146	440,012,157
Wyoming	98,643	42,630,545

[1] Figures obtained from U.S. Census Bureau. Current as of July 1, 1998.

I know that there are still those out there who say, ''I would rather have the tax cut.'' Who is it that when you are asked a question ''Would you rather have a tax cut than to have new government programs'' will not answer the question, ''Yes, I'd like a tax cut''? There are a lot of people out there who feel that the proposal that has been made by the Republican majority affects me and impacts on me and I will have some piece of that. The Republican majority has said they are going to have an across-the-board 10 percent cut in taxes. That will add up to a large amount of money for people who are making large salaries. If their incomes are very high, they will have a large dividend from that, because what the Republican majority is saying is they are going to have a 10 percent across-the-board cut on the tax rates. The tax rates. So that people who are paying the highest tax rates get the greatest benefits from that 10 percent across-the-board cut.

People down lower who think that they are going to realize a lot from their tax cut do not understand that this tax cut is not for the average person making $50,000, $30,000. It is not for you. If they wanted a tax cut for you, and I think you ought to understand this before you support what looks like a good idea and looks like it might deliver some benefits to you, you might take a look at what the Republican majority could have done if they wanted to deliver tax relief or a tax cut to the little guy and to the average family.

□ 2245

They could have a 10 percent cut on taxable income; that would be real. You could realize that at any level. As my colleagues know, I propose, just as an example, and I proposed several tax bills this year, as my colleagues know, I have a former tax expert on my staff who constantly updates me on what is going on and what some possibilities are.

You know, people who are on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, as I am, are not supposed to deal with tax matters. They want to compartmentalize this, but I think the people who elected me to come to Congress to do a job across the board, you cannot separate these things.

If you oversimplify and you separate tax policies from education policies, you are going to end up being swindled because people who are promoting tax policies are going to continue, as they do now, to pretend that ways and means and taxes has nothing to do with education. But once they give all the money away, the argument is going to be made that they have no more money for education; and for that reason we have to all be involved across the board in all facets of what goes on here in this Congress, and certainly all of us need to be involved with tax matters and appropriation matters.

My bill, the one I am dropping in today, calls for a 3 percent cut of taxable income across the board. Now what does that mean? That means that if you make $30,000 a year, I mean, if you have an income and after all the deductions and adjustments are made your taxable income is $30,000, you would get a $900 tax cut. The same guy who is making a million dollars on his first $30,000 of taxable income will get a $900 tax cut too. There would not be the unevenness that you have here where the rate across the board reduction, 10 percent reduction in the rate, gives advantage to those on the top. Everybody would benefit equally in terms of a cut in the taxable income. The people at the bottom would get the same advantage as the people at the very top.

And a staff member of mine prepared a chart for me. I was going to read off what it looks like from the top to the bottom, and I misplaced the chart and did not bring it with me. But the thrust of the matter is that a 3 percent tax cut yields a certain amount of money, 3 percent from the taxable income yields a finite amount of money. For $30,000 you are talking about a $900 cut, and the first $30,000 that a millionaire makes, he get a $900 tax cut, the next $30,000, he get another $900 tax cut and so forth. Everybody would be getting the same amount cut as the Republican majority now proposes it. It is a cut in the rate, which means that the people with the highest rates will get the greatest benefits for the tax cut.

There is another item that I wish would get some consideration. The Republican majority is moving so fast with the tax cut that it will be on the table tomorrow. I had hoped that some considerations I had raised earlier in the Progressive Caucus and with other circles would be put on the table as we prepared an alternative to the Republican tax cut. I understand in the Democratic Caucus tomorrow we may be considering some kind of alternative. It is a pity we waited so late to prepare an alternative, but at least I like to take a look at that alternative.

Part of what should be in that alternative is some relief, some tax relief for the people on the bottom who have paid the highest increase in taxes over the last 10 to 20 years. The payroll taxes have gone up, and in an article by David Rosenbaum in the New York Times on July 19, yesterday, Mr. Rosenbaum talks about the fact that

polls on tax cuts find that the voters are kind of mixed up, and the edge seems to go to voters who feel that programs are more important than tax cuts. People worry more about programs and high taxes. But in his conclusion of the article Mr. Rosenbaum points out something which I have tried to get my colleagues to understand but failed, and that is, and I will quote from the latter part of the article:

''In a Gallup poll, 69 percent of the Republicans said a candidate's position on the amount Americans pay in Federal taxes was an important factor in how they voted, but fewer than half the Democrats and Independents gave that response; and not surprising, the more money people make and thus the more they pay in taxes, the more they favor tax cuts. Gallop found that 62 percent of those with annual incomes above $75,000 regarded taxes as a high or top priority in deciding whom to vote for.''

