every American would support that. Who would not want to be able to avoid gas stations? Who would not want to drive a car that does not spew fumes?

But the reality of physics, the reality of modern science today is the internal combustion engine is the only affordable way for people to get about, and God forbid we have a situation where politicians from Washington are trying to completely eliminate the internal combustion engine, let alone no one other than the President of the United States.

I just want to wholeheartedly congratulate the gentleman from California on bringing these issues to the forefront. These are the issues that we should be debating, what are the underlying philosophies and beliefs of the candidates.

I certainly thank the gentleman, and I would be more than delighted to do this again with the gentleman from California.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I thank the gentleman. We will be doing it again soon as we examine other aspects of the views and the record of Vice President AL GORE.

EDUCATION

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

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I heard the previous speakers close out with the name of AL GORE. I understand they have been talking about the Vice President, who is the probable Democratic Party nominee for president.

I certainly would like to begin my statement with a hearty congratulations to Mr. GORE for proposing a $115 billion education reform program over the next 10 years, to allocate $115 billion over the next 10 years.

The details of Mr. GORE's proposal I do not particularly agree with. However, the perspective, the understanding of the need and the scope that we have to move on is welcome. I welcome Mr. GORE's vision, I welcome his commitment, and he is in line with where the American people want to go.

I think we are in an area where the people, the ordinary citizens, are out there ahead of the Members of Congress, ahead of the decision-makers even in the White House, ahead of the decision-makers in the local governments and in the State governments, because the polls repeatedly keep showing that the average American out there views education as the number one priority for governmental action. Education is the number one priority.

There was a time when education was in the top five, in fact, that has been the case over the last 5 years, but education was not number one. Reducing crime at one time was number one, saving social security at one time was number one, Medicare and shoring up the Medicare fund was number one at one time. But not now. Education consistently for the last 10 months has been in all of the polls, and I think the Republican polls are showing exactly what the Democratic polls are showing, that education is the number one concern of the American people.

So a candidate who proposes to come to grips with the problem in a time when we have considerable wealth in this Nation, at a time when we see the estimates for revenue, revenue, being so much greater than expenditures, and the projection after we take care of the surplus of social security and put that away just for social security, the projection is $1.9 trillion in surplus over a 10-year period. So surely it is appropriate that one could talk in terms of investing $115 billion of that $1.9 trillion surplus in education reform.

□ 2015

I do not think that goes far enough. I think that $115 billion is about half of what we need. And the Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget that was on the floor as an alternative to the Republican budget a week ago, the Congressional Black Caucus budget recommended that we use 10 percent of the projected $1.9 trillion surplus, 10 percent should be used for education. Of that 10 percent, 5 should go to school construction and the other 5 percent should go to other kinds of improvements in education; reduction of class sizes by having more teachers, more training for teachers, education technology.

There is a whole range of things that needs to be done and should be done. And for the first time in the last 50 years, the revenues are there. The resources are there. Will we reinvest those resources in education and get a return on them, or will we invest them in trivial weapon systems that are redundant and not needed?

Will we do as the Republican majority has done, add $17 billion to the President's defense budget? The President already put in an increase for defense in his budget that was submitted to the Congress, and the Republicans have added $17 billion to that. Are we going to throw the money away in redundant weapon systems, or are we going to invest the money in education and the kinds of activities that are going to pay off, because there will be a return on those investments?

Now, I have had some comments made about some of the remarks that I have made during Special Orders, especially remarks made about school construction and the fact that I continually seem to be obsessed with one subject. I just want to confess that I have certainly spent a lot of time on this particular subject, on education, in general, but, more specifically, on school construction.

I am going to talk quite a bit about it again tonight, because, you know, in the American political process, the dialogue is invaluable. As a Member of the minority party here in the House of Representatives, all we have left, in many cases, is dialogue, the ability to talk and the opportunity to reach our allies out there in the general public. I have just said we have been reading polls now for the last 10 months, which show that the majority of the American people consider government assistance for education to be the highest priority.

If that is the case, then I have many allies. We have many allies, those of us who want to see more resources from the Federal Government put into education. I want to talk to our allies. I want to talk to all the school children out there who need help. There are 53 million children who go to public schools, and many of those public schools are in serious trouble.

Public schools in the inner cities are in very serious trouble in most of our big cities. Public schools in some of the suburbs also need a lot of help. Public schools in the rural areas are in many cases in the worst shape of all. Help is needed.

I repeat many things over and over again because it is important for us to try to understand this very unusual phenomenon. We have a situation where the people clearly have sent a message that they want to go one way and the overwhelming majority of the powerful decisionmakers in our government are going in a different direction.

The response of the public figures, the public decisionmakers, the response of the leaders, including those who are running for President, has been to talk about the issue of education incessantly. There is plenty of discussion. Among Members of Congress and the Senate and candidates for the presidency, governors and State legislators and city council people and mayors, there is an understanding that when you see the polls, you understand that people are primarily concerned about government assistance for education, your response should be to talk about it, the rhetoric is important; but do not take any significant action, play around with the game of education, make education a game.

Everybody is an expert on education. They want to talk about the phonics system versus the whole word system. They want to talk about the need for more discipline. They want to talk about teachers working harder and the need for certification. Most of the things they want to talk about have some validity, in terms of need.

We need to deal with all of those components. There are different components, and they should be addressed; but few of the decisionmakers, the public officials, want to talk about the need for more resources. They want to deal with the fact that we have Stone Age budgets in our schools. Everything else has taken off. The stock market has soared. It is three times the size it was 10 years ago.

The degrees are different when you start talking about wealth and money

in every other area that you want to examine; but when it comes to schools, suddenly we want to take a horse and buggy approach. We can only see incremental gains being made, small experiments here and there. That is the approach of the present Department of Education. They cannot think big. They cannot see that this is a time to come to grips with the major problem and put major resources behind it; and at the heart of the problem of education is the need for new infractures that I continue to talk about.

It is the kingpin issue, school construction, infrastructure, infrastructure involving a number of things, school repair, new school construction, modernization of schools, the wiring of schools, the developments of new security systems, you know, electronic security systems within schools.

