

development, provide opportunity for our children, invest at the beginning, not in our prisons, but invest in education from the beginning. Then we are going to have a society where individuals are going to go out to be governors, Presidents, Congressmen, assemblymen, businesspersons; they will have an opportunity to fulfill those dreams.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California. I think the gentleman reminds us if it were not for public education, most of us would not be here either.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), my friend who serves on the Committee on Education and the Workforce. He has been an outspoken advocate for education and a real champion.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina, my friend, for yielding to me.

I saw the conversation taking place on the House floor and I wanted to join my friends and also commend my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina, the former State superintendent of the school system there, for his leadership and expertise that he has provided us in this Chamber on education issues.

I wanted to also thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA), my good friend, for his energy and tireless effort in promoting educational programs here in Congress during his term. But I, for one, was very, very happy during the last campaign that there was so much discussion and focus on education issues whether it was Vice President Gore or Governor Bush.

I think it elevated the sense of urgency that many of us feel in regards to our education investments as a Nation, but I just wanted to add during this conversation tonight a very important piece of the puzzle as we move forward on reauthorizing the elementary and secondary education bill in the Committee on Education and Workforce this year, and that is virtually every school district throughout the Nation is facing a common challenge, and that is the rising costs of providing a quality education to students with special needs, special education costs.

We have a bill at the Federal level called Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, and when it was passed back in the 1970s, there was a commitment on the Federal level that we would at least provide 40 percent of the expenses to local school districts and educating these children with special needs.

We have not done a very good job of living up to that obligation, that responsibility at the Federal level. I am sure every representative in this House could go home and find stories that they can share with us in regards to the rising costs of special education. Let us face it, with the advancement of medical technology and health care today, we are putting our children on a collision course with school funding at

the local level, because many of the kids now who normally would not have survived and lived to join the public education system are doing so, and with that brings added costs and expense.

If we can get one thing right during this education debate this year, it is fully funding IDEA, providing the 40 percent cost share back to local school districts, so they have more flexibility, more resources in order to educate these children, but also to do and implement the type of reforms that we are demanding of them, to improve student performance in the classroom.

This is more than just good policy, this is a civil rights issue. These children deserve to have access to a quality education, like any other child in this country. So we have a special obligation, I feel, in this session of Congress to try to get to that 40 percent level.

Even though we had a 27 percent increase last year in the last budget in regards to IDEA funding, it still only puts us at roughly 14 percent or 15 percent of the 40 percent level where we really should be. It would require an additional \$11 billion or so to get the full funding this year, but it is a question of budgetary priorities, where we feel investments need to be made as a Nation. I could not think of any better place to start than with our children in the education system, helping local school districts, increasing their flexibility by providing them these resources that the Federal Government has promised throughout the years but has failed to deliver upon.

Hopefully we will be able to get that aspect of education done in a bipartisan fashion during this year in Congress. The litmus test, quite frankly, will be the administration's first budget request that they are going to send out and where they place special education funding on their list of priorities, from there, then, hopefully, we will be able to establish the broad-based political coalition that I know exists in the House based on previous debates and votes that we have had in order to get this piece of the puzzle done for education.

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Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Wisconsin is correct. We have the resources to do it this year. There is no reason that we cannot start down that road and make it happen. If we really want to have a better world, it has been said if you want a better world, you share it with a child and they will build it. We have that opportunity.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ACKERMAN (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Mr. SCOTT (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. STUPAK (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week on account of family obligations.

Mr. WAMP (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of canceled airline flights.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. McNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BACA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PLATTS, for 5 minutes, March 7 and 8.

Mrs. BIGGERT, for 5 minutes, March 7.

Mr. KELLER, for 5 minutes, March 7.

Mr. OXLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, March 7.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House, reports that on March 1, 2001 he presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 559. To designate the United States courthouse located at 1 Courthouse Way in Boston, Massachusetts, as the "John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse."

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 7, 2001, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1104. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Force Management Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting a notification to close six Department of Defense