

Mr. Speaker, we should ask the President to uncharacteristically restrain the price of his promises. We do not need finger wagging or redefinition of the word "is," we need old fashioned fiscal discipline. We invite the President and the administration and our friends on the left to join us in that process.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues tonight who have joined me, the gentleman from Georgia, the gentleman from Arizona, the gentleman from South Carolina, for having what I think is a very interesting talk about a way that we can ask this president and challenge this president to save one penny.

We know what happened, today the President vetoed the bill because he wants more and more and more and more spending. He wants less accountability, and the worst part is that what it means is it would be spending our Nation's future social security.

Republicans will not allow this to happen. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) will not allow a bill that places social security in danger. I thank the gentlemen.

AMERICA'S EDUCATION CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I am again here to talk about the education crisis and the failure of our elected decision-makers to respond to that crisis.

I have been asked by people, why do you continue to come back and talk about the same subject? Well, I do that because the American people have made it quite clear in poll after poll and focus group after focus group that education is their number one priority.

No matter how we approach it, and I know ABC has now a series on it, because of the fact that they have recognized and want to pay tribute to the fact that continually the American people say education and the problems related to education should receive the highest priority when it comes to government assistance and the attention of our decision-makers in the Nation.

A poll was recently taken for the State of Ohio, and it came up 90 percent of the people said education is the number one priority. No matter how we approach the problem in this democracy, the people speak with one voice, that they understand what the most important priority is.

What is amazing, what I cannot comprehend, is why in this democracy elected officials do not respond to that clearly-designated priority. How many times do the American people have to say it? How many ways do they have to say it? Well, there are some people who say we are responding to the priority,

and I want to talk about that mistaken assumption.

I think that there is a lot of activity, a lot of rhetoric, related to education as a result of understanding that the general public, the overwhelming majority of the American people, want some action of great significance on education. Instead of acting, there is a lot of rhetoric. There is a lot of posturing.

I think we might call education the most trivialized priority in the history of political dialogue in this country. Education is the most trivialized priority. That is the response of a collective elected official community.

Too many of our elected officials are like the group of whales that were documented recently. There was a documentary where a group of whales were filmed beneath the ocean tossing a bloody baby seal around as sort of a game. I suppose eventually they ate the seal, but they tossed it around for a long time, and played with it. When we look at what is happening with education, the political functionaries who have the power to do something of great significance, the Governors, the mayors, the Congressmen, the White House, everybody seems to be willing to toss the bloody baby seal, instead of dealing with the problem.

Now, there are some of these whales, and whales come in many species, some whales are truly without vision. They do not understand how to deal with the problem. Some whales do not care. They understand the problem. They do not care about the public school system. Public education in America is like a baby seal bleeding and they do not care whether it bleeds to death or not. They do not care how long they play with it. They really do not intend to do anything about it.

Then there are some other whales that are too cautious, too frightened. They understand the problem but they do not dare venture out and talk about a real solution to the problem. So the bleeding baby seal keeps dying, and we keep tossing him about, but nothing is happening of great significance.

The public school system needs to be saved. We need to do it with some kind of activity comparable to the kind of activity exhibited by Thomas Jefferson when he decided he would purchase a territory which was larger than the United States at that time, it was a big, significant action; or when they decided to build the transcontinental railroad.

The transcontinental railroad was built not by private industry, as most people think, it was built by the government subsidy. The government hired private companies to do it, but the money came from the taxpayers. The initiative came from the government. The transcontinental railroad which linked the East and the West Coast was a monumental undertaking.

The Morrill Act, the Morrill Act which established land grant colleges in every State, it took Morrill a long time to get the idea across, but finally he did. That was a huge undertaking which transformed the American education system in very important ways. Especially, it gave to the agricultural industry a scientific engineering base that has made agriculture in America something that no other Nation has ever been able to get close to, agricultural production in America.

We have undertaken the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan was no small, trivialized step toward the rebuilding of Europe. It took billions of dollars. If we look at the Marshall Plan dollars in terms of today's dollars, it was fantastic.

Somebody could have been sitting in the corner saying, look, we cannot solve the problem of the revitalization of the European economies by throwing money at it. Let us not do it. Europe would have probably gone Communist in a few years if they had not moved in a dramatic fashion with an overwhelming amount of aid.

So we know how it is done. There is an American way of approaching the problem if we really want to solve it. But when it comes to education, we seem to think that the American public will soon get tired. There is no issue, there is no phenomenon which maintains and holds onto the attention of the American public indefinitely. There is always the hope that it will go away, that the concern will cease.

I hope not. That is why I make the trip here as often as I can to remind the voters that they are right, and the elected officials and their failure to respond places them in a situation where they are wrong. The American people are right. The American voters, they are right. Their common sense is on target. Do not give up. Do not stop demanding.

At the focus groups when they call you on the phone, keep saying, we want government to provide some significant assistance to education. We want to go on in some overwhelming way and deal with the problem, instead of playing games with it.

There are a lot of things that are happening in the area of education which we have to look at. It is such a complex problem until, like the blind men feeling the elephant, you can get a part of it and tell the truth. If you feel the trunk, you may describe the elephant one way. If you feel the tail, you describe him another way.

It is a complex problem, education. I do not want to belittle any aspect of the problem. They all deserve attention. We have to deal with reading, we have to deal with science laboratories, we have to deal with libraries, we have to deal with certification of teachers, we have to deal with standards, testing, and most of all we need to deal

with what I call the opportunities to learn.

We have had some great strides in the establishment of new curriculum standards. We have had some great strides in the area of testing. It is the area of opportunities to learn which seems to be the area where we lose vision, and that is the most important area of all.

The opportunity to learn involves what are you going to do. The question is, what are you going to do to make certain that the students in the schools have what they need to deal with the curriculum that we have established and to be able to pass the tests that we are establishing.

I have served on the Committee on Education and Labor, and what is called now the Committee on Education and the Workforce. I have served on that for the entire time I have been in Congress.

On the occasion of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act 5 years ago we had a great debate about this whole matter of establishing curriculum standards and establishing testing standards.

□ 2200

We were, in the case of a group of Democrats on the committee, afraid that if you established curriculum standards that are national, although States have the freedom to deal with their own standards but they do not have to be dragged into it, but if you established models that are replicated State by State and then you established the testing standards and that became some national testing standards that were going to be used all over the country, if you did all of that, there is a danger that you could ruin the lives of youngsters by having these high-stakes tests circulating all over and determining who gets pigeon holed for the time that they are in school and college or for determining their ability to get a job.