There are a number of ways dollars for infrastructure might be spent, but they are critical in the case of a great number of inner city schools, like the schools in New York City. You need the basics. You need to deal with health-threatening issues. In New York out of the more than 1,000 schools, we still have 200 schools that still burn coal in their furnances. Coal-burning furnaces are still in at least 200 schools; a year and a half ago, there were 275.

I am happy to report that this talk, this repeated focus on the issue has moved some things faster. Certainly in my district, I have seen several schools watch their coal burning furnances being removed and replaced with other cleaner fuels. There are still 200 left.

There are schools in our city, at least a third of them or more, where children have to eat lunch in the morning at 10 o'clock because the school is overcrowded. The lunchroom was built for a certain number of kids. They cannot get them all in there so they have to have three or four cycles, the cycle is three or four. They have to force some to eat lunch at 10 o'clock while some are forced to wait until 1:30 to eat lunch.

The kids at the end are much too hungry and have been deprived, and the kids at the beginning have been abused by having been forced to eat lunch shortly after they have breakfast.

I will not go into all of these examples, which I have given many times before.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to bring you up to date. I feel it is important to talk about it today because today the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which I have served on for 18 years, has begun the process of a markup of the final section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was a creation of Lyndon Johnson and Adam Clayton Powell during the era of the great society.

They broke new ground in providing assistance to elementary and secondary schools. That new ground was broken on the basis of the fact that there were areas of the country of great poverty and where the tax base and various other devices were not measuring up to the provision of adequate education to those children who lived in those areas.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act's primary focus is on children in poverty, and title I is a primary ingredient of the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act. We have taken care of title I already in last year's session. Now there are other elements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act, which we started to discuss today.

I am proud to announce that we spent about the first 2 hours of consideration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. They have another name for it. It is called Education Options now. The first 2 hours were spent discussing school construction. This is quite an achievement.

I am here to report tonight that we are winning in the battle to get school construction on the agenda, and the battle to get school construction to be seriously considered. We are winning. We are winning, because not only could we not have a 2-hour discussion in the committee of jurisdiction before, the committee of jurisdiction had ruled that the discussion of construction was not germane.

School construction was not germane a year ago. They would not even let us discuss it. The Committee on Education and the Workforce had surrendered its jurisdiction on school construction to the Committee on Ways and Means.

The only bill in the Congress which dealt with school construction 2 years ago was the bill in the Committee on Ways and Means which was sponsored by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) which was supported by most Democrats. It was, of course, proposed by the White House, initiated by the President; and it cost $25 billion in bonding authority to be backed up by the Federal Government with interest payments. The Federal Government, in other words, would pay the interest on $25 billion worth of bonds that States and local education agencies might borrow.

If you borrow the money, all you have to pay back is the principal. The Federal Government would pay the interest, and over a 5-year period that interest came out to be estimated to be about $3.7 billion. In the Committee on Ways and Means, the process of paying back the interest on bonds would have yielded a 5-year commitment of the Federal Government of $3.7 billion for school construction. Now, that is a very tiny amount compared to what we need.

It is at least a recognition that the Federal Government has a role in school construction. We all have supported that consistently. I am happy to report that we are winning. For the first time, the bill also has a Republican cosponsor, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON), who is a cosponsor now with the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL). We have hopes that we will have enough votes, if it is allowed to come to the floor, we will have enough votes with the supporting majority party, Republican party, and the Democrats to be able to pass such a bill now that we have Republican cosponsorship, as small as it is, as meager as it is, as inadequate as it is. It at least recognizes the role.

It would be a breakthrough to actually have it pass on the floor or even come to the floor for serious consideration. I assure you that there are real problems with more than just the amount. Not only is it too small an amount but it will not help New York State, for example. The great State of New York with millions of childrens in school will not be helped by this bond authority bill, even though the Federal Government is willing to pay the interest on the bond.

We have had two bond issues related to school construction over the last 10 years and they failed. The voters have voted down two bond issues, and the likelihood that they will vote for another one, even if it has the Federal Government paying the interest, is very slim. So it will not help us.

We need a direct appropriation. There are hundreds of jurisdictions across the country, local education agencies and counties and States that have the same requirement, that the voters have to approve the borrowing of money for schools, and the voters consistently in many places are not approving that.

We had a dialogue about it, though, in the Education and the Workforce Committee. The dialogue was very interesting. We should report the very fact that we had the dialogue, as I said before, is an indication of the facts that we are winning. We are winning because we had the dialogue about school construction on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which has been in denial for the last 6 years.

Since the Republicans gained control, they have refused to discuss the issue of school construction in the Committee on Education and the Workforce. Today we had a discussion. Part of the stimulus for the discussion was the offering of an amendment by the ranking Democrat, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY), to amend the Republican-sponsored substitute by placing in that substitute the President's $1.3 billion direct appropriation for school repairs.

□ 2030

The President has offered $1.3 billion for a direct appropriation for emergency repairs, and that itself is a breakthrough. Because the President and the White House also, for the last 6 years, the last 5 years, have only had one initiative and that is the Ways and Means initiative with the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for the $25 billion in authority to buy bonds

and we pay the interest on it. So when the President offered his budget for the year 2001 in February of this year, he included for the first time a direct appropriation, $1.3 billion, for education.

The government really runs on direct appropriations. We do not fund helicopters or aircraft carriers or submarines with bonds. We do not say go out and buy bonds, we will pay the interest. We fund what we consider important with a direct appropriation. We fund the agriculture subsidies to farmers with direct appropriations.

We fund many programs that are questionable with direct appropriations. I will not say that highways and roads are questionable. We all need them. But we authorize the funding of highways and roads and mass transit, too, subways and buses. We authorized $218 billion last year, $218 billion over a 6-year period for highways and roads; and that is going to be a direct appropriation. We did not say borrow the money and we will pay the interest.

So when the Government is serious, when the decision-makers are serious, they do not talk about giving bond authority to go out and borrow the money and we will pay the interest; we have direct appropriations. And if we are going to be serious about school construction, we need direct appropriations.

So I want to applaud the President, the White House, for taking this small step. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. They broke the pattern of insisting that school construction funds have to be won through a bonding process, a borrowing process, and they recommended and they put in the budget $1.3 billion.

So we were introducing, the Democrats, the minority Democrats were introducing an amendment to the majority Republican bill which would put the President's $1.3 billion into the bill that we are preparing to bring to the floor. And of course the majority had the votes and they voted it down. But we had 2 hours of discussion, and I consider the 2 hours of discussion in the committee to be a victory, just as I consider the fact that the President moved off dead center and even made the proposal for the $1.3 billion a victory. We are winning. We are winning.

