

21st century technology and high-quality programming to teachers, students, and parents both inside and outside the classroom. It is remarkable to see how teachers like Bryan DeBates can use this technology to make this possible.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to honor Bryan DeBates. It is the perseverance and dedication of teachers like him that will lead our youth to a brighter future.

SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS H. ALLEN

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2210) to authorize the Head Start Act to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children, and for other purposes:

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, nearly 4 decades ago, a program was introduced that would forever change the lives of more than 20 million American disadvantaged children and their families. The achievements of Head Start have become so legendary that I thought it was secure. I was wrong.

Instead of directly funding community-based Head Start programs, the School Readiness Act would allow some states to receive "block grant" funding. States could then use their own untested standards, avoid federal quality oversight, diminish services, weaken the role of parents, and shift money to shore up sagging state budgets.

I have seen examples of the positive impact of Head Start throughout Maine. At a meeting earlier this year, for example, a Head Start father movingly told of his struggle with illness and unemployment; he firmly believes that his children are thriving despite this hardship primarily because of their enrollment in Head Start.

At the same meeting, a graduate of Head Start credited her own success—being the first in her family to gain an advanced degree—to the program.

Another Mainer wrote to me about her son, whose many medical problems at birth led his doctor to predict he would be severely mentally disabled. Enrollment in Early Head Start provided the early intervention that vastly improved his prospects.

National studies confirm that Head Start works: the gap is narrowed significantly between Head Start children and other children in vocabulary and writing skills; once in kindergarten, they continue to make substantial progress in language and math skills. Head Start graduates are less likely than similarly situated children to repeat a grade, require special education, or be charged or convicted with a crime. They are more likely to complete high school and college and earn more as adults than those who did not have the benefit of this program.

Head Start benefits all Americans in the long term. Numerous studies show that for every dollar spent on Head Start, taxpayers save \$4 to \$7 in the future due to lower education, crime and welfare expenses. Yet, the President's budget for Head Start does not

even keep up with the rate of inflation, let alone provide enough funding to serve all eligible children.

If it ain't broke, why does the Administration want to "fix" it? The track record of Head Start and those who benefit from its services are evidence that there is no need to restructure the program. We should instead address its real financial needs: to fully fund this program to provide the greatest assistance for low-income children and their families.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the Democratic substitute which will expand access to the program for more eligible children, improve teacher and program quality and strengthen the overall program. H.R. 2210 would simply undermine a program which has been a major success.

OFFSET OF FEDERAL TAX REFUNDS FOR STATE AND LOCAL TAX DEBTS

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to be introducing legislation that would establish a federal tax refund offset program for state and local governments. Specifically, this program would require the federal government to withhold refunds from those individuals and corporations that still owe state or local government tax obligations.

Today, the reverse situation exists. A number of states allow their own state agencies, local governments and the Internal Revenue Service to submit a list of delinquent taxpayers. The state then matches these delinquent accounts against taxpayers who may qualify for a state tax refund. If a match is found, the state reduces the refund by the amount of the delinquency and remits the funds to the claimant. These programs have proven to be low-cost and highly effective. Congress recognized the effectiveness of these programs and directed the Internal Revenue Service to establish a similar program to cover claims by other federal agencies, as well as for past-due child support obligations. In 2000, Congress expanded the program by directing the Treasury Department to accept claims by states for income tax obligations.

The legislation I am introducing today builds on these successful programs by permitting local governments to participate. The local governments could submit their outstanding tax debts to the Department of the Treasury for an offset against any federal tax refund, just as federal agencies and states do now. This legislation would also permit a claim to be made for any legally enforceable tax obligation owed to the state or local government.

In an era of tight state and local government budgets, it is patently unfair to have the tax-paying citizenry bear the costs and burdens of those who do not pay their fair share. As President Kennedy recognized, "[t]o the extent that some people are dishonest or careless in their dealings with the government, the majority is forced to carry a heavier tax burden." (April 20, 1961) The legislation that I am introducing today will provide a means to help distribute that burden more equitably.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

REGARDING THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY STABILIZATION ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I rise today to introduce the "Middle Rio Grande Emergency Water Supply Stabilization Act of 2003," a bill amending the Flood Control Act of 1948 with respect to the Middle Rio Grande Project to authorize programs for water conservation and control of phreatic vegetation, and for other purposes.