There were a number of reasons why we were afraid of testing, but those of us who were afraid of a national testing policy to accompany a national set of curriculum standards agreed that we would accept national testing standards and national curriculum standards if you also had a national opportunity to learn standards. Opportunity to learn standards was the third set of standards. We called it a troika for education reform. And after many weeks of debate, finally we got that passed into the legislation. It was added to the legislation. Of course, Democrats were in control of the House at the time. We had the majority and we were able to prevail, and the opportunities to learn standards are included with the curriculum standards and the testing standards.

The problem now is that our schools are not going forward. We are not get-

ting results, because we have eliminated a part of the troika. Actually, in a back-room deal, the Committee on Appropriations which had no authority to do it but all parties agreed, the administration agreed, both parties agreed, they took out the opportunity to learn standards, and we are zooming forward with the curriculum standards and with the testing standards.

Every State, every local education agency is now dealing with ways to tell the students that you have to measure up to certain standards. The curriculum is going to be tougher, but what the States and local education agencies are not willing to deal with is we are also going to provide you with the opportunities to learn; that what you need, we are going to provide you with whatever you need in order to be able to measure up to these standards; pass the tests. We are going to provide you with decent buildings, decent libraries. We are going to provide you with laboratories. We are going to provide you with necessary books. We are going to provide you with teachers who are able to teach what they are assigned to teach in the classrooms, certified, competent teachers. Those are the things we backed away from.

In New York, you have a new set of tests. All students have to pass certain regents tests. Otherwise, they do not get any type of paper. There was a time when you get what you call a general diploma which said you were sitting in the seats when you were in high school and you attended, you met certain minimal standards, so here is a general high school diploma. That is being eliminated. You have to pass certain tests.

I have no problem with the tests. I have no problem with the curriculum standards, if only we can add some opportunity to learn standards. We do not want children who have to sit in classrooms that are still threatened with asbestos. We do not want children to have to sit in classrooms that have the pollution from coal-burning furnaces. We do not want children who have to sit in overcrowded classrooms where there are too many in there.

We do not want children who have to eat lunch at 10:00 in the morning because the school has twice as many students as it was built for. In order to cycle them through the lunchroom, you have to have three different lunch periods or four different lunch periods. The first lunch period has to begin at 10:00. The last one ends at 1:30 or 2:00. So the children who eat last are very hungry excessively and the children who eat first are being force fed after they have already had breakfast.

We do not want these atrocities to go on. You have to deal with opportunities to learn by guaranteeing the right kinds of facilities and the right kinds of materials and conditions. If you take New York as a case study, and I

think that whenever I talk about New York I later on get comments that are e-mailed or faxed or come over the telephone where people indicate that it is not unique to New York.

You have got similar problems in many other places. There are other places where children have to eat lunch at 10:00 in the morning, I found out. There are numerous places where the overcrowding has reached a point where it is almost impossible to conduct classes. Even after the trailers are added and the kids have to walk through the snow to get to the restroom from the trailers, or even after you add trailers in order to bring down the class size, the conditions still continue to be detrimental to learning. It is not just New York. It is not just big cities. The reason we keep getting the polls which show that the American people want education to be treated seriously, as a high priority item from all over the country, is because the situation does exist in most parts of the country; but New York is a good case study.

Whatever I discuss with respect to New York is applicable elsewhere in the country. I got a letter from some people who were working very hard in New York about some of the comments that I have made previously. In essence, a very respected retired judge, Thomas Russell Jones, who is a retired judge who works very hard to try to improve education, he is the president of an organization that he and his wife established called the Children's Times. The Children's Times continues to work away at the problems.

To carry my analogy of the ocean a little further, they are not whales tossing a bloody baby seal. They are people who desperately at the bottom of the sea are searching for pearls, polishing those pearls and trying to in every small way do something significant to help improve education. I applaud all of the efforts, no matter how small they are, to try to come to grips with problems related to our educational system.

I don't mean to say that those people are not serious. I am talking about public officials with power, Members of Congress, governors, mayors, people with power are the whales who are playing with the bloody seal.

We can do far more, and I suppose what Judge Jones was saying to me is that he would like to see me stop talking so much and do more. I agree with the judge's comments in the letter he wrote.

He says of my October speech, he criticizes me for not proposing any real solutions. He must not have listened to the very end because I always propose solutions. The solutions that I propose are not small ones, however. They are not nickel and dime solutions. They

are solutions that are worthy of government action, certainly Federal Government action, but I will just quote a little from Judge Jones' letter.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN OWENS, your October 12 speech to the House of Representatives as the designee of the Democratic minority informs the American people about a number of problems with education. You inform us that 81 percent of the American people favor placing computers in the classrooms of all public schools. You inform us that students in our country are going to have to seek jobs in a world where if one cannot use computers and use them effectively there is little hope for them to make a decent living. You have said that, quote, "black parents do not have any faith left in the public school system. They have given up hope." The Children's Times' directors agree with your findings and conclusions. We congratulate you for focusing attention on the findings of the Washington Post poll released on September 5, 1999, which reports that the American people place the immediate improvement of public schools at the top of their agenda year after year. Your statement, however, does not present any concrete, practical proposals to guarantee a modern education to 1.1 million children who attend public schools in New York City. The Children's Times petitions you to address the critical deficiencies in the elementary schools of New York City with respect of computer equipment in the classrooms and the effective closing of libraries in all public schools. I respectfully request that you publicly endorse the statement of United States Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts delivered to the U.S. Senate on July 29, where he reported that the teacher shortage has forced many school districts to hire uncertified teachers or ask certified teachers to teach outside their area of expertise. Each year more than 50,000 underprepared teachers enter the classrooms. One in four new teachers do not meet standard certification requirements. Twelve percent of new teachers have had no teacher training. Students in inner city schools have only a 50 percent chance of being taught by a qualified science or math teacher.

I agree with all of these observations by Judge Jones and his son David Jones, who as the head of the Community Service Society some years ago was responsible for a survey which showed that in two-thirds of the schools in the city, those schools that were serving Hispanic and African American children, practically all the teachers who were teaching science and math had not majored in math and science in college.

So, Judge Jones, you have laid out several different aspects of the problem. I will not belittle any of them. Everything that you point out is correct. I applaud the Children's Times for staying on the case, but listen carefully. I do propose solutions. I propose solutions at all levels. On several previous occasions I said that New York City had part of the solution to the problem in its hands. New York City had a \$2 billion surplus last year. Their budget had \$2 billion left over after they met all city obligations, and the city could have moved to begin to deal with some of these problems without Federal assistance.

New York State had a \$2 billion surplus last year and New York State not only did not do anything about the problem, when the State assembly and the State Senate finally reached agreement that they would appropriate \$500 million of that \$2 billion for school repairs, the governor of the State vetoed that part of the budget. He would not use \$500 million out of the \$2 billion for school repairs all across the State.