The pressure of public opinion, the pressure of what is said in the polls and what people are telling their Congresspeople is beginning to get through. So I am here to say to all America that we are winning, and we must continue the pressure. Over the next 2 or 3 weeks we are going to be discussing this education bill. We probably have 2 more days before the markup is finished in the committee, and then probably in 5 to 10 days it will be on the floor of the House for discussion. And then, of course, the Senate will act and there will be a conference.

Given the position of the majority party, the Republicans in the majority in the House of Representatives and the Republicans in the majority in the Senate, given the position of the majority party, it is not likely that any direct appropriations are going to pass out of the Congress for school construction. However, the dialogue is important. The record of the dialogue is important. The public ear in listening to the dialogue is important. Because in the final analysis, this issue is going to be decided in a set of negotiations, what I call the end-game negotiations.

The President will veto a bill that is filled with outdated assumptions and throwbacks to the past, like the one that we were discussing today. I want to discuss the nonconstruction parts of it, where they talk about block grants and they are wiping out certain types of programs, including the program which provides more teachers for the classroom. There are many reasons why the President will veto the bill. So having vetoed the bill, there will have to be negotiations before we can come up with another bill. In those end-game negotiations we want the President to hear the voice of the American people. We want him to listen to what they have to say and understand that we are winning.

We are much further along now than we were a year ago. When I first came to the floor with this hat as a symbol, we were way, way behind in terms of the recognition among Members of Congress that school construction is a major issue and it is an issue at the heart of education reform. Democrats and Republicans have a hard time understanding that. Although the polls show not only that education is of primary concern among the American voters, when they broke down education into components, one poll did this, they found at the head of the list of all the things that the public feels should be done in education the item of fixing the schools.

Now, fix the schools can mean a lot of different things, but they mean physically fix the schools. There was repair, new schools, modernization, wiring for the computers and the Internet, but that emerged clearly. The physical infrastructure emerged clearly among the concerns about education as the top concern.

Why? Because a lot of the other things become jokes. Common sense out there among the people and the teachers and the students tells us that it is hard to envisage a modern education with new computers, new technology in the school, in the classroom, if the school has a coal burning furnace and the kids have respiratory illnesses and the teachers have respiratory illnesses. It is kind of hard to deal with the dream, the vision of an education for the digitalized world. The new computers coming in are resented because they would like to see the coal furnace go. Or if the windows are broken and have not been fixed for some time; or if the top floor of the school cannot be used.

One school I know of, with three floors, has the top floor abandoned because the walls are caving in. No matter how hard they try to fix the roof, they cannot stop the moisture from leaking in and the walls on either side are caving in. It is time to leave the school. It is time to abandon that building. But they are still there, and the school is over 100 years old. They cannot believe that we are serious about education when we talk about everything except the physical infrastructure because we say that that is too expensive. Let us focus on something else because we cannot afford to fix that. Let us focus on new technology. Let us focus on the teachers.

The great cry about the fact that teachers are not qualified, and in poor schools we find a large number of uncertified teachers, where people have not even bothered to take the test that certifies teachers, because there is a great teacher shortage in the inner city schools in particular. Number one, the suburban schools surrounding most large cities are paying larger salaries; and, number two, the working conditions are so much better.

Why should a teacher teach in a school that is burning coal in the furnace and have her own lungs jeopardized when they can have a choice and teach under better conditions. Working conditions for teachers are as important as working conditions for people who work in factories. Unions bargain and working conditions are always a major item on the bargaining list. Why should teachers teach in conditions that threaten their health when they can go and teach in schools that are not only safe and healthy but also conducive to learning? They have decent lighting, they are painted, the ventilation is adequate. All of these things do not exist in many of the inner city schools that the teachers are running from.

So we cannot solve the problem of certification by focusing only on the problem of teacher certification. We cannot have high standards for teachers if the pool of teachers is always going to be very shallow. These school systems do not have a choice. If they want a body in front of the classroom, they are going to have to take an inadequate teacher, a teacher that is not certified.

In fact, we had a dramatic situation in one district. In my congressional district there are four different school districts. And in those school districts they have varying kinds of problems, but one has an intense problem with uncertified teachers. The teachers' union offered the uncertified teachers in one district their tuition. They said they would pay their tuition. They would cover the cost if they would go finish their education, so they can take the test and be certified. The majority of the uncertified teachers, many of whom have been around for years, did not want to bother, even with the tuition paid and the benefits the union was willing to offer. They refused.

And, of course, the superintendent of that district said, well, everybody who

refuses to accept the offer will place their job in jeopardy. The answer came back from some of the uncertified teachers, go ahead. Because they knew if they were fired, they could go to another district. If they were fired, they knew there would be nobody in front of these classes. They understand very well things are at such a low point in terms of teacher availability and teacher training that most districts are desperate to have a body in front of a classroom. They must have an adult in front of a classroom, and that is their first priority. They cannot demand that people get certified.

Uncertified teachers do not have the same benefits as certified teachers. They suffer a few hardships, but there are some people in the world who just want a basic job and have no ambition or whatever. The pool is so shallow until we cannot weed those folks out. There was a time when people coming out of college, the first job that they had was teaching. It was a time when large numbers of people, certainly in the minority community, had no options. So we had some of the best teachers in the Nation in the minority schools because we had brilliant people who could not get jobs elsewhere who became great teachers.

That is not the condition that exists anymore. We have a shallow pool to begin with, and if we make it difficult for them, they will not be there. Only those who cannot go anywhere else, the worst, the worst college graduates and the worst lingerers, people who have been around for years and years and not bothered to finish their education, all kinds of people have become uncertified teachers for life. It becomes a career, a career as an uncertified teacher.

So we cannot solve the problem, though, if we do not address a number of issues. And certified teachers have now been given health benefits, vacation, a number of things; but the pool keeps being eroded because the certified teachers, the best teachers, keep leaving a system that has problems, including problems of poor working conditions; poor working conditions that sometimes jeopardize their health.