And this is the paragraph that I want to stress:

''One reason the public may generally be skeptical about tax cuts is that most people pay more in Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes than they pay in income taxes, and no one nowadays is talking about reducing payroll taxes.''

I think the Democratic party, my colleagues, my leadership, is missing an opportunity that is not gone completely. If we are going to have a tax cut, an alternative to the Republican $864 billion tax spending bill, then let us consider this paragraph.

One reason the public may generally be skeptical about tax cuts is that most people pay more in Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes than they pay in income taxes, and no one nowadays is talking about reducing payroll taxes.

Why do we not talk about reducing payroll taxes? Into this tax package that is into this surplus spending package and the tax reduction part of it let us not only put education as one of the vital items that must be considered in the negotiations, let us also put the high payroll taxes into that mix and into that discussion. Let us reduce payroll taxes.

The final paragraph of Mr. Rosenbaum's article concludes:

''In 1997 a couple with $50,000 in income from wages paid $7,650 in payroll taxes.'' Let me repeat. ''In 1997 a couple with $50,000 in income from wages paid $7,650 in payroll taxes, but assuming one child and itemized deductions of $10,000, the couple paid only $4,800 in income taxes.'' They are paying almost twice as much in payroll taxes as they pay in income taxes.

If you want a tax cut and if you are one of those people who say, well, I know we need money for education and we should have money for school construction, but I want a tax cut, and I insist that we have a tax cut; well, let us have a tax cut, but let us have a tax cut for the people who are on the bottom and who need it most. Let us have a tax cut for the people who have the highest increases in their taxes, and that is the people on the bottom, the payroll taxes. The Medicare and the Social Security taxes combined have represented the biggest increase in taxes of all over the last 10 to 20 years, and we need to give relief for those people.

So in conclusion what I am saying is that we cannot separate those two matters, and I do want to introduce this article, Mr. Speaker. I include an item by David Rosenbaum, a New York Times, July 19, 1999, in the RECORD:

[From the New York Times, July 19, 1999]

POLLS ON TAX CUTS FIND VOTERS' MESSAGES MIXED

(By David E. Rosenbaum)

WASHINGTON, July 18—Nearly two-thirds of Americans think their taxes are too high. But few of them worry much about it, and most people would rather have the Government spend money on popular programs than cut taxes.

These somewhat contradictory findings from a review of public opinion polls help explain why Republicans and Democrats have such different views on tax cuts. Each side can find something in the polls to justify its position.

Republicans in Congress expect to approve large tax cuts this summer. Among the steps Republicans are considering are reduced income-tax rates, a lower capital gains tax, abolition of the tax on inheritances, new tax breaks for retirement savings and more favorable tax treatment of married couples.

These measures are opposed by most Democrats in Congress, and President Clinton has promised to veto them. The President favors a much smaller tax cut focused largely on retirement savings. The President and the Democratic lawmakers also favor spending more on health and education programs.

In a Gallup poll this spring, 65 percent of those questioned said their taxes were too high. Over the last 30 years, through good economic times and bad, this figure has not changed a great deal.

On the other hand, when CBS News asked people in a poll last week what they thought was ''the single most important problem for the Government—the President and Congress—to address in the coming year,'' only 5 percent named taxes, putting the issue behind health care, Social Security, the national debt, education and Medicare and Medicaid.

In a similar vein, when Gallup asked people in March whether they favored a tax cut or ''increased spending on other Government programs,'' three-quarters opted for the tax cut. But on an alternative question, when people were asked whether they preferred a tax cut or more spending to ''fund new retirement savings accounts, as well as increased spending on education, defense, Medicare and other programs,'' three of every five respondents favored financing of the specified programs.

The idea of cutting taxes ''has only moderate priority when you test it against spending,'' said Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan polling operation. ''The reason is not that people don't think their taxes are too high, because they do, but they think tax breaks won't benefit them and the country as much as the spending, and they think that when taxes are cut, the rich guys are the ones who are going to make out.''

Indeed, a poll by Gallup, CNN and USA Today in April found that 66 percent of the public believes ''upper-income people'' already pay too little in taxes.

When they debate tax policy, Republicans and Democrats rely on the polling results that bolster their separate doctrines.

