

Let us wish them the very best in all of their future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
SCHOOLYARD SAFETY ACT

HON. JENNIFER DUNN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, in May 1998, Kip Kinkel of Hillsborough, Oregon showed up on his school grounds with a firearm, was expelled and sent home. He was not detained for a psychological evaluation or placed in custody to protect his innocent classmates. The following day he showed up at school again with a gun, shot several students, and returned home where he killed his parents. Three years ago, a Moses Lake, Washington middle school student brought a gun to school and killed two students and a teacher. Weeks ago, a student showed up at Stanwood High School in Washington with a loaded weapon, where fortunately there were no injuries to fellow students.

These tragic stories demonstrate the need for our schools and communities to have in place a policy to protect our children from gun violence in our schools. Expelling youths once they have brought a gun onto school grounds is not enough, as the tragic story of Kip Kinkel illustrates. Who knows how the outcome might have been different had Kip been detained in protective custody or given a psychological evaluation to determine whether he was indeed a threat to the community? Our laws are very clear with respect to possession of firearms. It is a crime under both State and Federal laws to have firearms on school grounds. However we have failed to address the underlying issue—many of our youths have serious problems and are a danger to themselves and others. When an adolescent disobeys the law or threatens the safety of other students, it is our responsibility to help that child before he or she commits any further crimes and to minimize risks to the community. These youths must be detained and their crime must be taken seriously.

For this reason, Representative PETER DEFAZIO and I are reintroducing the Schoolyard Safety Act, our legislation from last year encouraging states to pass measures holding juveniles for at least 24 hours if they bring guns onto school grounds. Rather than create further burdensome regulations or mandates, we leave the authority and accountability in the hands of those closest to the situation, while providing the funding necessary for states to implement these protective programs. This funding could help pay for holding centers, psychological evaluations, or other preventative measures decided on by those closest to the danger—teachers and school officials whose primary responsibility is educating our children, and who have been forced to take on the role of providing for their physical safety instead.

The people of Springfield, Oregon know all too well how easily crime can break the heart of a community. Every man, woman, and child in that town had the right to expect to live on

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

a safe street and send their children to safe schools. Children who learn in fear are learning the wrong lessons. It is our responsibility to do whatever we can to prevent a horrible tragedy like this from happening again.

WELLTON-MOHAWK PROJECT
TRANSFER

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to transfer title to the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District in Yuma, Arizona from the Federal Government to the project beneficiaries. It pleases me to say that I am supported in this effort by my Arizona colleagues, Congressmen STUMP, KOLBE, and HAYWORTH and that Arizona Senator JON KYL has introduced identical legislation in the other body.

Last Congress, similar legislation was passed by the Senate, but it failed to receive the consideration of this chamber, Senator KYL and I continued our work with representatives of the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District and the Bureau of Reclamation, and this bill is a product of that effort. It is in accordance with the administration's policy framework for such title transfers.

I urge my colleagues on the House Resources Committee to act favorably on this measure early on in this first session, so we can move forward with the project transfer.

THE CHILD CARE WORKER
INCENTIVE ACT OF 1999

HON. ROBERT A. WEYGAND

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Child Care Worker Incentive Act, which will create educational opportunities for those who are for our youngest children—our child care workers.

Quality and affordable child care is extremely important for the healthy development of all children. An increasing amount of research confirms that responsive child care is essential to the positive development of the brain. In fact, recent studies by the University of Chicago show that a child's intelligence develops equally as much during the first four years of his or her life as it does between the ages of four and eighteen.

In order to ensure quality in child care we need dedicated and well-educated child care workers. Unfortunately, the field has historically had a significant problem attracting and retaining these quality workers. Nationally, child care teachers earn an average of \$6.89 per hour or \$12,058 per year, only 18 percent of child care centers offer fully paid health coverage for teaching staff and one-third of all child care teachers leave their centers each year.

I was honored to join President Clinton, Vice President GORE and First Lady Hillary Clinton

February 24, 1999

at the White House Conference on Child Care in October of 1997. At the conference, we discussed many innovative approaches to improving quality child care for the children of our country. One of the programs highlighted at the conference was the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Project in North Carolina.

Shortly thereafter, I visited Kidworks, a child care center in North Carolina where several child care workers have been involved in the T.E.A.C.H. Project. I can attest to the success of this program in raising the education levels of child care workers in North Carolina and, by doing so, has improved the quality of child care for countless children in that state. The T.E.A.C.H. Project provides scholarships to child care workers in return for a commitment from the teacher that they will remain in the child care field for a certain amount of time. Scholarship costs are based on a partnership and are shared by the T.E.A.C.H. Project, the child care center and the teacher. Because of the increased education, the children in the care of T.E.A.C.H. Project participants receive better quality child care. If they complete their educational goal, participants receive a salary increase, through either a raise or bonus.

There have been great results with this program. Over 2,200 child care providers have completed their state's Early Childhood Education Credential on a scholarship from the T.E.A.C.H. Project which translates into a better educated workforce. Participants in the associate's degree program have received, on average, a 30% increase in compensation at the end of the four years of participation as a T.E.A.C.H. associate's degree scholarship, which means a better paid workforce. In addition, participants in the associate's degree program have less than a 10% turnover rate per year, as opposed to the statewide turnover rate of 42%. Of those participants in the bachelor's degree program, there has been a 0% turnover rate. This low rate means less tumultuous adjustment for children and thus, better quality child care. All indicators point that the T.E.A.C.H. Project has made a difference to increasing the educational levels of child care workers, increasing their pay and lowering turbulent turnover rates.

Last year, I visited a day care center in Rhode Island where I met with Judy Victor. Judy is a day care provider who expressed to me her concerns with the rapid turnover among her employees. She said, "You must be able to afford good people. If you get someone good, the low pay drives them out."

After hearing Judy's thoughts and after viewing the success of the T.E.A.C.H. Project, I have introduced the Child Care Worker Incentive Act. This legislation would create similar scholarship programs throughout the nation. These child care scholarships will provide tuition assistance to child care workers who have a demonstrated commitment to children and a career in child care. The legislation provides great flexibility to states to design programs which most appropriately fit the needs of the children in their state.

Among other provisions, the legislation requires each state's scholarship program to have the following components.