So we can take any problem that we want to talk about: the fact that the regents of New York State have now said a student cannot graduate unless they pass a battery of tests; English test, math test, et cetera. There was a time when they would allow youngsters to graduate with a general diploma. They would march in the line and nobody would know the difference whether they had really completed all of their work or not. Now the general diploma has been eliminated so the State board of regents that oversees all education in the State looks good.

That is a politician's dream, to take action, affirmative action to do something about poor education. But most of the affirmative action is directed at the students, forcing the students to live up to standards. They still do not have any improvements in the quality of the teachers. There are some schools who lost their physics teachers 5 years ago, and they have not been able to find another person who pretends to know physics. Oh, yes, they will get some English teacher or some person who is brave enough to volunteer to go into the classroom, but there is a great shortage of physics teachers and other science teachers.

There is one school I know of that has not had a physics teacher in 5 years; yet we are going to make this student pass a science test when the teacher is inadequate in the area of science. We are going to make them pass a science test when the school has no laboratory. Not an inadequate laboratory, but there are some schools that have no laboratories where students can go and experiment.

□ 2045

Most of them that do have laboratories are woefully inadequate, they are stone-age creations and have nothing to do with textbooks and the kind of things that textbooks are talking.

The libraries are a disgrace. Most of the libraries have books that are 20 and 30 years old. It is better sometimes not to learn than to learn the wrong facts by reading a 20- or 30-year-old book, especially if it is a geography book or a history book. There are a number of books that it is dangerous to believe the map of the world is the way it looked 20 or 30 years ago, the nations and the United Nations as they were 20 or 30 years ago. And on and on it goes.

So all of these other problems are very real, but if we do not have adequate facilities, if we do not have an adequate infrastructure, the solution to the other problems become that much more difficult.

We have a situation now where we are about to pass, and it is going to pass because very few people are against it, and I have mixed feelings about it, another extension for H1–B.

H1–B is a piece of legislation that comes out of the Committee on the Judiciary which changes the immigration quotas for professional workers. Professional workers, people with expertise needed in a country, the agitation for these kinds of changes comes from industries that have the greatest need.

The industry that has the greatest need is the information technology industry, the industry which uses computers and has taken us into the whole world of digitalization. They need people. There are real vacancies. They are not exaggerating. And I suspect, even with the gyrations of the stock market, the fact that it has gone up and down and some technology companies may be in trouble, I suspect they will have no real impact on their need for more high-tech employees.

So we are going to have the bill on the floor to greatly increase the number of people who are allowed in the country exempted from the other immigration rules given a red carpet into the country to fill these jobs.

I think it was increased less than 2 years ago to 125,000. And now I think they want to double or triple that. They are really going for broke in terms of many, many more to bring in. And that is the way we solve the problem of not having an adequate pool of young Americans who can meet the requirements of the age of the cybercivilization.

We are into the cybercivilization. It surrounds us in many ways, not just industry and the high-tech industries. But in the military they are having serious problems finding young people who have had enough exposure to training in computers and related matters to be able to go into the Army, the Navy, or the Marines and deal with the high-tech military equipment.

The last super aircraft carrier that was launched was 300 people short. They were short 300 personnel because they could not find the personnel who had the aptitude to learn how to operate the high-tech equipment. They probably solved the problem by now. But they had to put out to sea and launch the aircraft carrier 300 personnel short.

So those who think that pouring billions of dollars into defense is a noble and adequate act relevant to our times, stop and think about the fact that the high-tech military that we have is as much in need of brain power as our economy is or any other sector of operation.

Brain power is the power that drives everything. And surely, if the public out there, the voters who clamor for more government assistance for education, if they understand this, why do the elected Members of Congress, most of whom have gone to college, most of whom read quite a bit, most of whom are in an atmosphere where these items are discussed, why do they cling like savages to the taboo that Federal assistance to schools should not include school construction?

Let me just read two items here, portions of it. April 4. ''Today the Clinton-Gore administration put out a 'National Call to Action' to close the digital divide.'' To close the digital divide means that there is a segment of our population, the elite segment, they are very much well versed in the whole digital age, computers and Web sites, and they are off and running, they are making a lot of money, they are improving technology by leaps and bounds, we have geometrically increases in our knowledge, but they are leaving behind them a large segment of the population, not just the poor and the minorities, but there are many children of working families who are not minorities who will also be left behind.

Children of working families in America need first-class schools and need world-class schools, and they are being denied those schools by the kind of decision making that refuses to recognize the need for school construction.

So we have the phenomenon of President Clinton announcing today that over 400 companies and nonprofit organizations have signed a ''National Call to Action'' to bring digital opportunity to youth, families, and communities. President Clinton's ''National Call to Action'' is a challenge to corporations and nonprofit organizations to take concrete steps to meet two critical goals.

Goal one is to provide 21st century learning tools for every child in every school. For children to succeed, they need to master basic skills at an early age. The ability to use technology to learn and succeed in the workplace of the 21st century has become a new basic, creating a national imperative to ensure that every child is technologically literate.

To reach this goal, America needs a comprehensive approach to connect every classroom, provide all students with access to multimedia computers, train teachers to use and integrate technology into the curriculum, and to provide high quality on-line content and educational software.

Goal number two is to create digital opportunities for every American family and community. For all families and communities to benefit from the new economy, we must ensure that all Americans have access to technology and the skills needed to use it. We must work to meet the long-term goal of making home access to the Internet universal to bring technology to every neighborhood through community technology centers, empower all citizens with information technology skills, and motivate more people to appreciate the value of getting connected.

And then the President proceeds to announce a number of initiatives being taken in connection with Government and private industry. And it is the private sector, of course, that is taking the initiatives which involve money, additional funding. Because we are at a standstill here in this Congress in recognition of the fact that we are going into the cybercivilization, and we need to address the investment of more of our money into the education of our populous.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following statement: The Clinton-Gore Administration: Related to a ''National Call to Action'' to close the digital divide:

THE CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION: A NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

President Clinton Will Announce Today That Over 400 Companies And Non-Profit Organizations Have Signed A ''National Call To Action'' To Bring Digital Opportunity To Youth, Families and Communities. The President will be joined by the Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, Senator Barbara Mikulski and Julian Lacey, a longtime volunteer at Plugged In, a Community Technology Center in East Palo Alto, California. He will announce his ''National Call to Action'' to help bring digital opportunity to youth, families and communities around the country. Over 400 companies and non-profit organizations have agreed to sign this Call to Action.