So these problems deserve attention, and I am a Member of Congress and am here to represent my constituency at the Federal level. The Federal Government must lead the way because that is where most of the money is.

All taxes are local. All the money in Washington came from the local level, and we should not flinch or hesitate to send some of that money back to deal with basic problems like the public school system.

I also received a letter from Mrs. Jones, Bertha Jones, Judge Jones's wife, who is a secretary of the Children's Times, at a later date, and she is talking about our libraries. The Children's Times Associates has launched a campaign to reestablish functioning libraries in the elementary schools of the City of New York.

The facts, the New York State Department of Education Division of Library Development, the State agency which supervises public school libraries throughout the State, informed the Children's Times Associates by a written memorandum dated August 23, 1999, that 550 elementary schools out of a total of 672 schools report a shortage of 550 certified librarians.

The memorandum adds that many public school libraries are presently staffed by teachers who have no library or technological training, or by para-professionals who lack expertise of any kind. I would not say para-professionals lack expertise of any kind, but certainly they are not qualified to run school libraries.

The United States Department of Education statistics reported recently that the New York City School System has hired fewer than one library media specialist for every 1,042 students. Library media specialists are trained to provide local media and telecommunications materials and access to experts whose advice and instructions teach children how to prepare classwork and homework on their own.

The Children's Times Associates predict that if children do not learn to read and do basic arithmetic by the fourth grade, they will be playing a losing game of catch-up for the rest of their academic lives, which may not be very long.

When libraries are reestablished in all elementary schools in New York City, under the supervision of library media specialists, in compliance with the New York State education law and the commissioner's regulations, 533,695

students will have access to the instructions and technology they need to work for their livelihoods as adults in 2000 and beyond, and that is signed by Bertha Jones, the secretary of the Children's Times Associates.

□ 2215

Again, as a former public librarian, my profession is library science, I have a master's degree in library science, I wholeheartedly agree that this is a very devastating report of a blind spot in the public school system.

Libraries have always had to fight to exist in elementary schools. It looks as if we are losing that battle in New York City. Nothing is more important than what goes on with respect to libraries and the processes that children learn there about how to learn on their own, how to use the great fountain of knowledge that exists to take care of their own needs and to facilitate ways to educate themselves. Nothing is more important than encouraging youngsters also to do as much reading as possible.

I wholeheartedly agree with Mrs. Jones. I talk a lot about computers. I talk a lot about the need to bring our students to the level where they can run a cyber civilization, where they can deal with the fact that the world is now being more and more digitalized. It is not computer literacy, it is computer competence. The ability to work with imagination dealing with computers and web sites and the whole telecommunications revolution requires very well educated people. I have talked a great deal about that.

But do not misunderstand me. I know that begins with reading. Nobody learns how to deal with the information technology if they do not know how to read, if they do not know basic arithmetic. It all begins with the basics, and I do not want to ever appear to have down played that.

In response to the Children's Times Crusade to provide libraries for the schools in New York City, let me say that I have joined with my colleague in the Senate, JACK REED, and Senator JACK REED was a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce when we passed the last Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act, and we placed in that act the opportunity to learn standards.

So he knows very well that one of the things we have to do if we are going to improve education in America is to go beyond curriculum standards, go beyond national testing, and deal with providing opportunities to learn.

So Senator REED has already introduced a bill, and I have introduced the same bill, companion piece October 4, a few weeks ago, which provides for amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, to provide up-to-date school library media

resources and well-trained professionally certified school library specialists for elementary schools and secondary schools and for other purposes. This bill's number is H.R. 3008, H.R. 3008 in the House. The companion Senate bill is S. 1262. Now, I have just recently put out a Dear Colleague letter asking all of my colleagues to join me on this particular piece of legislation.

Going beyond the statistics which Mrs. Jones cited for New York City, let us talk about the whole country. Looking at libraries in the whole country, we are talking about almost one-third of the U.S. public schools lack a full-time school library media specialist.

The national average is one library media specialist to every 591 students in American elementary and secondary schools. The ratio of students to school library media specialists varies widely from one school library specialist for every 287 public school students in Montana to one library media specialist for every 942 public school students in California.

A 12-State U.S. study found that funding for school library materials annually vary from \$15 to \$58,874 for elementary school libraries and \$155 to \$100,810 for secondary school libraries. In other words, the funding for some elementary school libraries as low as \$15. For others, for some high school libraries as low as \$155, this funding for school library materials. But in some schools, it was as high as \$58,874 in some elementary schools and as high as \$100,810 in some secondary schools.

So the disparity is obviously there. It is one of the problems which the Federal role in education has always sought to address, the great disparity between the richest districts and the poorest districts.

Reading further in terms of the findings that make this school library bill important, the median per pupil expenditure by school library media centers in America in the 1995-1996 school year was \$6.73 for elementary schools. The per pupil expenditure, the median was \$6.73 for elementary schools, that is all, and \$7.30 for middle schools, \$6.25 for senior high schools. In a Nation which is enjoying unprecedented prosperity, we can do better.

Mr. Speaker, I will not read further from this Dear Colleague letter, but I include for the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 3, 1999.

DEAR COLLEAGUE: Almost one-third of U.S. public schools lack a full-time school library media specialist. The national average is one library media specialist to every 591 students in American elementary and secondary schools.

The ratio of students to school library media specialists varies widely: from one school library specialist for every 287 public school students in Montana to one library media specialist for every 942 public school students in California.

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from \$15 to \$58,874 for elementary school libraries and \$155 to \$100,810 for secondary school libraries.

The median per pupil expenditure by school library media centers in America in the 1995-1996 school year was \$6.73 for elementary schools, \$7.30 for middle schools, and \$6.27 for senior high schools.

School libraries have become the heart of the learning experience for students being prepared to enter the Twenty-First Century, the age of almost unlimited information access available at a touch. But many of those children will not be ready for the demands of the third millennium if something is not done to make access to that information equally available to every student in America. As the numbers above show, there is a lot to be done to make that a reality.

That is why I have introduced a bill that will provide the technology and the expertise to all elementary and secondary public schools across the country. H.R. 3008, The Elementary and Secondary School Library Media Resources, Training, and Advanced Technology Assistance Act, which is a companion bill to S. 1262 introduced by Senator Jack Reed, will provide funding for media resources for elementary and secondary school libraries as well as well-trained, certified library specialists for students. Through the establishment of the School Library Access Program, these resources will be available to students during regular school hours, during after-school hours in the evenings, on weekends, and during school breaks. Schools with the greatest need will receive priority funding consideration, as will local educational agencies with a high level of community support, coordinated services, and non-school hour activities for students.

