#60 Mike Meese; #92 Tim Mercurio; #30 Drew Metz; #72 Mark Naltner; #28 Alex Niehaus; #43 Billy Phelan; #31 Seth Priestle; #90 Matt Umberg; #10 Jeff Vogel; #16 Eric Welch; #74 John Wellbrock; #87 Mike Windt; #55 Eric Wood; and #94 Mike Zielasko.

Sophomores: Craig Carey; D.J. Hueneman; Eric Kenkel; Rick Stautberg; and Nick Williams.

Managers: Kyle Miller and T.J. Weil.

## INTEREST-FREE FUNDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND MODERNIZATION PROJECTS

### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2003*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would provide $25.2 billion in interest-free funds over the next two years for public school construction and modernization projects.

Currently, our public school system has extraordinary unmet needs for funds to construct and modernize schools. Consider the following facts:

The average age of a public school in the United States is 42 years.

One-third of all public schools in the United States are in need of extensive repair or replacement.

Three and a half million students attend schools that need major repair or replacement.

According to a recent report from the National Education Association, it will cost $332 billion to bring the existing public schools into overall good condition. Billions more will be required to construct new schools to meet expanding student enrollments.

President Bush's education program places strong emphasis on raising standards in America's classrooms, but does not provide promised Federal help for the cost of additional testing and services required to reach that goal. His program also ignores the fact that school facilities are an important part of raising student performance. Inferior facilities make teaching more difficult. They also send a clear message to the student that this nation does not value their education. The President's program seems to be designed to fail.

My legislation will provide funds for school modernization projects through a federal tax credit. The tax credit will, in effect, pay the interest on $25.2 billion of school modernization bonds. All decisions relating to how those funds would be used would continue to be made at the local level.

My legislation is based on a successful model, the Qualified Academy Bond (QZAB) program enacted in 1997. A California local school official described that program as a ''local school district's dream'' after having successfully participated in a bond offering subsidized under that program. U.S. Education Secretary Rodney Page endorsed a similar proposal in 1999 when he was Superintendent of the Houston schools. In a statement submitted to the the Committee on Ways and Means, he said that school modernization bonds ''represent the approach to Federal aid that will have a truly consequential impact on meeting the infrastructure needs of Houston and other large urban high poverty districts.''

Mr. Speaker, I regret that I am introducing this bill today without the broad bipartisan support that it has received in the past. The lack of bipartisan support is due to the fact that the bill is fundamentally inconsistent with the President's dividend exemption proposal. I am hopeful that the Congress will reject or substantially modify the President's dividend proposal and, therefore, make it possible to pursue this bill with its former bipartisan support.

Attached is a brief description of the bill and a table showing how the funds will be allocated among the States.

SUMMARY

The bill would subsidize $25.2 billion in zero-interest school modernization bonds. The federal government would provide tax credits for the interest normally paid on a bond. Funds that would have gone to pay bond interest would be freed for other education needs. For each $1000 of school bonds, the net benefit of the program to State or local school districts would be approximately $500.

Funding: The bill divides the interest-free funds for public school construction and modernization as follows:

$22 billion over two years for zero-interest school modernization bonds ($11 billion in both 2004 and 2005). The bill would allocate 60 percent of the $22 billion in bonds to states based on school-age population. The State education agency has the authority to allocate the State's share among the schools districts in the State with no restrictions as to what schools can qualify. The remaining 40 percent of these bonds would be directly allocated to the 125 school districts with the largest number of low-income students based on ESEA Title I funding (poverty-based distribution).

$400 million in school modernization bonds for Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools.

$2.8 billion for expansion of the existing Qualified Zone Academy Bond program (QZAB). This amount is allocated among the States based upon the number or poor students. The State education agency has the authority to allocate the State's share among the school districts in the State; except that amount may be allocated only to schools with at least 35% poor students—those schools located in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities or which have at least 35 percent of their students eligible for free or reduced price school lunch.

Federal Role: The federal government would provide a tax credit to the bond purchaser equal to the interest that would otherwise be paid on a school construction bond. No new federal bureaucracy would be created.

Cost: The five-year cost to the Federal government is approximately $1.7 billion and the ten-year cost is approximately $6.8 billion.

The following table shows the estimated allocations under the bill.

*Estimated state bond allocations*

| | |
|---|---|
| Alabama | $354,922 |
| Alaska | 53,398 |
| Arizona | 337,448 |
| Arkansas | 183,516 |
| California | 3,109,598 |
| Colorado | 296,358 |
| Connecticut | 292,085 |
| Delaware | 49,070 |
| District of Columbia | 88,904 |
| Florida | 1,188,467 |
| Georgia | 654,051 |
| Hawaii | 77,438 |
| Idaho | 93,409 |
| Illinois | 1,221,868 |
| Indiana | 459,436 |
| Iowa | 196,453 |
| Kansas | 196,866 |
| Kentucky | 295,249 |
| Louisiana | 473,051 |

*Estimated state bond allocations—Continued*

| | |
|---|---|
| Maine | 84,355 |
| Maryland | 395,270 |
| Massachusetts | 467,254 |
| Michigan | 1,006,867 |
| Minnesota | 378,952 |
| Mississippi | 237,537 |
| Missouri | 452,673 |
| Montana | 65,077 |
| Nebraska | 131,275 |
| Nevada | 92,951 |
| New Hampshire | 80,802 |
| New Jersey | 660,175 |
| New Mexico | 157,627 |
| New York | 2,476,435 |
| North Carolina | 488,119 |
| North Dakota | 46,596 |
| Ohio | 1,019,626 |
| Oklahoma | 277,839 |
| Oregon | 235,626 |
| Pennsylvania | 1,044,126 |
| Puerto Rico | 378,751 |
| Rhode Island | 90,648 |
| South Carolina | 284,932 |
| South Dakota | 56,180 |
| Tennessee | 421,577 |
| Texas | 1,998,390 |
| Utah | 175,947 |
| Vermont | 42,022 |
| Virginia | 422,902 |
| Washington | 402,308 |
| West Virginia | 123,951 |
| Wisconsin | 491,648 |
| Wyoming | 38,712 |
| Outlying Areas | 51,263 |
| BIA Schools | 400,000 |
| Total | 25,200,000 |

## HELENA MARQUES—SOUTHCOAST WOMAN OF THE YEAR

### HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2003*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, one of the most difficult issues that we have been dealing with in these past years has been that of immigration. Sadly, it has become politically popular to blame immigrants for a wide variety of problems for which they are not, in fact responsible, and people have increasingly overlooked the important cultural and economic contributions immigration continues to play in our Nation of immigrants.

In my efforts to provide fair treatment for immigrants, both as a matter of equity and as a matter of correctly assessing our national interest in a sensible immigration policy, I have benefited enormously from the counsel, advocacy and commitment of Helena Marques. She has been an extraordinary asset to all of us who are charged with helping to make national policy on this matter, and she has been a beacon of strength for those in the immigrant community and their families who have been affected by our policies. I concur wholeheartedly with the decision of the New Bedford Standard Times to designate her the south coast woman of the Year, and I ask that the article describing her work from the Standard times be printed here, because I believe our colleagues will benefit from reading about her important work on the immigration issue.

After Sept. 11, 2001, Helena Marques had bad news for the mothers of area residents deported from the area to Portugal.

As she delivered the news during a meeting in a South End Holy Ghost club, she