President Clinton's ''National Call To Action.'' President Clinton has issued a ''National Call to Action'' to challenge corporations and non-profit organizations to take concrete steps to meet two critical goals:

Provide 21st Century Learning Tools For Every Child In Every School. For children to succeed, they need to master basic skills at an early age. The ability to use technology to learn and succeed in the workplace of the 21st century has become a ''new basic''—creating a national imperative to ensure that every child is technologically literate. To reach this goal, America needs a comprehensive approach to connect every classroom, provide all students with access to multimedia computers, train teachers to use and integrate technology into the curriculum, and to provide high quality. online content and educational software.

Create Digital Opportunity For Every American Family And Community. For all families and communities to benefit from the New Economy, we must ensure that all Americans have access to technology and the skills needed to use it. We must work to meet the long-term goal of making home access to the internet universal, bring technology to every neighborhood through community technology centers, empower all citizens with IT skills, and motivate more people to appreciate the value of ''getting connected.''

The President Will Announce Several Initiatives To Help Bring Digital Opportunity To All Americans. The President will announce the following initiatives that demonstrate a real commitment by the public and private sectors to work together to bridge the digital divide:

$12.5 Million For An ''E-Corps.'' The Corporation for National Service will commit $10 million to recruit 750 qualified AmeriCorps members for projects aimed at bringing digital opportunity to youth, families and communities. These volunteers will provide technical support to school computer systems, tutor at Community Technology Centers, and offer IT training for high-tech careers. The Corporation for National Service will also commit $2.5 million for digital divide projects under the Learn and Serve program, which allows young people to make a difference in their communities while going to school.

Yahoo! Will Invest $1 Million in Digital Opportunity. Yahoo! will provide an Internet advertising campaign worth $1 million to enlist volunteers with high-tech skills for AmeriCorps' digital divide initiative. The Yahoo! banner ads will help AmeriCorps meet the challenge of recruiting volunteers with high-tech skills to work on technology-related projects.

3Com Launches NetPrep GYRLS. In partnership with the YWCA's TechGYRLS program, 3Com will announce NetPrep GYRLS, a $330,000 program that will offer girls aged 14–16 training in computer networking. Currently, women represent less than 30 percent of U.S. computer scientists and computer programmers. The 3Com NetPrep curriculum will allow high school girls to focus their technical education on computer networking, leading to an industry-standard certification. 3Com expects to reach 600 girls in 30 NetPrep GYRLS locations across the country.

American Library Association. The American Library Association will pledge to help bridge the digital divide by working with its members to create or expand ''information literacy'' programs in at least 250 communities around the country. People with information literacy skills are able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively.

President Clinton Will Also Announce His Third New Markets Tour—From Digital Divide to Digital Opportunity. On April 17–18, President Clinton, accompanied by CEOs, Members of Congress, Cabinet Secretaries and community leaders will focus national attention on initiatives aimed at overcoming the digital divide and creating opportunities for youth, families and communities. The President will travel to East Palo Alto, California; the Navajo Nation in Shiprock, New Mexico; and Chicago, Illinois to highlight private and public-sector initiatives to help bring digital opportunity to all Americans. Later this month, the President will travel to rural North Carolina to stress the importance of expanding rural access to the emerging broadband Internet.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND CREATING DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS

Access to computers and the Internet and the ability to effectively use this technology are becoming increasingly important for full participation in America's economic, political and social life. People are using the Internet to find lower prices of goods and services, work from home or start their own business, acquire new skills using distance learning, and make better informed decisions about their healthcare needs. The ability to use technology is becoming increasingly important in the workplace, and jobs in the rapidly growing information technology sector pay almost 80 percent more than the average private sector wage.

Technology, used creatively, can also make a big difference in the way teachers teach and students learn. In some classrooms, teachers re using the Internet to keep up with the latest developments in their field, exchange lesson plans with their colleagues, and communicate more frequently with parents. Students are able to log on to the Library of Congress to download primary documents for a history paper, explore the universe with an Internet-connected telescope used by professional astronomers, and engage in more active ''learning by doing.'' Students are also creating powerful Internet-based learning resources that can be used by other students—such as award-winning Web sites on endangered species, the biology of sleep,human perception of sound, and an exploration of the American judicial system.

Access to computers and the Internet has exploded during the Clinton-Gore Administration. Unfortunately, there is strong evidence of a ''digital divide''—a gap between those individuals and communities that have access to these information Age tools and those who don't. A July 1999 report from the Department of Commerce, based on December 1998 Census Department data, revealed that:

Better educated Americans more likely to be connected. Between 1997 and 1998, the technology divide between those at the highest and lowest education levels increased 25%. In 1998, those with a college degree are more than eight times likely to have a computer at home and nearly sixteen times as likely to have home Internet access as those with an elementary school education.

The gap between high- and low-income Americans is increasing. In the last year, the divide between those at the highest and lowest income levels grew 29%. Urban households with incomes of $75,000 or higher are more than twenty times more likely to have access to the Internet than rural households at the lowest income levels, and more than nine times as likely to have a computer at home.

Whites more likely to be connected than African-Americans or Hispanics. The digital

divide also persists along racial and ethnic lines. Whites are more likely to have access to the Internet from home than African-Americans or Hispanics have from any location. African-American and Hispanic households are roughly two-fifths as likely to have home Internet access as white households. However, for incomes of $75,000 and higher, the divide between whites and African-Americans has narrowed considerably in the last year.

Rural areas less likely to be connected than urban users. Regardless of income level, those living in rural areas are lagging behind in computer ownership and Internet access. At some income levels, those in urban areas are 50% more likely to have Internet access than those earning the same income in rural areas. Low income households in rural areas are the least connected. with connectivity rates in the singles digits for both computes and Internet access.

In addition, data from the National Center for Education Statistics reveals a 'digital divide' in our nation's schools. As of the fall of 1998, 39 percent of classrooms of poor schools were connected to the Internet, as compared to 74 percent in wealthier schools.

I will not go through the entire piece because it is available on the Internet from the White House, and now we can get it from the Library of Congress THOMAS because it will be entered into the RECORD here for this special order.