The bill has been endorsed by the American Library Association and retired New York State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Russell Jones, now Chair of the Advisory Committee for CHILDREN'S TIMES Associates.

If the quality of America's future leaders is as important to you as it is to me, please join me in being a cosponsor of the Elementary and Secondary School Library Media Resources, Training, and Advanced Technology Assistance Act. Together, we can help to shape an even stronger, more vibrant nation and maintain America's cutting leadership in the field of information technology. Please contact Beverly Gallimore in my office by Monday, November 15, at 5-6231 to be a cosponsor.

Sincerely yours,

MAJOR R. OWENS,
Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to congratulate the Children's Times and what they are doing in New York City. As I have just illustrated, the problem is not a New York City problem only. The case history of New York City is relevant for numerous local school districts across the country. New York State is a good case study, though, in many ways. We are having a problem that many other States have faced. We have a problem. We are attacking that problem in a new way. Many other States have done the same thing.

The political situation is such that the whales who play with the baby seals do not play with all the seals in the same way. The whales provide to let some seals go free while others bleed and die. In numerous States, one

has drastic unevenness between the funding for certain schools. Some States like New York, the difference may be between \$17,000 or \$18,000 per pupil funding compared to they say \$8,000 in New York City. But in New York City, there are 32 school districts. Within the city, the funding for some school districts is as low as \$3,000 per pupil, which means that some districts in the city are getting far more than they should be receiving.

When one averages it all out, it is going to be \$8,000 to \$9,000 per pupil. That is another problem I am going to deal with in a minute. But in numerous States, rural schools and big city schools face the same problem of not being funded equally with State aid.

In New York City, the problem has been a serious one for a long time. They have many devices that result in some parts of the State getting greater aid per pupil than others. One of the archaic and most devastating devices is the hold-harmless formula where no school district gets less money one year than it got way back 20 years ago.

Each year, the hold-harmless formula says that, no matter what happens, you do not get less. That means that, if the school district gets a reduction in the number of pupil they are going to be receiving as the district, the same amount of money they received when the pupils were much higher, the amount per pupil will go for that reason.

There are many other devices used to produce a result where New York City per-pupil expenditure is about between \$450 to \$500 less than the per-pupil expenditure average in the rest of the State.

A group called the Campaign for Fiscal Equity has brought a new court suit. We have had a few suits over the last 30, 40 years where court actions, litigation has attempted to try to correct this problem of unequal funding throughout the State.

The new one has been launched by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. I want to congratulate the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. They are doing something about the problem. The trouble is that what they are doing, as noble and as necessary as it may be, it is still dealing with how are we going to, in a fairer way, divide up the pie that exists already.

I say the pie that exists already is grossly inadequate. We must address both problems, how to divide it up so that you do have equitable funding. But the biggest problem at this point is also how do we use the resources of this Nation in a more creative way, in a more generous way to deal with the problem of funding for schools.

Campaign for Fiscal Equity is suing the State. The trial is under way now in Federal court. In the past, these battles have been fought out in State court because the State has primary

responsibility for education in New York State, as is the case in most States.

But the campaign for Fiscal Equity is arguing on the basis of a violation of civil rights, unequal protection under the law. This is going to be a landmark case.

What they are also using now that they did not have before is a definition of what an adequate education is. The State has always in the past argued that, even though one school district may get far more money from the State than another get per pupil, the State is only responsible for doing an adequate job; and that the student receiving the lower amount of money is still getting enough money to provide an adequate education.

How does one define adequate education? Well, prompted by the Federal Government, prompted by our legislation, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the States have moved to define adequate education. They have established standards. Now we can hold the State to its own standards.

The State of New York has established some curriculum standards. The State of New York has established testing standards. They have said no student in this State will receive a high school diploma unless they measure up to certain standards. They must pass the test to a certain level. So we have a way to measure what is an adequate education.

The next question is: If this is your definition of an adequate education, what does one need, what kinds of materials, what kinds of facilities, what kinds of teachers do you need in order to meet that standard, in order to provide that adequate education.

You cannot play with it anymore. If you are saying that every student has to pass a math test at a certain level, you cannot continue to provide uncertified math teachers in junior high school and high school who did not major in math. Nobody, no matter how smart they are, is going to be able to adequately teach math in junior high school and high school if they did not really major in math in college.

You cannot pretend you are doing that if you are saying that every student, before they get any kind of diploma must meet certain math standards. You provide the teachers who can produce that.

You cannot say that, if you say that every student must meet certain science standards, display certain kinds of knowledge with respect to science, if you do not provide any laboratories in the high schools, if you do not provide adequate laboratories in the high school to deal with what you are going to have on your test.

As I said before, great strides are being made in the establishment of curriculum standards. Great strides are being made, and a lot of this is being

driven by elected officials, politicians in testing. We want to hold everybody accountable. I am sorry not everybody. We want to hold students accountable. We do not want to hold the school system accountable. We do not want to hold the State accountable for funding. We do not want to hold the city accountable and say that you should not have neglected to spend some part of your \$2 billion surplus on education. We want to hold students accountable. Everybody is focusing on the student and dumping the load, the burden of changing the education standards and system on the students.

New York City recently, and this is an article that appeared in the New York Times yesterday, New York's new curriculum guides set up standards grade by grade. In an effort to help parents hold schools accountable for what children learn or do not learn, the New York City school systems has produced a series of guides to what every child should know from kindergarten through 12th grade. Wonderful.

The guides being distributed to teachers and parents beginning today decree that a fifth grader multiply with speed and accuracy, understand exponents, write a report using three sources of information, and know how to punctuate with quotation marks, commas, and colons.

□ 2230

"A kindergartner should be able to count to 10 and tell a story using letters, drawings, scribbles, and gestures."

I do not know enough to know whether those are reasonable standards or not, but I applaud some kinds of standards.

The school's chancellor, Rudy Crew, said yesterday that the new guides are intended to be so clear and so simple that all parents can understand these guidelines and became partners in their children's education. He said that they would give parents the tools to hold schools responsible for what their children learn and whether they learn it.

Dr. Crew said the pamphlets, one for every grade, are intended to at least implicitly establish a common curriculum. Although he talked about ensuring that children throughout the city are learning the same thing every day, every week, every month, he cannot ensure that; but the guides do set goals like "write daily for extended periods," but not specific content. They do not list books that all children in one grade should read or math problems that they all do. But for the first time there is a consistent framework of student achievement across the whole system regardless of the borough, the district, or the classroom, Dr. Crew said.