Asked in an interview last week why polls showed little clamor for tax cuts among voters, Representative Bill Archer of Texas, the Republican who is chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, replied: ''We know from long-term polling data, over a long period of time, that people believe they are overtaxed. People do not say we are taxed too little. They say Government spends too much and that we are taxed too much.''

But in the Ways and Means Committee debate on tax legislation last week, Representative Pete Stark, Democrat of California, insisted that people understood the Republican bill would benefit mainly the rich. The Republicans ''would rather help multimillionaires and special interests rather than enable seniors to obtain affordable prescription drugs,'' Mr. Stark declared.

Paradoxically, when the Pew Research Center asked voters last month whether they thought Republicans or Democrats would do ''a better job'' on taxes, the outcome was a dead heat: 38 percent said Republicans and 38 percent said Democrats.

One reason tax cuts are so important to Republicans is that this is a matter on which two main strands of the party, business interests and religious conservatives, agree.

Another reason is that many issues that used to be central to Republican dogma, like anti-communism, are not relevant today. And many others, like welfare, crime and balanced budgets, have been co-opted by President Clinton.

Among voters, tax cuts are a significantly higher priority for Republicans that for Democrats and independents.

In a Gallup poll, 69 percent of Republicans said a candidate's position on the ''amount Americans pay in Federal taxes'' was an important factor in how they voted, but fewer than half of Democrats and independents gave that response.

And not surprising, the more money people make and thus the more they pay in taxes, the more they favor tax cuts. Gallup found that 62 percent of those with annual incomes above $75,000 regarded taxes as a high or top priority in deciding whom to vote for.

One reason the public may generally be skeptical about tax cuts is that most people pay more in Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes than they pay in income taxes, and no one nowadays is talking about reducing payroll taxes.

In 1997, a couple with $50,000 in income from wages, paid $7,650 in payroll taxes. Their employers paid another $7,650 as their share. But assuming one child and itemized deductions of $10,000, the couple paid $4,800 in income taxes.

And in conclusion I want to say that what I am trying to say here is important. We cannot separate education from tax policy. Education policy, education programs, tax policy, we must discuss them all in one package. We must understand that there is going to be an end game negotiation process. Probably the first part of that process will take place this fall, but the final process that must take place will be in the fall of the year 2000, just before the election.

Just as we had a final set of decisions in 1996 that were revolutionary in terms of education funding, I expect that we will have a set of decisions in the fall of 2000 as a result of the end

game negotiations between the majority Republicans and the White House which will conclude by dispensing a package which includes some kind of tax cut. There are also going to be increases for health care, increases for defense, and we want education also to be in that package. We need funding for education, school construction, repair, renovation and technology.

ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor again to talk about the subject that is very important to me and to millions of Americans, unfortunately a subject that does not get a lot of headlines except in local papers; and I will refer to those, some of those headlines across the country tonight, and that is the subject of illegal narcotics and the problem of drug abuse and illegal narcotics trafficking across our great land.

I come to the floor to report to the House and to the American people again on this epidemic, this silent epidemic, but deadly epidemic, that is facing our Nation and a challenge that is facing this Congress I inherited from Speaker HASTERT who chaired the National Security International Affairs Oversight Subcommittee during the last Congress in which I served with him, responsibility for national drug policy in the House of Representatives, working with the Speaker and several other colleagues in committees of jurisdiction, but my particular subcommittee assignment is chairing Criminal Justice and Drug Policy and Human Resources, trying to piece together our national drug policy and whatever efforts this Congress may take to stem this horrible problem, and each week I come to the floor in a 1-hour report to provide sort of an update on what is happening and try to get the message across to the Congress that drugs do destroy lives, illegal narcotics kill and maim, just absolutely devastate family after family in our land.

In fact, last year over 14,000 Americans lost their lives to illegal narcotics in our country. In the last 6 or 7 years of this administration over 100,000 Americans and particularly our young people have been victims and lost their lives, more than the losses in many of our recent international conflicts and some of our wars. We have suffered these tragic losses and those are losses in lives, not to mention the destroyed families, the cost to this Congress, the hundreds of billions of dollars to support our criminal justice system to take care of the social problems, the lost employment and other opportunities that are lost with people who fall victim to the plague of illegal narcotics.