There is another document that I would like to also read some excerpts from. This is a document that came from a group in California near Silicon Valley: Jacqueline S. Anderson, the vice president of the Bay Area Chapter of Black Data Processing Associates; Hattie Carwell, who is president of Northern California Council of Black Professional Engineers; Eric Harris, who is the chair of the National Society of Black Engineers Alumni-Extension in the Silicon Valley Chapter; Henry Hutchins, the president of San Francisco Bay Area Chapter National Black MBA Association; Dr. Keith Jackson, the National Society of Black Physicists; Harvey Pye, Human Resources Network of Black Professionals; Kervin Hinkston, the president of the Bay Area Chapter Black Data Processing Associates; Frederick E. Jordan, the co-founder of the Northern California Council of Black Professional Engineers; John William Templeton, Books'n'Bytes, the Technology Alliance for African American Students.

They sent this letter to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) and they sent copies to Senator DASCHLE, Senator KENNEDY, the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), etc.

They did not send a copy to me. But in the Congressional Black Caucus meeting today, it was passed around and I found it to be very relevant to what is taking place right now in our Committee on Education and the Workforce and what will be coming to the floor probably next week, if not tomorrow, the H1–B visa issue.

As I said before, H1–B visa is an exemption that is granted for professionals and experts to come into the country without having to go into the usual procedures to speed into the country those people which the industry needs in high-tech jobs and other positions requiring expertise.

We went through that less than 2 years ago, and we increased the quota greatly. And now they are coming back for a still greater increase in quota. These people whose names I just read, all minorities, practically all African Americans, who are professional, who are experts, who are scientists, have written to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) about the dilemma they face at a time when we are bringing in H1–B professionals from all over the world.

I am going to read some excerpts here from this letter, and I will submit the rest of it for the RECORD.

Dear Representative GEPHARDT, more than 10,000 African American students in physics, chemistry, and engineering have met in the past 30 days. Only a token number of Silicon Valley companies showed up to recruit them.

When the National Council of Black Engineers and Scientists met in Oakland in 1998, not a single Silicon Valley company showed up to recruit them. You can ask Representative BARBARA LEE (D-California) because she spoke at the event.

Those young people are counting on you and the Democratic Members of Congress to protect their right to earn a living in the highest wage, highest growth sectors of our economy. That is why we are quite disturbed that you and other members of the Democratic Caucus are supporting gargantuan increases in the H1–B program that exceed the total number of projected new jobs in the high-technology industry.

Dr. Anita Borg of the Institute on Women and Technology, pointed out on 60 Minutes that the jobs being filled by H1–Bs correspond almost exactly with the underrepresentation of women and minorities in science and technology education. The proposal you are quoting as backing would not only fill all those jobs but all the available university slots at the same time as many States are ending their affirmative action programs.

Back in 1876 the Hayes-Tilden compromise set in motion an irreversible series of events that led to Plessy v. Ferguson and Jim Crow laws. The ability to impose segregation in practically every employment sector was undergirded by extensive immigration.

The point here is that immigration has been used to defeat the training of people with insight and the employment of people who are already inside the country.

In January of this year, we received the entire file of labor condition applications from the Department of Labor for the western United States. After selecting 100 LCAs at random, we solicited resumes for the jobs among groups of older white programmers and African-Americans. We were able to gain a sufficient number of responses within 4 days and submitted the data to the applicant companies. We have yet to get a single response.

They go on and on talking about the great need in Silicon Valley for people that is being voiced by the companies there as they are joining the other high-tech companies around the country, and they are demanding that we get more foreigners in through the H1–B visa process while they are not making the opportunities available to people within their own jurisdictions, own areas.

These are people who have already gotten training and have said that they are being locked out because the H1–B visa process brings in a more desirable people in terms of people from other countries who are willing to work for lower salaries and for other reasons that they claim they cannot quite comprehend but prejudice and discrimination are at the heart of it as they see it.

I do not agree with the statement here that we have enough people in the country already to fill all those vacancies. But I do sympathize with these workers because they represent another part of the problem.

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Part of the problem we are faced with when they bring in workers from outside is that they are paying them much lower salaries. In fact, one of the great sources of high-tech workers, information technology workers, is India. India had a vision more than 20 years ago to see that this was an area where they wanted to develop a large pool of highly trained people, so they have become the suppliers of high-tech personnel all over the world, especially in English-speaking countries. So India, because it is an English-speaking country that has the professionals who have this kind of expertise, has become a major supplier. But they come and they work for much lower salaries. The appeal of the lower salaries is a factor in the push to get more of them in rather than to have better training programs and greater opportunities being created here in this Nation for people who are here already.

They conclude by saying:

We do not see the gesture of applying H1–B fees to scholarships and K–12 education as significant. Those funds should go to enforcement and streamlining the immigration process, already overwhelmed by current numbers. As written, the scholarships are likely to go to visa holders. The amount needed to bring inner city schools to current standards for high-technology instruction is about $20 billion, the same amount Congress recently spent on so-called juvenile justice. Instead, we would encourage requirements of direct scholarship and internship assistance by any company filing for such a guest worker, the funds for scholarships should go to community colleges, area public institutions, historically black colleges and universities, et cetera. We would also give a priority for H1–B approvals to companies that meet or exceed local community representation in their workforces as measured by the EEO–1 for underrepresented groups.

In conclusion, it is untenable for America to spend billions locking up African American and Latino youth or forcing them to fight overseas wars just to gain skills or an education and then to lock them out of the best-paying jobs. If there is a choice in the

2000 elections, then we would expect you to stand up for those who have traditionally supported you. You have the benefit of history to guide your decision. Don't let Jim Crow come back.

This letter from the professionals from the Bay Area I would like to submit in its entirety for the RECORD.

Hon. RICHARD GEPHARDT,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GEPHARDT: More than 10,000 African-American students in physics, chemistry and engineering have met in the past 30 days. Only a token number of Silicon Valley companies showed up to recruit them. When the National Council of Black Engineers and Scientists met in Oakland in 1998, not a single Silicon Valley company showed up to recruit them. You can ask Rep. Barbara Lee, D-CA, who spoke at the event.

Those young people are counting on you and the Democratic members of Congress to protect their right to earn a living in the highest wage, highest growth sectors of our economy. That is why we are quite disturbed that you and other members of the Democratic Caucus are supporting gargantuan increases in the H1–B program that exceed the total number of projected new jobs in the high technology industry.