"In the last few years," again New York is not alone, and I am reading from a New York Times article which

appeared yesterday, November 2. "In the last few years, many states, including California, New York, and Virginia, have tried to take a stronger hand in dictating curriculum after years of giving schools and districts control. Indeed, Dr. Crew, at a news conference at the Board of Education Headquarters in Brooklyn, said that New York City is actually entering the game rather late, a decade after the movement to tie curriculum and standards together actually began in California and other states.

"The project was also clearly intended to fend off lawsuits, one has already been filed, challenging Dr. Crew's plan to end the automatic promotion of failing students. In New York, Florida, and other states parents have argued that it is unfair and even illegal to hold back children if they have not been clearly told what is expected of them and if the curriculum does not reflect the standards.

"In June, thousands of children in New York City were held back based on test scores alone, setting off a lawsuit by some parents who contended that other factors like attendance and classroom work should be considered. Until now, Dr. Crew said yesterday, curriculum was set by a combination of state and city standards, which he criticized as too vague, as well as standards of the textbook publishers.

"Because this is the first year of our new promotional policy, it is very, very important that parents understand what is acceptable grade level work said Judith Rizzo for instruction."

And on and on it goes.

Everybody is in harmony with establishment of these standards. The questions that are not being considered in this article are, what are we going to do to make certain that you have the teachers, the materials, the libraries, the science laboratories which allow the children to measure up to these standards?

Diane Ravitch, an old colleague of ours here in Washington, has certainly pinpointed one the problems. Diane Ravitch, in this same article, says, "the new goals would only be effective if teachers were trained to use them and tests were designed to measure them.

"The board released guides covering English and math in kindergarten through grade 8 yesterday and will add grades 9 through 12 shortly, the officials said. It also plans to issue social studies and science guides. The officials said the guides will be sent home with students in time for parent-teacher conferences this month and will be available in several languages."

I applaud the work of the Board of Education and Dr. Rudy Crew in coming to grips with the need for curriculum guides. Now we can take the curriculum guides and create another column, a column next to each set of

measurements for the curriculum standards, and lay out what is needed in order to meet that standard.

If you are teaching science, then we can ask the question, does the school have science laboratories? We can ask the question, does the school, if you want children to read at a certain level and be able to write reports, do they have a library, can they get access to books and be able to be stimulated to read more and learn how to write reports? On and on you can go.

Once you have established standards and curriculum, now you certainly have tests which are serious. Because if children do not pass the test, they are not going to make the next grade.

No social promotion is a policy that everybody has jumped on board. It is a great wonderful policy, no social promotion. We will have a problem with no social promotion because one of the things that happens is you increase the over-crowding in schools. The schools that are already overcrowded are going to be even more crowded. Classrooms are going to be even more crowded if you do not have social promotion, and you will have to deal with that problem.

But the other problem is too often the primary determinant as to whether a youngster is promoted or not is the test. And the test, as administered by the New York City Board of Education last spring, as scored by the firm that they hired to do it, the tests had 20,000 youngsters labeled as being not eligible to move on to the next grade because they made mistakes.

In the computation of the test scores they made mistakes. And large numbers of children had to sit through summer schools in hot buildings that had no air conditioning. They had to go through torture of summer schools when they had not failed, they had passed, and the blunders of the bureaucracy had placed them in this situation.

So it is a high-stakes game. These tests determine what happens grade by grade, and these tests are going to determine what happens in the life of the students that have to go through it. If we are going to have these standards, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Incorporated, that has the trial going at Federal courts is on target. If you are going to have these standards, then you have to provide the resources starting with the provision of State aid to the City of New York at the same level per pupil that you have provide to the rest of the State.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the article that appeared in the New York Times, November 2, 1999, "New York's New Curriculum Guides Set Up Standards."

[From the New York Times, Nov. 2, 1999]
NEW YORK'S NEW CURRICULUM GUIDES SET UP STANDARDS, GRADE BY GRADE
(By Anemona Hartocollis)

In an effort to help parents hold schools accountable for what children learn—or don't learn—the New York City school system has produced a series of guides to what every child should know from kindergarten through 12th grade.

The guides, being distributed to teachers and parents beginning today, decree that a fifth grader multiply with speed and accuracy, understand exponents, write a report using three sources of information and know how to punctuate with quotation marks, commas and colons. A kindergartner should be able to count to 10 and tell a story using letters, drawing, scribbles and gestures.

Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew said yesterday that the new guides are intended to be so clear and simple that all parents can understand them and become partners in their children's education. He said that they would give parents a tool to hold schools responsible for what their children learn, and whether they learn it.

Dr. Crew said the pamphlets—one for every grade—are intended to at least implicitly establish a common curriculum. Although he talked about ensuring that children throughout the city are learning the same thing every day, every week, every month, the guides set goals, like "write daily for extended periods," but not specific content. They do not list books that all children in one grade should read or math problems that they all should do.

"For the first time, there is a consistent framework for student achievement across the system, regardless of the borough, the district or the classroom," Dr. Crew said.

In the last few years, many states, including California, New York and Virginia, have tried to take a stronger hand in dictating curriculum, after years of giving schools and districts control. Indeed, Dr. Crew, at a news conference at Board of Education headquarters in Brooklyn, said that New York City is actually entering the game rather late, a decade after the movement to tie curriculum and standards together actually began in California and other states.

The project was also clearly intended to fend off lawsuits—one has already been filed—challenging Dr. Crew's plan to end the automatic promotion of failing students.

In New York, Florida and other states, parents have argued that it is unfair and even illegal to hold back children if they have not been clearly told what is expected of them, and if the curriculum does not reflect the standards. In June, thousands of children were held back based on test scores alone, setting off a lawsuit by some parents who contended that other factors, like attendance and classroom work, should be considered.

Until now, Dr. Crew said yesterday, curriculum was set by a combination of state and city standards, which he criticized as too vague, as well as standards of the textbook publishers.

"Because this is the first year of our new promotional policy, it is very, very, very important that parents understand what is acceptable grade-level work," said Judith Rizzo, deputy chancellor for instruction.

Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers, said the idea was "terrific," but that the union believes it will not be complete until the school system has a "much more thorough and really core curriculum." The union is working on such a curriculum, to be unveiled next school-year.

But some parents said yesterday that the learning standards were too vague to be useful and feared that the pamphlets would be used to blame children and parents if students did not measure up.

Sylvia Wertheimer, the mother of a fifth grader at Public School 41 in Greenwich Village and an assistant district attorney in Manhattan, said the goals articulated in the pamphlets sounded just like the goals that her school already uses in its report cards. She also fretted that teachers and administrators would be defensive if she tried to use such standards to confront them about their shortcomings.

