

H.R. 1350—IMPROVING EDUCATION RESULTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1350. When Congress made the leap to dramatically change the way the nation treats the education of disabled students in 1975 when it created IDEA, it made a commitment to providing a free, quality education to children who previously had been neglected by the system. This commitment to fund 40 percent of the excess cost of education for children with disabilities was unprecedented. Six million children who had once been forced to seek private education or forego education altogether were given the opportunity that so many children take for granted. At least, that was the idea.

Unfortunately, this body has continued to neglect these children by refusing to fully fund the program. Today we had the opportunity to show these children, their parents, and their educators how serious we are about their education—but passing H.R. 1350 will be a failure to do that. Not only does the bill fail to fund IDEA above the 18 percent we currently give to the 40 percent Congress promised, but it actually sets back the education of children with disabilities. In fact, this bill weakens the civil rights protections that were initially established with IDEA, undermines parental involvement and even creates the potential for disabled students to be punished for actions related to their disabilities. When the Majority promises to leave no child behind, does it make an exception for children with disabilities?

Many groups, including the PTA, the National Mental Health Association, and the Children's Defense Fund oppose this bill because it falls short of improving education for children with disabilities. It has become clear that this bill favors school administrators—not children, parents, and the teachers who work so hard to give disabled children an equitable education.

I strongly support a good public education for all children and I believe that every child is entitled to the same. Those who passed IDEA in 1975 shared that view, and they set a goal to give students with disabilities the treatment and education they deserve. Unfortunately, this bill fails to live up to what the original authors of IDEA intended, and I must vote against it. However, I am committed to special education and I will continue to work to pass a bill that accomplishes the intended goals set out under the original Act.

REMEMBRANCE ON MOTHER'S DAY

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2003

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the Mother's Day weekend, I rise today to remember the mothers of missing children, or mothers whose children's lives have tragically ended in violence. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Most of you remember the story of the two Oregon City girls who disappeared on their way to school last year: Ashley Pond in January and Miranda Gaddis in March.

Months later after a lengthy search by law enforcement and the community, the entire Nation was horrified as the FBI and Oregon City Police dug up the backyard of a home neighboring their apartment complex to discover the girls' bodies.

Ashley and Miranda were just 13 years old when their precious young lives ended in violence. I think of them often.

Throughout the last year, my staff and I have gotten to know Michelle Duffey, the mother of Miranda. She has survived horrors unimaginable except to those who have lived through this kind of terrible tragedy themselves. Less than 1 year after learning of her daughter's fate, Michelle is trying to rebuild a life for herself and her family.

Just consider for a moment, that throughout her grieving process, Michelle has been recognized in the grocery store and on the street. She continues to be called upon for numerous media interviews. This sort of notoriety must be very, very hard for her and her family to endure. And yet Michelle has taken that attention, gained some strength from the community's support, and has used that courageously to advocate on behalf of missing children and their families. I admire her fortitude. And I greatly appreciate her public service.

I will continue to stand by Michelle Duffey in her efforts to prevent this type of tragedy from happening to someone else's child.

Each year, nearly 800,000 children are reported missing according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This includes children who run away, who are abducted by family members and the most serious and deadly kidnappings, those by strangers. I am proud to be a member of the Missing Children's Caucus that supported the passage of the national AMBER Alert plan, that takes important steps to prevent such tragedies as happened in Oregon City. No legislation will ever prevent 100 percent of the atrocious crimes perpetrated against our Nation's children, but it is up to us to try. Michelle Duffey has been one of its strongest and best advocates.

This Sunday, I will remember Miranda and Ashley's mothers in my thoughts as we honor our Nation's mothers. I ask you to keep in mind all the mothers across America who are missing their children at this time, and to offer your thoughts and prayers for them and their children.

NAVY JUNIOR ROTC

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2003

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise with pride today to recognize an outstanding Navy Junior ROTC from Corpus Christi, Texas, in my congressional district.

The Flour Bluff High School's Navy Junior ROTC is easily the very best in the country, having won the national title among all Navy Junior ROTC programs in the country for the past seven years. So they are used to being known as the "best of the best."

This week, they made their domination of Junior ROTC competitions complete by winning competitions against units from every branch of the service. For the first time, both the armed and unarmed drill teams from Flour Bluff won the all-service competition against teams from all other military branches.

The 33 students from the Coastal Bend of Texas who won the competition of 4,000 students on 155 teams were simply spectacular at the All Service Grand National Championship competition in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Both young women and men have competed for the championship—and both have won. The young women of Junior ROTC won the national title in 2000. The following year, the young men took the championship. But this year, they accomplished a new goal by both taking home the championship.

They are judged on drills, precision marching, personal appearance and their knowledge regarding current events. While these are exceptional young people who are outstanding young leaders, they have a visionary example of leadership in their unit Commander, Armando Solis.

Commander Solis has nurtured these teenagers through seven consecutive titles for the Flour Bluff High School Navy Junior ROTC. It is largely through his dedicated guidance that Flour Bluff's Navy Junior ROTC has been extremely successful in their national competitions.

I am particularly proud of these young people under Commander Solis' guidance. ROTC is a feeder program for tomorrow's officer corps, and there are a number of people who are serving us in uniform today who came through this particular program, and from Junior ROTC programs across the nation.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending the Flour Bluff High School's Navy Junior ROTC for their excellence.

A BILL TO PERMANENTLY EXTEND THE WORK OPPORTUNITY AND WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDITS AND IMPROVE THE PROGRAMS

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2003

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by my colleague from New York, Mr. RANGEL, in introducing our bill, "Encouraging Work Act of 2003." The bill would permanently extend the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Welfare-to-Work Credit (W-t-W) and make other changes discussed below. Both programs are currently due to expire on December 31, 2003. The credits are tax incentives designed to encourage employers to hire public assistance recipients and other individuals with barriers to employment. They are important tools in our efforts to help needy individuals become productive employees.

Improvements in the programs the past few years have made WOTC and W-t-W far more effective in providing employment, with training, for our nation's disadvantaged. Such training can be costly and the credits provide an incentive to employers to hire the disadvantaged and provide the needed training while