Dr. Anita Borg of the Institute on Women and Technology pointed out on 60 Minutes that the jobs being filled by H1–Bs correspond almost exactly with the underrepresentation of women and minorities in science and technology education. The proposal you are quoted as backing would not only fill all the jobs, but all the available university slots at the same time as many states are ending affirmative action programs.

Frankly, it is a shame that two conservative Republicans, Reps. Lamar Smith and Tom Campbell, from the two highest-growth technology areas, Austin and Palo Alto, are sounding the alarm for the protection of American workers, while the Democratic Caucus appears to be chasing campaign dollars.

Back in 1876, the Hayes-Tilden Compromise set in motion an irreversible series of events that led to Plessy vs. Ferguson and Jim Crow laws. The ability to impose segregation in practically every employment sector was undergirded by extensive immigration.

In Silicon valley, the progress of the African-American, Latino and Native American communities since the 1960s to break into technology has been reversed since 1996. Our analysis of 253 EEO–1 forms from Northern California high tech firms showed an absolute decline in the employment from these groups. In addition, 80 percent of high tech companies do not even file the EEO–1 form. By comparison, the same cohort makes up 35 percent of the Department of Defense's civilian and uniformed personnel.

In January of this year, we received the entire file of Labor Condition Applications from the Department of Labor for the western United States. After selecting 100 LCAs at random, we solicited resumes for the jobs among groups of older white programmers and African-Americans. We were able to gain a sufficient number of responses within four days and submitted the data to the applicant companies.

We have yet to get a single response. Keep in mind, under the unenforceable ACWIA, each applicant company ''attests'' that it can not find American workers for the job. However, no government agency actually audits or monitors that claim.

The seven-day response guarantee on LCAs looks like a speedway compared to person who have filed discrimination complaints with the federal government against high tech firms. Waits of two years for a ''right to sue'' letter are minimum. 3Com fired an African-American engineer, Lindsay Brown, last year from its Palm Computing division the day after he filed a complaint with the EEOC. That shows the kind of contempt for labor standards that the H1–B program is breeding in high technology. Although we informed EEOC and OFCCP about the 80 percent non-response rate for EEO–1s two years ago, neither agency has even sent a letter to the offending companies.

Only discriminatory practices can explain the fact that there are more than 225,000 African-American engineers, programmers and systems analysts, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, yet only 1,688 black professional employees of any kind in those Silicon Valley companies.

You should take note of the fact that the three states with the highest demand for these H1–Bs have all taken steps to reduce African-American and Latino enrollment in their colleges, particularly in graduate and science programs, through initiatives funded largely by high technology executives.

Putting the pieces together, Congressional approval of the Abraham or Lofgren-Dreier bills would extend and accelerate ethnic cleansing in the high technology industry, lock the doors of opportunity for decades and harden racial inequality into concrete and steel, instead of merely glass.

We would encourage you to support and extend the worker protection provisions in the Smith-Campbell bill by requiring that companies with active ''right-to-sue'' letters from the EEOC or OFCCP be barred from making ''attestations'' about hiring American workers; by making filing of the EEO–1 form a prerequisite for a Labor Condition Application; by funding personnel to perform audits and backup checks on H1–B visas.

We do not see the gesture of applying H1–B fees to scholarships and k12 education as significant. Those funds should go to enforcement and streamlining the immigration process, already overwhelmed by current numbers. As written, the scholarships are likely to go to visa holders. The amount needed to bring inner-city schools to current standards for high technology instruction is about $20 billion, the same amount Congress recently spent on so-called ''juvenile justice.'' Instead, we would encourage requirements of direct scholarship and internship assistance by any company filing for such a guest worker to community colleges, area public institutions, HBCUS or OMIs. We would also give a priority for H1–B approvals to companies that meet or exceed local community representation in their workforces as measured by the EEO–1 for underrepresented groups. Right now Congress has made it cheaper to recruit from the Indian Institute of Technology than from North Carolina A&T or Hampton University. While Congress ponders giving $40 million to 110 HBCUs for graduate education, the Indian government has asked for $1 billion from U.S. emigres for just six institutions.

In conclusion, it is untenable for America to spend billions locking up African-American and Latino youth or forcing them to fight overseas wars just to gain skills or an education and then to lock them out of the best-paying jobs. If there is a choice in the 2000 elections, then we would expect you to stand up for those who have traditionally supported you. You have the benefit of history to guide your decision. Don't let Jim crow come back.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline S. Anderson, Vice President Bay Area Chapter, Black Data Processing Associates; Hattie Carwell, President, Northern California Council of Black Professional Engineers; Eric J. Harris, Chair, National Society of Black Engineers-Alumni Extension, Silicon Valley Chapter; Henry Hutchins, President, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, National Black MBA Association; Kevin Hinkston, President, Bay Area Chapter, Black Data Processing Associates; Dr. Keith Jackson, National Society of Black Physicists; Frederick E. Jordan, P.E. Co-founder, Northern California Council of Black Professional Engineers; Harvey Pye, Human Resources Network of Black Professionals; John William Templeton, Books'n'Bytes: the technology alliance for African-American students.

As I close, I would like to just go back to the fact that I reported when I began, that is, that there was a lengthy discussion in the Committee on Education and the Workforce today. I am proud of the fact that we finally had a discussion which almost lasted 2 hours on school construction, because the general tenor has been that school construction belongs somewhere else and the Committee on Education and the Workforce had surrendered its powers to the Committee on Ways and Means. It was a victory just to have the discussion. We also discussed it because there was an amendment offered to put the President's proposed $1.3 billion into the bill that the majority Republicans have put forth as they complete the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization.

I see both of those items, the fact that the President even proposed a $1.3 billion amount for school repairs and the fact that we had a discussion as one more piece of evidence that we are winning, those of us who agree with the overwhelming body of American voters out there that it is only common sense to put more money into education, more resources into education; and among those items in the education budget, the school construction component is a vital component. It is a kingpin component.

We are happy to see that we are beginning to win. Slowly we are moving off dead center. I also mentioned a few moments ago that the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) has now joined forces with the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) in the Committee on Ways and Means; so even that bill, as inadequate as it may be, the bill which allows for $25 billion in borrowing authority and the Federal Government will pay the interest, as inadequate as that is, it never had a chance of passage before and with the joining of the gentlewoman from Connecticut with that bill, it becomes a possibility.

