welfare, juvenile justice, and campaign finance reform. A League representative sits on the Rouge River Advisory Council, as well as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Educational Advisory Council. As spelled out in their original charter, the League's actions are always a reflection of their member's priorities.

I would like to recognize the current officers of the Dearborn/Dearborn Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters: Elizabeth Linick, Janice Berry, Mary Jo Durivage, Mary Anne Wilkinson, Jeni Dunn and Mary Bugeia. I thank all the fine members of this Chapter of the League for all their hard work over the past 50 years, and would ask that they keep it up. On the occasion of their 50th anniversary, I would ask all my colleagues to salute the Dearborn/Dearborn Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DEFERRED ANNUITANT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2001

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, later today I will introduce legislation, the Deferred Annuitant Fairness Act of 2001, to correct a glaring inequity in Federal retirement law. At a time when we are considering legislation to protect the hard-earned retirement benefits of working men and women—and give them more control and responsibility over their income in retirement, at least one class of federal government retirees find themselves at an unfair disadvantage and their retirement benefits eroded through no action of their own.

I speak of deferred annuitants of the federal government—employees who work for the Federal Government for at least five years, vest in the retirement program, and who separate from service before becoming eligible for immediate retirement. When these individuals claim their retirement annuity in later years, the pension benefit they have financed is eroded by inflation and they are put at a financial disadvantage which they cannot overcome.

Under current law and practice, the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund invests employee contributions but gives no added value to a retiree for the time his or her money was invested before the deferred annuity starts to be paid out. As a consequence, if two employees gave identical service, with the first retiring in 1970 and the second in 2000 with annuities for each starting in 2000, the second retiree receives nearly five times the annuity of the first. In addition, the spouse of a CSRS retiree is not protected during the deferral period. (This protection is already afforded to FERS spouses and spouses of Members of Congress participating in CSRS.)

This legislation will make two primary changes in current law to correct this inequity. First, it will compensate deferred annuitants for the added value generated over the deferred period from investing what was deposited into the trust fund on behalf of the employee up to the time of separation from service is compensated. Second, it will eliminate the disparity in spousal protection for deferred annuitants covered under CSRS and FERS.

Mr. Speaker, fairness and equity should be the watchword when it comes to the treatment of our federal workforce—the hundreds of thousands of men and women who dedicate their lives to service to this nation and our people. With the changes proposed in the legislation I introduce today, federal employees who take a hiatus from their federal service before retiring will be protected from inflation and the erosion of their pension benefit available upon retirement. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of these changes.

This measure is endorsed by the National Association of Retired Federal Employees.

RETIREMENT OF TOM MILLER, PRINCIPAL OF ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL IN ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to offer heartfelt congratulations to Tom Miller. Throughout his career, Tom Miller has constantly demonstrated a commitment to the educational and athletic development of the future leaders of our society. His professional life has consisted of numerous positions of leadership at various schools in Southwest Michigan, including his current post as principal of St. Joseph High School, which he has served for over 23 years. Tom's dedication to the enhancement of the educational experience of young people is a truly noble quality, and one that will be sorely missed.

Additionally, Tom's involvement in the athletic arena of the school system has earned him a place in the Battle Creek St. Philip High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Tom spent numerous years involved in student athletics, his basketball teams enjoying a host of victories during his tenure. I would like to wish the best of luck to Tom in his retirement, which will allow him to spend the coming years with his family, including his wife Mary Lou and all of his loved ones.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I want to praise President Bush for putting forth an education plan that offered children in failing schools a chance to get a better education. It is too bad that Democrats and supporters of the failing status quo were allowed to gut the legislation, H.R. 1, at the Committee level to remove any chance for failing schools to successfully improve their performance or to let parents have the option to move their children to better schools.

I believe that control of education should be retained at the local level. Last year, Illinois high school students led the nation in Advanced Placement scores. With a few exceptions we have good schools in the 8th District, and I don't want to force parents, school boards, and teachers into a one-size fits all approach that might work in New York City or Atlanta but not in Barrington or Wauconda.

One of the reasons I supported broad-based tax relief, including eliminating the marriage tax penalty and doubling the child tax credit, is because it lets 70,000 married couples and families with 125,000 children in the 8th District of Illinois keep $162 million per year in their pockets. That is $162 million per year that families could spend in our district on education if they chose to do so.

Former President Ronald Reagan, in a March 12, 1983 radio address to the nation on education, said, ''Better education doesn't mean a bigger Department of Education. In fact, that Department should be abolished. Instead, we must do a better job teaching the basics, insisting on discipline and results, encouraging competition and, above all, remembering that education does not begin with Washington officials or even State and local officials. It begins in the home, where it is the right and responsibility of every American.''

When we send a dollar to the federal government from Illinois, we only get 75 cents back. In my district, we send more than $2 to Washington and only get $1 back. With a return like this, it is easy to see why I support letting taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money and having parents decide locally how their money should be spent on education.

Federal education funding is at an all-time high, and H.R. 1 increases it by a huge amount. Yet, student achievement continues to lag. Most Republicans in Congress want to give local schools more freedom to use new models to solve old problems while maintaining high accountability standards. I am saddened that H.R. 1 does not accomplish this worthy goal.

One concept that has strong support from parents is President Bush's proposal to improve public education by testing children in reading and math in grades three through eight once each year. Under President Bush's proposal, schools would be held accountable for either improving scores or losing their federal money, which accounts for seven cents of every education dollar.

I fully support this provision and am gratified it has been included in the conference report before us today. In fact, during debate on H.R. 1 in May of this year, I voted against the amendment co-sponsored by Congressmen PETER HOEKSTRA and BARNEY FRANK to remove President Bush's test requirement from the bill. The tough new testing regimen designed to identify failing public schools—an idea at the heart of President Bush's education plan—survived when the amendment failed. But the rest of the President's plan to give local schools more control to make the changes necessary to improve and to give parents the option to move their children to a better private school were stripped out of the bill.

For the reasons I have outlined, I have decided to vote against H.R. 1. Again, I want to praise President Bush for his leadership in proposing creative solutions to improving the education of our children. I encourage him to continue to move the federal government out of the way and to give schools more tlexibility and parents more choices for their children.