"More gibberish," she said. "I feel like they want the parents to do everything, whatever deficiencies children have. Why don't they just teach them?"

Diane Ravitch, an education historian, said the new goals would only be effective if teachers were trained to use them, and tests were designed to measure them. "Al Shanker always used to say, 'Does it count?'" Dr. Ravitch said, referring to the former president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Despite his vision of 1,200 schools doing the same thing at the same time, Dr. Crew's plan would not be as regimented as, say, the French school system, where if it is 10 a.m., children everywhere are learning "Phèdre" by Racine.

Neither Dr. Crew nor his aides were able to explain how they would enforce the new learning standards in a system as complex as New York City's, where local districts and schools have historically enjoyed a high degree of autonomy.

For each grade, the new guides describe how the standards will be used to determine whether children go on to the next grade or are held back, and warn that no decision will be made based on one factor alone, like a test score.

The board released guides covering English and math in kindergarten through grade 8 yesterday and will add grades 9 through 12 shortly, officials said. It also plans to issue social studies and science guides. Officials said the guides would be sent home with students in time for parent-teacher conferences this month, and will be available in several languages.

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity is a noble attempt, I said, to deal with the fact that the amount of resources available are not being distributed appropriately. A lot of the activity and energy that has been put forth surrounding education in this House of Representatives for the past few years has dealt with the same problem of no new resources; let us argue about how we use what we have.

One of the big issues that was on the floor of this House a few weeks ago related to the passage of the title I funding out of the committee that I serve on was, shall we take what exists already, title I funding, nearly \$8 billion for the whole Nation, shall we take that and change the original target.

The original target for that funding under the original law was that the poorest children in America needed the most help. The school districts where the poorest children resided were not capable of giving the kind of help that they should give, and the Federal Government intervened, just as the Federal Government intervened before in

school lunch programs to make sure that every child gets nutritional care in terms of food, and a number of other ways the Federal Government has over the years intervened.

By the way, it even intervenes in the case of highways. We have a national highway system which is fantastic because the Federal Government intervened to provide a highway system. So when we have had needs, the Federal Government has intervened.

A lot of people say, well, there is nothing in the Constitution that makes the Federal Government responsible for education. There is also nothing in the Constitution that makes the Federal Government responsible for railroads, but we built the transcontinental railroad. There is nothing that says the Federal Government is responsible for highways, and yet we spent billions of dollars for a highway system. And recently we authorized \$218 billion over a 6-year period to continue to build and refine our highway system.

So the Federal Government, under Lyndon Johnson, decided to intervene and provide education for those schools that need it most. Title I funding is for the poorest schools and the poorest youngsters. The formula for title I is driven by poverty. The measurement for poverty is the number of youngsters who qualify for free school lunches provided by the Federal Government.

We have had situations where the intent of the law, the target population, has been circumvented. Too many districts that did not have poor children were going to receive title I funds, or only had only had a tiny amount. We dealt with that when the law was reauthorized 5 years ago, tightened it up.

But then we had a situation where they wanted to define which schools are eligible to have schoolwide programs. And when you determine who is eligible to have a schoolwide program instead of focusing on individual children, we had a figure of the number of percentage of children who are poor as a factor to decide whether or not they could have a schoolwide program.

If you had 75 percent of the children who were poor, then we could have a schoolwide program that did not have to focus on individual children, but the whole school could benefit from the dollars that the title I program provided.

It started out at 75 percent. Then it was reduced to 50 percent. One of the battles we had a few weeks ago on the floor was the fact that the present majority, Republican majority, decided they wanted to reduce that further to 40 percent. One of the members on the Committee on Education, Republican majority member, also even wanted to go to 25 percent.

Well, if a school qualifies with only 25 percent poverty, you could see how

you then have to cover more schools. And many of those schools, with only 25 percent of the children being poor, would absorb dollars and help fewer poor children. So you could describe it accurately as the Robin-Hood-in-reverse approach. Instead of appropriating more money if you want to reach more children, we were going to take money from the poorer children and give it to the children who were better off and the schools that were better off, circumventing and undercutting the intent of the law.

Well, that is going forward. On the floor of this House there was an amendment offered to keep it at 50 percent, where it is now, and that amendment lost. So the legislation that went to the other body contains in it the 40 percent figure. And probably if the Republican majority had their way, they would eliminate any percentage, because they came on the floor shortly after the title I bill was passed with another bill called the Straight A's act.

The Straight A's act says, let us give all money related to education to the governors and the States and let the governors decide how to spend the money, and they probably certainly will not use any 50 percent formula.

The history of the States is that they operate in a way which satisfies the most powerful elements in the State, and poor people are seldom the most powerful elements in the State political arena.

Right now you have large numbers of States that have surplus funds for welfare. They are not providing the funds that they should for day-care and for other kinds of services to welfare recipients, even though it is Federal money. They have saved it in various ways, and they are supposed to provide that money to help train and provide jobs for welfare recipients and day-care services.

New York State is a place where there is a tremendous need, large waiting list for day-care services. There is a surplus now, and the governor and the State have moved so slowly, until you have a surplus but large numbers of unserved families who want day-care and need day-care and cannot get it.

The likelihood is that, the more discretion you give to the State, the fewer poor people would get service. History has demonstrated that the States will not take care of the poor. The Robin Hood approach is to not provide more money but to spread it out.

We have a situation in New York City where the number of poor children drive the formula, determine the amount of money that comes into New York City. New York City is composed of five counties; and in the distribution of money in the counties, we found that the children in some counties were getting far more of the title I funds than others. And we corrected that 5 years ago by changing the for-

mula to make it similar to the formula that applies to the rest of the Nation.

□ 2245

The formula says that money must come to New York City by county, so that the poorest county, the county with the largest number of poor children, Brooklyn, found that it was getting far less money than it should get if you use the straight formula as was used in the rest of the Nation. So we had a battle and we had forces lined up to challenge that and try to fight again for the pile, the limited pile, how to divide that was going to become a fight. I hope that that fight does not materialize.

I would like to join all my colleagues in New York State, certainly from New York City and take a look at how we can deal with the fact that the city as a whole and the State as a whole does not get the kind of funding from education that it should be receiving per student. We should have a unified effort to try to bring in more funds instead of dividing up the pile. The Robin Hood approach at the local level is no more desirable than the Robin Hood approach at the Federal level. We do not want to have title I formulas distorted. We do not want to have favoritism in the bureaucracy determining that children who are poor in one part of the city will get far more than they deserve while other children are robbed of their fair share of title I funding. We want to deal with that. There are many positive solutions that we can go forward with while we are waiting for reelection by the levels of government that have real power. The Federal Government, State government, governors should stop playing games. I go back to the analogy of the bleeding baby seal. We should stop tossing the bleeding baby seal about and having fun with it, pretending we are going to do something about education while the bleeding baby seal dies. We should do big things to deal with a monumental problem. Education is a monumental problem. It requires a big solution, a big approach.