We are winning, and I want the message to go out there to all of our allies, all of those millions of people who keep showing up in the polls; and as I said before, the Republicans have the same polls as the Democrats. They are getting the same results. Nobody can hide from the fact that the demand of the American people is that our number

one priority for government assistance be the assistance to education, the improvement of education.

Now, there have been some arguments made, Mr. Speaker, and you are aware of that, that the demand of people for funds for schools in general and more specifically for school construction should be met by the local governments and by the States. One other speaker during our discussion pointed out that the States have unprecedented surpluses and many localities have surpluses and that they should be the ones who provide the resources to invest in education. Those are good arguments.

Nowhere is that truer than it is in New York City and New York State. Two years ago, a little less than 2 years ago, the city of New York had a $2 billion surplus. We have big budgets in the city; but even with those big budgets, the revenue that came in was $2 billion greater than the expenditures. At the same time, the State of New York had a $2 billion surplus. The governor of the State of New York, who is a Republican, and the mayor of the State of New York both refused to spend a single penny on school repairs and school construction. This is in a city where there are 200 schools that still burn coal in their furnaces.

The mayor did not do it. He would not spend any money to relieve the situation of overcrowding, the fact that children have to eat lunch at 10 in the morning because of the fact that they are overcrowded and the lunchroom has to eat in cycles, the mayor did not move to provide any relief for that situation. The members of the city council did not even do what we do here in Congress. Democrats cannot pass anything, but at least we insist that there be a dialogue. The dialogue did not even take place in New York City. The horror of having a $2 billion surplus and not using it was not brought home to the people of New York City, the horror of a governor who vetoed a bill that the legislature passed.

Now, in the State legislature in New York, the Assembly is controlled by the Democrats, the State Senate is controlled by Republicans, so you had a bipartisan bill which would have provided for $500 million, half a billion dollars for emergency school repairs. The Republican governor of New York State vetoed that even though he had a $2 billion surplus.

Across the country, the Nation, you have the same pattern where the needs of the schools for some reason are not being met by local and State officials. I cannot get into the analysis of what is going on because I am not sure I know. What I do know is that a generation of children should not have to suffer because you have Neanderthals out there in the State and city governments, and we give them more and more power at the Federal level all the time.

They cannot see the obvious, that there is a need to invest in education. The Nation has been shortchanged by the States many times. In World War I, in World War II, we found we had young people, young men that we had to send off to war who were unhealthy basically because they had poor health care and had been neglected in terms of basic nutrition. The Federal Government got very much involved in free lunch programs and all kinds of health programs because of the fact that it had to fight a war. The national interest was such that they had to have a population that could meet those requirements. They could not leave it up to the States. The States for some reason with all of their advantages, and they have gloriously served us in many ways, for some reason the States never take care of the people on the bottom.

The States are examples of how democracy goes wrong and the majority overwhelmingly takes care of itself and the rights and the concerns and the welfare of the powerless minority gets neglected. That is the pattern. States have had responsibility for education since the founding of the country. The primary responsibility for education is in the States. The Federal Government has no direct responsibility spelled out in the Constitution and this is often used as a way to keep the Federal role at a very low level, or not there at all. But we have a responsibility for defense and we have a responsibility for the general welfare of the people.

The general welfare is threatened as well as our military defense is threatened by the inadequacy of education at the State level. So we cannot let a generation go down the drain because the States and localities are too stubborn to take action and deal with the problem by appropriating the necessary resources. It is unconscionable; it is a threat to the entire Nation.

There are several of my colleagues, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), who is our premier expert on defense in the Democratic Caucus, they have recently written a letter to the President saying that we need to take a look at the complex of education and defense and the technology needs and the research and see how it all is inexplicably interwoven. You cannot separate the education effort from the basic research effort, the research effort, technology and the ability of the military to function in this modern world. It is all there together. With a $1.9 trillion surplus, we have the advantage of being able to breathe and take a look at it and place these investments where they should be placed.

I am going to end by switching subjects just a bit, because I have spent most of the time talking about education, but there is another crisis in New York City which has captured the attention of most of my constituents and most of the people of New York. We have had a situation where a police killing, a man named Amadou Diallo, took place more than a year ago, almost 2 years ago now, I guess, and the final verdict set all four policemen who were responsible free. Again, the majority of the people in a poll in New York State showed that they were outraged at the verdict, and you have a lot of activity within the city around this.

On top of this miscarriage of justice, recently another young man was shot to death by police and some unfortunate political moves were made by the mayor, pulling out his records as a 13-year-old and saying he was a troublemaker and implying that he deserved to die because at 13 he had gotten in trouble. He was not convicted at 13; but he had been arrested at 13, and the record showed that. This is a boiling caldron. I have been trying to get people to see, it is very important that these matters with police brutality and police killings always touch off a kind of dynamite reaction on the one hand while the killing of children and the smothering of spirits in the education system that goes on and on year after year is never given much attention. They are related.

I want to just close by saying that I heard that there was a group that met recently, a church packed with young people who decided that the solution of the problem was that they all should buy rifles. I can think of nothing more ridiculous and more dangerous than young people going out to buy rifles to try to solve a problem in the city. There are many more solutions that are to be proposed. I would like to close by saying that, again, education is at the heart of that. Being able to respond in a nonviolent way means you have to have discipline, and you have to have the leaders step forward and offer solutions to that problem in the appropriate way.

THE NATION'S NUMBER ONE HEALTH PROBLEM

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

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, the number one public health problem facing the country today is the death and morbidity associated with the use of tobacco. Tonight, I want to discuss why the use of tobacco is so harmful, what the tobacco companies have known about the addictiveness of nicotine in tobacco, how tobacco companies have targeted children to get them addicted, what the Food and Drug Administration proposed, the Supreme Court's decision on FDA authority to regulate tobacco, and bipartisan legislation that will be introduced tomorrow in the House to give the Food and Drug Administration authority to regulate the manufacture and marketing of tobacco.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat. The number one health problem in the Nation today is tobacco use. It is well captured in this editorial cartoon that shows the Grim Reaper, Big Tobacco, with a cigarette in his hand, a consumer on the cigarette, and the title is