

It is with great honor that I remember the lessons of yesterday—the lessons taught, and those who taught them. It is my history, and I am thankful that Mary Ann Roswal made it a history worth remembering, worth honoring.

Today, I ask that my colleagues join me as I honor a great teacher I admire and respect.

A TRIBUTE TO STUDENTS FROM
MCALLEN MEMORIAL HIGH
SCHOOL

HON. RUBEN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, on May 6–8, 2000 more than 1200 students from across the United States will be in Washington, DC to compete in the national finals of the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program. I am proud to announce that the class from McAllen Memorial High School from McAllen will represent the state of Texas in this national event. These young scholars have worked diligently to reach the national finals, and through their experience have gained a deep knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The names of the students are: Melinda Acuna, Cassie Baumeister, Paul Bongat, Amy Booth, Emily Dyer, Brandon Garcia, Gabriela Gonzalez, Amber Hausenfluck, Jason Jarvis, Kyle Jones, Anita Manoharan, Suleima Mohamed, Taylor Mohel, George Morgan, Raquel Pacheco, Angela Perez, Blythe Selman, Matt Sheinberg, Jane Springmeyer, Veronica Vela, Summer West. I would also like to recognize their teacher, LeAnna Morse, whose tireless efforts have contributed greatly to the success of the class.

The We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The three-day national competition is modeled after hearings in the United States Congress. These hearings consist of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges. The students testify as constitutional experts before a panel of judges representing various regions of the country and a variety of appropriate professional fields. The students' testimony is followed by a period of questioning by the simulated congressional committee. The judges probe students for their depth of understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge.

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the We the People . . . program has provided curricular materials at upper elementary, middle, and high school levels for more than 26.5 million students nationwide. The program provides students with a working knowledge of our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the principles of democratic government. Members of Congress and their staff enhance the program by discussing current constitutional issues with students and teachers and by participating in other educational activities.

The class from McAllen Memorial High School is currently conducting research and preparing for the upcoming national competition in Washington, DC. I wish these young

"constitutional experts" the best of luck at the We the People . . . national finals, and my staff and I look forward to greeting them when they visit Capitol Hill.

INTRODUCTION OF THE OMNIBUS
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TAX IN-
CENTIVE RECOVERY ACT OF 2000

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Omnibus District of Columbia Tax Incentive Recovery Act. Congress was out of session on the day of the deadline for filing federal taxes, when I had wanted to introduce the D.C. Tax Package. Therefore, on the first day the House returns, I introduce the Omnibus District of Columbia Tax Incentive Recovery Act. The legislation builds on federal tax incentives Congress has already passed here to produce market-induced residential and business stability and growth. This bill is necessary to assure even the sustained stability, let alone real economic growth, that still eludes the District economy and the city government. This federal tax package gives the city the tools it needs to produce a self-sufficient economy. After the financial collapse of the 1990s, and as the control board passes from the scene, the Congress has an obligation to help the city do what is necessary to increase its own economic output on its own.

The city does not have that capacity today. Ominously, the District lacks the essential safety valve of other large cities—a state to fall back on in times of economic downturn. The economic forecasters agree that D.C. has reached the height of its economic output for this period and will experience four straight years of declining economic output after 2001, largely because its economic boost has come primarily from temporary construction jobs and from jobs held primarily by commuters. The surpluses that brightened the city's hopes have already declined: 1997, \$185 million; 1998, \$445 million, an artificial increase resulting from one-time federal contributions; 1999, \$105 million. The District's top two private sectors—hotels and health care—actually lost jobs, and retail continues to shrink. The city's unemployment rate is 5.7% compared with 3.0% in Maryland and 2.7% in Virginia. This picture resembles other large cities in the United States. However, none survives on city-generated revenues alone, nor could it do so. State assistance is necessary not only to meet current expenses, but also to make up for sharply diminished tax bases in every major American city.

The District is not requesting similar subsidies or federal financial assistance. We believe that the federal tax credit incentive approach already approved by Congress that is already having substantial success here is the key to permanent stability. Tax credits leverage the private sector rather than the government to do the job of growing the economy and return many times the revenue foregone by the federal government.

The Omnibus Tax Package I am introducing today has four parts. They are: (1) the District of Columbia Non-Resident Tax Credit Act that would cost commuters nothing but would fairly

spread the cost of the services used by federal and other employees, who return to the suburbs untaxed the overwhelming majority of the income earned here; (2) the District of Columbia City-Wide Enterprise Zone Act, to spread to all neighborhoods and businesses tax incentives that have brought substantial benefits to communities but with the unintended effect of affording an unfair and arbitrary advantage to some neighborhoods and businesses over their competitors; (3) the District of Columbia Economic Recovery Act, affording a progressive 15% flat tax to residents in order to draw and maintain taxpayers; and (4) the District of Columbia \$5,000 Homebuyer Credit Act, to make permanent the tax incentive that is largely responsible for new homebuyers and for maintaining and attracting taxpayers to the city.

TITLE I: THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NON-RESIDENT TAX
CREDIT ACT

Not only do suburbanites carry home two-thirds of all the income generated in the District. They leave behind most of the damage that occurs to many services, especially roads and other infrastructure, while making free use of many of the same services that D.C. taxpayers can obtain only by paying for them. Large cities generally recoup at least some of these service costs in order to avoid overwhelming the tax base of cities, which are far less prosperous than the regional areas where suburban service users reside.

For years, the District has sought some reimbursement for the heavy toll in services commuters use. Neither the obvious unfairness, nor even the city's insolvency and increasing need for reimbursement for the services provided, has produced any change.

The District's future economic prospects necessitate a fresh look at how to assure that the city gets its fair share of revenue in a region experiencing large and sustained growth while its core city does not generate sufficient revenue to assure its economic viability. The matter is no longer only a home rule issue or a services issue. Today, it is a fundamental needs issue to assure a viable capital.

The city gave up the federal payment in return for a takeover of state functions as the only way out of its insolvency. The old federal payment was almost never increased and, therefore, declined in value each year. A flat payment was a seriously antiquated and obsolete way for the federal government to meet its financial responsibility to help maintain a capital city. The 1997 Revitalization Act provides an automatic increase by assuming at least some of the most costly and fastest rising state costs. In spite of the splendid national economy, without the Revitalization Act takeover of some state costs, D.C. would still be insolvent, the city would not have an investment grade bond rating, and the control board would not be on its way out.

The tax credit is necessary because even the substantial relief afforded by the Revitalization Act has not left the District able to support itself in the long run. The cold reality is that neither the present robust economy nor the District's own exemplary efforts are doing enough, or can do enough, to assure a permanent recovery.

Three reasons account for this dilemma: (1) There simply are not enough taxpaying residents and businesses here now; it will take many years to make up for the shortfall, and the sufficient business and residential growth