I understand there are some candidates running for President who say that it is the duty of the Federal Government to deal with big problems with big solutions. The Marshall plan is one example I told you. The Transcontinental Railroad, the Morrill Act which established land grant colleges, the GI bill which provided education for all GIs after World War II. We have numerous examples of how we have dealt with big problems with big solutions.

I want to close by reading a letter I sent to the President to appeal to him to offer leadership in this area. I think that as I have said many times, there are many components of the problem of education reform, many components. They are all important. But the kingpin component is what are you going to

do about facilities, what are you going to do about the infrastructure, how are you going to send a message to all the students that we really care about public education by letting them see the highly visible changes that we can make to improve education? I wrote this letter to President Clinton on October 13, and I want to read parts of it. First I am going to read a part which does not relate to education but relates to my great appreciation of President Clinton because I think we need to re-establish a perspective on the man we are dealing with. I do not agree with all the people who seem to say that he has no legacy. I think he has a legacy already, but I would like to see the legacy improved upon.

“Dear President Clinton:

“Let me begin with an expression of my deeply felt admiration of your leadership in a period cluttered with many more political perils than most citizens have realized. Your leadership has been the vital defense against an unprecedented right wing assault on the unique institutions and programs which extend the benefits of our democracy down to the ordinary men and women of our Nation. When all others were traumatized by the Republican blitzkrieg, your maneuvers held their forces in check. Despite the petty problems highlighted by the partisan impeachment effort, Mr. President, you have already established firmly an impressive legacy. For many millions, you already have the unwavering loyalty and heartfelt appreciation that you deserve. You have preserved the conscience of the country. That is a legacy that historians will eventually be compelled to acknowledge.

“But, Mr. President, there is one more vital request we must make on your unique ability to fuse the practical with the idealistic. Now is the time for you to crystallize, solidify, concretize your legacy as the Education President with actions that will catapult our Nation forward. I strongly advise, urge and plead, Mr. President, that you launch an omnibus, cyber-civilization education program to guarantee the brainpower and leadership needed for our present and for the expanding future digitalized economy and high-tech world.

“At the heart of such a comprehensive initiative, we must set the all-important revitalization of the physical infrastructure of America’s schools. These necessary brick and mortar creations will long endure not only as highly visible symbols of your overwhelming commitment to education but they will serve also as practical vehicles for the delivery of the kind of high-tech education required in the 21st century. To the working families who depend on public schools, it would be a resounding message that a vital segment of our Nation’s children have not been abandoned.

“The message will also state that we are willing to make an overwhelming investment in a workforce which will help to guarantee the viability of Social Security. We are willing to make an investment in a massive student pool that provides the military with the recruits needed to operate a high-tech defense system. We are willing to make an overwhelming investment in a massive body that can produce the full range of geniuses, scientists, engineers, administrators, managers, technicians, mechanics, et cetera, necessary to launch and maintain a cyber-civilization.

“In other words, Mr. President, it is of vital importance that you carry your own movement to a highly visible apex. Please consider the fact that it is not by accident that the most brilliant American President, Thomas Jefferson, chose a message for his tombstone which only noted that he was the founder of the University of Virginia. If there had been no first model State university established by Jefferson, there would have later been no Morrill Act to establish land grant colleges in every State.

“The America of the year 2000 requires from you, Mr. President, a comparable pioneering act to guarantee its brainpower leadership in the world.”

Mr. Speaker, I submit the entirety of this letter for the RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 13, 1999.

HON. WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
President of the United States,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON: Let me begin with an expression of my deeply felt admiration of your leadership in a period cluttered with many more political perils than most citizens have realized. Your leadership has been the vital defense against an unprecedented right wing assault on the unique institutions and programs which extend the benefits of our democracy down to the ordinary men and women of our nation. When all others were traumatized by Newt Gingrich’s blitzkrieg your maneuvers held their forces in check. Despite the petty problems highlighted by the partisan impeachment, Mr. President, you have already established an impressive legacy. From many millions you already have the unwavering loyalty and heartfelt appreciation that you deserve. You have preserved the conscience of the country. That is a legacy that historians will eventually be compelled to acknowledge.

But, Mr. President, there is one more vital request we must make on your unique ability to fuse the practical with the idealistic. Now is the time for you to crystallize, solidify, concretize your legacy as the Education President with actions that will catapult our nation forward. I strongly advise, urge and plead that you launch an Omnibus CYBER-CIVILIZATION Education program to guarantee the brainpower and leadership needed for our present and expanding future digitalized economy and hi-tech world.

At the heart of such a comprehensive initiative we must set the all important revitalization of the physical infrastructure of America’s schools. These necessary brick and mortar creations will long endure not

only as highly visible symbols of your overwhelming commitment to education; they will also serve as practical vehicles for the delivery of the kind of hi-tech education required in the 21st Century. To the working families who depend on public schools it would be a resounding message that a vital segment of our nation’s children have not been abandoned.

The message will also state that we are willing to make an overwhelming investment: in a workforce which will help to guarantee the viability of Social Security; in a massive student pool that provides the military with the recruits able to operate a high-tech defense system; in a massive body that can produce the full range of geniuses, scientists, engineers, administrators, managers, technicians, mechanics, etc. necessary to launch and maintain a global Cyber-Civilization.

All of the most brilliant and visionary education achievements of your administration may be merged and focused through these vital physical edifices: The NET-Day movement for the volunteer wiring of schools; The Technology Literacy Legislation; the Community Technology Centers; the Distance Learning pilot projects; and the widely celebrated and appreciated E-Rate for telecommunications. The lifting of standards, the improvement in school curriculums and the support for smaller class sizes are also initiatives that require the additional classrooms and expanded libraries and laboratories that school modernization will bring.

In other words, Mr. President, it is of vital importance that you carry your own movement to an ultimate highly visible apex. Please consider the fact that it is not by accident that the most brilliant American President, Thomas Jefferson, chose a message for his tombstone which only noted that he was the founder of the University of Virginia. If there had been no first model state university established by Jefferson, there would have later been no Morrill Act to establish land-grant colleges in every state.

The America of the Year 2000 requires from you a comparable pioneering act to guarantee its brainpower leadership in the world. You have the opportunity to bequeath a new system for public education. Highly developed human resources are clearly the key to power and prosperity in the century to come. To minimize the crippling waste of human potential there must be a broad sweeping public school system forever striving toward education excellence. The kingpin for the education improvement effort, the temples for the promotion of excellence are our school buildings.