I would be remiss if I did not come to the floor and reflect upon what has been on the minds of the Nation since last Friday evening when we first learned the news of JFK Junior's missing airplane and the whole Nation has focused its attention on this great and tragic loss; and it is a shame that we have lost this young man. I had an opportunity to meet him twice, and he provided a beautiful role model, handsome, young, energetic with so much potential and so much life, and his life lost; and it is sad that a role model coming from a family that has given so much to this Nation should be lost in such a tragedy.

But again across our land every day 50 people die due to illegal narcotics. The toll, as I said last year, is over 14,000. Some die silent deaths, some more tragic deaths from drug overdoses from direct illegal narcotics use and abuse and tragedies.

I had the opportunity this morning to see another great role model. My son who is 20 and was in Washington with me today, he and I attended the Langley medal award for the Apollo 11 astronauts, and we had a chance to talk to Neil Armstrong and to the commander of the module, Mr. Collins, and also Buzz Aldrin, second man on the Moon. Again, great role models for our Nation, tremendous heroes whose names will go down in history.

□ 2300

I did have a few minutes to chat with Neal Armstrong, the first man on the moon. Again, a great, great role model for our young people. He and I, in our brief chat, did discuss our dismay at trying to find a solution, and I salute his efforts now as a private citizen trying to assist us in this war on illegal narcotics in what he has done, not only directly, but indirectly as serving as a role model of what opportunity this great Nation holds for us, that those of us who can live a drug-free life without a life of abuse for illegal narcotics or addiction to illegal narcotics. But 2 beautiful people, 2 beautiful examples of what life can be and hold so much promise and opportunity for each of us. I mention both of those tonight.

As I flew away from Washington last week, I went through the Baltimore airport and picked up the Baltimore Sun. I like to reflect on what is going on around the Nation with the problem of illegal narcotics. I was struck by last Friday's newspaper, the Baltimore Sun, on the front page. The headline, this tragic headline, They Killed Him Over $15. Sure enough, I read on into the paper, and let me read from this article a little bit about this preacher who was slain for $15 in a neighborhood in Baltimore that has been plagued by so many problems emanating from illegal narcotics. Let me just read a little bit of this article.

It says, ''For generations, this thin band of forest has embraced the residents of Quantico and Oswego and Clausen Avenues in cool, green shade. But in recent years, it became a Sherwood of thieves and dope addicts landscaped with syringes, liquor bottles, and discarded stolen goods.''

Further on in the story, it relates again how this preacher, this good human being, a citizen of Baltimore, was slain for $15 last week. It says, ''Even the presence of a police athletic league center has not discouraged the interlopers who lounge by the wading pool at night snorting heroin and littering the soccer field with empty drug vials.''

This is Baltimore, just a few miles from our Nation's Capital. What a tragedy of a lost life.

My message has been that drugs destroy lives; and in Baltimore indeed, drugs have destroyed lives, a great example.

Again, from the newspaper, to bring my colleagues up to date, Mr. Speaker, this is an article, an Associated Press article from July 18, just a few days ago. In New Orleans, it says, ''Two Jefferson Parish residents who drove to New Orleans to buy heroin were shot and killed early Sunday morning in a hail of bullets, a companion who survived the attack told New Orleans police.'' A wonderful city; probably one of the most beautiful cities in America. Another city ravaged by illegal narcotics and the crime, the death that it brings, just a few days ago. Another article, another city, other lives snuffed out by illegal narcotics.

This is an article that appeared again within the last 3 days, July 17. It says, ''Discovering drug labs is part of the job for probation and parole officers.'' This is not Baltimore, New Orleans or New York or Detroit areas where we might expect it. It is Boise, Idaho. And the AP story reads, ''Finding people making the illegal drug methamphetamine is becoming a potentially dangerous fact of life for Idaho probation and parole officers.'' The story goes on, ''They increasingly are uncovering make-shift meth-looking operations in the course of monitoring and trying to help redirect the lives of ex-convicts and offenders getting another chance to avoid prison.''

The story goes on. It says, ''The State's 170 probation and parole officers have been involved in discovering 51 of the 85 meth labs busted throughout Idaho recently this year. That is up sharply from 98 found Statewide in the entire year of 1998, 23 of them found by probation and parole officers. People have already been busted once,'' the article goes on to say, ''for using meth, and are 2 to 3 times more likely than other offenders to be arrested again.''

Mr. Speaker, ''80 percent of the offenders,'' the article goes on to state, ''are battling addiction to meth or other substances. Right now it is an incredible problem. Every time we write a violation report the word 'meth' is somewhere in it.''

Now, this is an article from the heartland of America from Idaho.

We held hearings in our subcommittee; and we found evidence of