On June 12, 2003, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Federal District Court's opinion determining that the Bureau of Reclamation "has the discretion to reduce deliveries of water . . . comply with the Endangered Species Act."

This lawsuit affirmation rekindled the passionate debate about how we use our water resources, about the sustainability of our current water practices, and whether we are using our water wisely.

This is a very difficult situation for everyone involved. Some have painted the situation as a crisis, as a people versus fish issue. Others state that this "crisis" should be taken as an indication that it is time to recognize the bottomline of the matter: water is a scarce commodity in New Mexico and should be treated accordingly.

In an effort to find a common-sense approach to sustainable water management in New Mexico and the west, I engaged in extensive discussions with the major stakeholders in the San Juan/Chama water dispute, and shared my concerns directly with United States Department of Interior Secretary Gale Norton, the person ultimately responsible for enforcing the 10th Circuit ruling.

As a result of these conversations, I am introducing legislation today that will address our outmoded water principles and practices.

First, the bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to contribute to a long-term solution for the Middle Rio Grande River in the State of New Mexico by preventing, reducing, or eliminating wasteful depletion of waters. This would entail the establishment of a water supply stabilization program at the local level. Under this program, the Secretary would provide financial and technical assistance to promote and encourage the adoption and implementation of water conservation measures within the Rio Grande Basin in New Mexico.

To accomplish this, the Secretary would enter into cost sharing and other agreements with the State and other entities including organizations, municipalities, Indian Tribes and Pueblos, and individuals, who use agricultural or municipal and industrial water from the Rio Grande River and its tributaries in New Mexico, including water supplied directly or indirectly from the Middle Rio Grande Project or the San Juan-Chama Project. These collaborative agreements will result in localized decisions regarding sustainable water management along the Rio Grande.

Second, the bill encourages the implementation of water conservation measures that will improve water quantity and water quality conditions needed to support a sustainable, living

river environment within the Middle Rio Grande Basin, and will result in conservation, recreation, and other public benefits.

Third, the bill sets a goal to achieve, within three years of the date of enactment of this legislation, quantifiable improvements in irrigation efficiencies through the incorporation of measures such as lining canals and ditches, and the use of low-flow or drip irrigation systems and other modern hydrological technologies.

Fourth, the bill directs the Secretary to cooperate with the State of New Mexico, water use organizations, and affected landowners to develop and implement a comprehensive program to identify, remove, and control salt cedar vegetation in the flood plain of the Rio Grande River and its tributaries, and to replant and reestablish native vegetation if appropriate.

Fifth, the bill authorizes grants for basic research on technological solutions for accessing new sources of water including, but not limited to, desalinization, and the purification of brackish and other types of unpalatable water. Furthermore, the bill authorizes grants for basic research to increase water efficiency. For example, Los Alamos National Labs, located in my district, is working to improve technology so that less water will be required in manufacturing computer microchips. And, the bill authorizes funds to conduct studies to quantify the water needs, requirements and rights of tribes and pueblos in the Middle Rio Grande Basin.

Finally, the bill confirms the original intentions of Congress as set forth in the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956, and the San Juan-Chama Project Act 1962. These Acts set forth the principle purposes underlying the furnishing of federal water supplies in New Mexico, including water for municipal, domestic, and industrial uses, and for the conservation of, and I quote from the original authorizing legislation, "the scenery, the natural, historic, and archaeological objects, and the wildlife" on lands affected by the project, and "to mitigate losses of, and improve conditions for, the propagation of fish and wildlife."

We are in the midst of a very serious drought, and in New Mexico and across the west. Our water resources are over-allocated, and an exploding growth in population is stretching these resources to the limits. This situation is compounded by a water infrastructure that is inefficient, outdated, and insufficient to meet our current needs.

My bill deals with these realities and many other crucial issues. It sets up incentives to conserve our water resources and develop collaborative solutions at the local level. It restores and protects the Rio Grande River and the surrounding Bosque, and encourages technological solutions for new sources of water and methods to harness such technology to increase water efficiency.