Mr. President, an adequate and landmark modernization and construction program requires that we move beyond HR 1660, the Rangel Ways and Means payment of the interest on school bonds (3.7 billion over a five year period). For New York and numerous other states which require that voters approve all borrowing for school construction, this legislation will provide zero funding. I strongly urge that you revamp your position and support HR 3071, my bill which provides direct funding at a level commensurate with the magnitude of the problem of school wiring, security, safety, modernization and construction (110 Billion dollars over a ten year period).

On a trip to New York more than a year ago, as your guest aboard Air Force One, I had the privilege of chatting with you about education issues and problems. When you asked my opinion of the growing endorsement of vouchers among African American

parents, I replied that our public school reforms were moving too slowly and sometimes even lurching backwards with the results that large numbers of parents have lost hope.

Mr. President, the trip was much too short and when we ended our brief exchange you invited me to forward a more thorough statement of views and vision on the education challenge. Although I have had the pleasure of speaking to you in group meetings since that discussion, I have not until now attempted to offer a thorough summary of my position on the need for an overwhelming campaign to greatly improve public education in America. A massive school construction initiative must be placed at the core of this campaign for a CYBER-CIVILIZATION Education Program.

Sincerely Yours,

MAJOR R. OWENS,
Member of Congress.

CONVICTED MURDERER SEEKS EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, a couple of days ago I was moved by an article that I read about an individual by the name of Leonard Peltier. Mr. Peltier is currently in the penitentiary, Federal penitentiary, for the assassination of two FBI agents. He has been in prison for 25 years.

I need to be fair to all of my colleagues here and give you some disclosures. First of all, I used to be a police officer. As a result of being a police officer, over the years and especially during the time of my tenure as a police officer, I developed a very close relationship with agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Over the years, I have also developed a great deal of respect for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. But I must also tell my colleagues that over these years I have also had an opportunity to carefully scrutinize the Federal Bureau of Investigation, because, you see, I think it is a very important agency for our country. But I think the integrity of the agency is also very, very important.

In the past, I have been very critical of the Federal Bureau of Investigation when they messed up. I can give you an excellent example, Ruby Ridge. The agents involved at Ruby Ridge in my opinion should have been immediately terminated. What happened at Ruby Ridge I will not repeat this evening but I will tell you that the command officer from the Federal Bureau of Investigation was not terminated, in fact the command officer was put on a paid leave of absence for 1 or 2 years and retired and received in my opinion no punishment at all.

I am also looking with a very careful eye at the Federal Bureau of Investigation's role at the Waco, Texas goof-up. That, too, is a very tragic situation in

the history of our country, and I think unfortunately, there will be revealed within the report about the incident at Waco, Texas, that the Federal Bureau of Investigation misstated their role, understated their contribution, so to speak, or their involvement in the situation at Waco, Texas.

So I am not necessarily in lockstep with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. But I can tell you, when I look at all of the law enforcement agencies I have seen over the years, and as a former law enforcement officer, I have had the opportunity to be involved with many of them, at the very highest, when you look at the picture as an average, the Federal Bureau of Investigation comes out at the very top. And I think it is incumbent, Mr. Speaker, colleagues, of every one of us when we see an attack launched against the Federal Bureau of Investigation that is launched without justification, or when we see an action being taken against the Federal Bureau of Investigation without justification, we have a commitment to step forward and say something about it.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, I saw an article the other day about this individual. This gentleman's name is Leonard Peltier. I saw today in fact an article in the USA Today. The article is Indians, FBI Face Off in Washington. First of all, I am not sure why the author of the USA Today article uses the word Indians in a broad or general descriptive form. In my particular district, which is the Third Congressional District of the State of Colorado, we have the Indian tribal lands, and I have yet to hear from any of the leaders of those Indian tribes, of which I work with very closely on projects such as the Animus LaPlata, the kind of appeal that may be suggested by all Indians as a result of this particular article. It is my opinion that the Native American involvement in this case is limited. And it is also my opinion that if you sit down with the average Native American in this country and you look at the facts of this case, that there will be very few Native Americans who would step forward and say that this particular convict is a political prisoner.

I think this is a stage being set by the defense attorneys for this convict. Actually using the word convict is somewhat gentle. He is not a convict, he is a murderer, and he is a cold-blooded murderer. He killed two FBI agents in cold blood. Now, 25 years ago, as one defense attorney would suggest, is something that enough time has passed by that perhaps he has served his time for this violent and horrible crime. I will quote exactly from the USA Today.

Peltier, that is the convict, the murderer that I am talking about, has been in prison as long as anyone responsible for similar crimes should be in, attor-

ney Carl Nadler says. Can you believe this? Let me repeat what this defense attorney says. Peltier has been in prison as long as anyone responsible for similar crimes should be in prison. What he is suggesting is that 25 years is enough time for somebody to serve that goes out and in cold blood assassinates two officers of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Well, I stand here tonight, colleagues, in deep disagreement with this defense attorney. And I urge that all of my colleagues on the floor take time to review what is going on in the month of November in regard to this case. Now, why have I suggested the month of November? Well, apparently this murderer's defense team has put together a little political show and tell, and they call November the month of publicity or the month to get reprieve for this convicted murderer. What I mean by that, it is this month that they are submitting papers to the President of the United States requesting that clemency be granted to Leonard Peltier, a convicted murderer.

A couple of days ago, I read an open letter. This open letter is a joint letter authored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents Association located in New Rochelle, New York and the Society of Former Special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation located in Quantico, Virginia. The above organizations, which are professional, nongovernmental associations, represent over 20,000 active duty and former FBI agents. I was so moved by this letter that I ask my colleagues to follow me closely this evening as I read verbatim that open letter to the American people.

As many of you know, I do not often read from notes when I speak from this podium, but I am going to be very careful this evening that I read this letter verbatim, because I think it is important that every one of us in this room have a clear understanding of the facts of this case before Peltier's defense attorney arrives here in Washington, D.C., sets up this political show and tell, and tries to convince through propaganda that for some reason this convicted murderer deserves clemency from the President of the United States.

We should not take this lightly. We had a very difficult situation about 1 month ago when clemency was given to the Puerto Rican terrorists.

□ 2300

As I pointed out from this House floor, you can look right up in the roof of this fine room and you can see the bullet hole, or I could walk over here to this desk drawer and show you the bullet holes through that desk from the Puerto Rican terrorists who entered this floor many years ago firing weapons.

Well, this case is somewhat similar, except in this case we know, we have