personal financial information can be shared. In effect, we are creating a financial privacy vacuum.

Defenders of the conference agreement say that the bill limits sharing of personal financial data with non-affiliated, third party entities. Nonsense. All that companies that don't formally affiliate have to do to escape the bill's consumer ''opt-out'' provision is enter into a joint agreement. Then, presto, they are free to manipulate personal financial data in any way they like.

Nobody likes getting annoying calls from pesky telemarketers at dinnertime. Well, once this bill passes, the telemarketing business will go through the roof. Mergers between banks, securities firms and insurers will produce data amalgamation like we've never seen before. Before long, your health insurer will be able to get information on how much money you make and what investment strategies you favor—making underwriting that much easier. Your bank will be able to easily look up how many checks you've written to your psychiatrist—and use that information to help decide whether you're an acceptable loan risk.

This is the dawning of a new Orwellian Age of Information.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on the Gramm-Leach-Bliley conference report.

COPS AND METRO ALLIANCE CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL ACTION

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 1999

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am truly honored to recognize the 25th anniversary of the founding of an organization that changed the political landscape in San Antonio, across Texas and the Nation. From the alleys of San Antonio's poorest South and West Side neighborhoods, people of faith and conviction came together a quarter century ago to form Communities Organized for Public Service, or COPS.

COPS, and later its sister organization, Metro Alliance, entered the scene at a time when the largely minority, poor communities of San Antonio did not have a voice at the table. Frustrated by inaction, and worse by a lack of attention from the establishment leadership, COPS and Metro Alliance became the voice of the unheard, the mouth of those who were ignored.

COPS and Metro Alliance draw their strength from the people and institutions that make up the local neighborhoods: churches, schools, and other community-based organizations. We hear a great deal of talk today about the need for faith-based groups to take responsibility, but the truth of the matter is that COPS and Metro Alliance long ago accepted that challenge. The result has been a thousand victories, each one building on the last, with more than 50 religious congregations working together.

COPS first set out to repair the imbalance in distribution of funds for city improvements. They rightly demanded that poor neighborhoods deserved flood control and street improvements. Later COPS fought in the battle to bring single-member districts to San Antonio, helping end the legacy of a system that did not adequately seat minorities, who by this time were a majority of the local population, at the table of power.

In recent years, COPS and Metro Alliance, recognizing that education is the cornerstone of any future success, focus their energies on job training and early childhood education. Project QUEST and the San Antonio Education Partnership are models for improving the lives of communities one person at a time.

The positive impact of these organizations reaches far beyond the banks of the San Antonio River. By joining with the Industrial Areas Foundation, sister groups began to spring forth across Texas, and then other areas of the country. From city to city, the basic principles were established—that local communities could organize themselves to create a political force that could not be ignored.

Today, similar organizations exist in Dallas, El Paso, Houston, the Rio Grande Valley, and communities in New Mexico, Arizona, Louisiana, Nebraska, Iowa and Southern California. On November 7, delegates from each of these areas, some 5,000 in number, will convene in San Antonio to celebrate 25 years of successful political action on behalf of the less fortunate. Their work has improved the living and working conditions of countless thousands of low- and moderate-income families.

All my colleagues in the House of Representatives should be proud of the work performed by COPS, Metro Alliance, and their sister organizations across the country. Ordinary people doing extraordinary work is the best way to describe them. I am proud to share in their accomplishments and look forward to years of future growth and success.

ABEL PEREZ HONORED FOR ''20 DE MAYO''

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 1999

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr. Abel Perez on the 30th anniversary of his newspaper, ''20 de Mayo.''

In July 1960, after being threatened by the Castro regime, Mr. Perez left Cuba with his pregnant wife in search of freedom and democracy in the United States. Later that year, Abel joined the Brigade 2506, which took part in the Bay of Pigs invasion against the communist government of Fidel Castro. After his return in 1962, they settled in California where Abel began to work for Mattel toymakers.

Aided by a small group of Cubans who were worried about communism in their homeland, the 20 de Mayo Spanish newspaper was founded on October 1969. Abel dedicated all his time to let the people in the United States know the truth about tragic events of Castro's dictatorship.

In the 1980's, Mr. Perez's community service was exemplified by helping Cuban refugees from the Mariel exodus, gathering a group of professionals in what was called the Cuban Assistance League. This organization helped the refugees to find shelter, as well as medical and financial assistance during the most critical years after their arrival in the United States.

I am proud to say that as the years passed, ''20 de Mayo'' has become one of the leading voices of freedom, democracy, and justice for all Hispanics residing in this country.

SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT SCHOOLS SHOULD USE PHONICS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 4, 1999

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this measure.

This resolution expresses the sense of Congress that phonemic awareness followed by direct systematic phonics instruction should be used in all schools. It further expresses the sense of Congress that phonics instruction should be an integral part of pre-service teaching requirements so that teachers will have the skills to effectively teach reading. I have concerns with this legislation on many levels.

As the Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I can very much appreciate new learning tools that could benefit our children. I seems likely that phonics do have a positive impact on our children.

According to some educators, phonics-based instruction teaches learners that there is a relationship between sounds and printed letters. In order to benefit from formal reading instruction, children must have a certain level of phoneme awareness. Reading instruction in sound symbol relationships also may heighten children's awareness of language.

However, we must note that phonics alone is not the solution. Instruction in phoneme awareness and phonics is not the sole component in a program that teaches learners how to read. Rather, phonics provides a foundation of skills and strategies which can be used to quickly and efficiently decode words and build reading fluency, which is essential to reading comprehension.

Whole language, a learning tool that emphasizes reading for meaning and using literature rather than rules, has often been advocated over phonics. Schools often use a mixture of phonics and whole language.

This measure is far too limited in its scope. Phonics may be a good learning tool, but there are countless other means of learning available such as whole language. We should not limit the language of the measure to only include phonics. The schools should be free to choose their learning tools.

Choice is indeed important here, and this legislation inappropriately attempts places Federal restraints on our local schools: this measure takes away choice from our Nation's schools. Yet, it should be left to the individual schools to determine which learning tools are applied to their students. After all, who is a better judge of the needs of our children? Our teachers and school administrators or those of us here in Congress? I think that the answer is clear.

It is unfortunate that this bill was offered as a suspension. Had we been able to amend this bill, we could have ameliorated the many problems contained in its language.