Considering the above, if we do not focus collaboratively and make every effort possible to conserve our water, I believe that New Mexico, and similarly situated western states, will continue to confront similar, if not worse, water scarcity problems indefinitely. We need greater and more conscientious efforts on the part of water users to conserve this precious commodity. And, these users must become more accountable for water waste. My bill provides the incentives to conserve our water resources to ensure that all New Mexicans will have water to use in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I introduce this legislation as a first step to solve a critical problem. We need to act now to ensure sustainable water management and conservation in New Mexico. I invite and welcome the support of my colleagues in the New Mexico Congressional Delegation as we continue to confront this problem together.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER PRIVACY AND IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION ACT OF 2003"

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, use of Social Security numbers is rampant. When Social Security numbers were created in 1936, their only purpose was to track a worker's earnings so that Social Security benefits could be calculated. But today, we literally have a culture of dependence on Social Security numbers.

Businesses and governments use the number as the primary way of identifying individuals. All of us know how difficult it is to conduct even the most mundane transactions without having to provide our Social Security number first. It's no wonder identity theft has become the fastest growing white collar crime.

Worse yet, terrorists, including those responsible for the September 11th attacks, misuse SSNs in order to assimilate into our society.

Barely a day goes by without hearing more examples of the truly devastating effects of identity theft. Just this month, at a Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security hearing, we learned about a widow whose husband died in the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center—an illegal immigrant used her deceased husband's Social Security number to get a driver's license and to work. We also heard about individuals whose credit was ruined, who were arrested for crimes they did not commit, and who spent years and hundreds or even thousands of dollars out of their own pockets trying to clear their names because of identity theft often facilitated by obtaining the individual's Social Security number.

Concerns about identity theft are increasing dramatically. According to the Federal Trade Commission, identity theft is the number one consumer complaint—amounting to 43 percent of complaints received in 2002. In fact, my state, Florida, is sixth in the nation in the number of identity theft victims per 100,000 people.

Clearly, there is need for a comprehensive law to better protect the privacy of Social Security numbers and protect the American public from being victimized. Today, I re-introduce the "Social Security Number Privacy and Identity Theft Prevention Act of 2003," which is similar to bipartisan legislation introduced during the last Congress. In the public and private sector, the bill would restrict the sale and public display of Social Security numbers, limit dissemination of Social Security numbers by credit reporting agencies, make it more difficult for businesses to deny services if a customer refuses to provide his or her Social Security number and establish civil and criminal penalties for violations.

Based on the thoughtful comments we have received, this new legislation reflects a small number of fair and appropriate modifications, including the following:

In response to concerns about potentially preventing necessary disclosures of the SSN and the impact on businesses, customers, and the economy, the U.S. Attorney General will be able to authorize the sale, purchase and display of SSNs only when necessary and with restrictions to assure the Social Security number would not be used to commit fraud or crime and to prevent risk of individual harm.

Based on feedback from employee benefit plan administrators, the legislation makes clear that sale and purchase of Social Security numbers does not include its submission for administering employee benefits.

In response to concerns regarding vulnerabilities in the Social Security Administration's process of issuing Social Security numbers, the bill tightens controls by requiring a photo ID; raising the standards for issuing Social Security numbers to babies; and restricting reissuance of Social Security number cards.

In response to concerns about the need for stronger, clearer penalties for SSN misuse, the legislation provides enhanced criminal penalties for repeat offenders and for misuse associated with drug trafficking, crimes of violence, and terrorism. The legislation provides criminal penalties for Social Security employees who sell Social Security numbers or cards, as well as for individuals who sell their own Social Security number to another.

Congress must act to protect the very number it requires each of us to obtain and use throughout our lifetime. Providing for uses of Social Security numbers that benefit the public while protecting these numbers from being used by criminals, or even terrorists, is a complex balancing act. This bill achieves that balance by ensuring Social Security numbers are assigned accurately, exchanged only when necessary, and protected from indiscriminate disclosure. I urge Members to co-sponsor this important legislation.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION'S CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

HON. MELISSA A. HART

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, today it is my honor to commend the 50th anniversary of the American Political Science Association's Congressional Fellowship Program. This program provides academic political scientists, journalists, and members of the executive branch invaluable learning experiences about how Congress works from the inside. In turn, the fellows bring their unique professional expertise and fresh perspectives to Congressional offices.

When I first arrived in Congress back in 2001, an APSA fellow, Amy Black, worked in my office and helped me research and write legislation. Amy's work was a great benefit to our office, and her time in my office gave her new insights for her teaching and academic research. I hope other Members will avail