The program educates and empowers secondary school students in Los Angeles county to be an active part of the solution to minimize use of landfill space and understand their role in reducing pollutants from entering our waterways by proper disposal methods. Through a hands-on approach, students learn that the local environment is part of their everyday life, and that everyday decisions, choices and actions make a difference to the health of our environment.

TreePeople, is one of Los Angeles’ oldest and most successful locally based nonprofit environmental education group. Since 1996, it has worked under the direction of the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Environmental Programs Division to create Generation Earth, the state’s most effective secondary school environmental education program.

Generation Earth is a highly successful program with measurable milestones, asked by researchers reviewed by educational experts. The classroom curriculum was designed to fit any academic discipline. It meets the curriculum objectives of language arts classes, math, science, social studies and history.

By providing opportunities for young people to improve their quality of life and challenge them as they apply lessons learned in school, Generation Earth is an important catalyst for the people of Los Angeles. Thanks to Generation Earth, Los Angeles County teenagers are beginning to learn that they can make a positive difference in their surroundings. I hope my colleagues will join me in commending Generation Earth for its leadership in developing a successful comprehensive approach to environmental education.

RECOGNIZING THE PARTICIPATION OF MS. JOANNA MANUEL IN THE VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE CONGRESSIONAL TEEN CONFERENCE

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD
OF GUAM
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, last month, 342 teenagers from throughout the country came to Capitol Hill to attended the Voices Against Violence Conference regarding youth violence. During the two days, the teenagers had unique opportunities to express their views on youth violence to Members, learn from national law enforcement and youth programming experts, and participate in workshops covering a variety of issues including diversity training, peer mediation, and hate crime prevention strategies. Supporting agencies and organizations included the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Crime Prevention Council, the American Mental Health Association, MTV, and the Children’s Defense Fund.

I felt it was important for a young person from Guam to participate in this conference to ensure that the diversity of perspectives on youth violence included teens from the furthest American jurisdiction. I was proud that Ms. Joanna Manuel, a sophomore attending Simon Sanchez High School, was Guam’s representative to the conference. During her visit, Joanna gained practical knowledge about violence prevention initiatives and helped to explore practical steps needed and solutions to the problems of youth violence which continues to impact our society. Joanna proved to be a valuable contributor and an able spokesperson for Guam’s youth.

The two day conference resulted in the introduction of House Resolution 357, which represents the views of the 342 conference participants and provides their collective views of the causes and solutions to youth violence. The measure was introduced by Democratic Leader RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, myself, and 94 other co-sponsors. I am hopeful that Joanna will continue to be involved in the issue of youth violence and help raise community awareness and activity. It is evident from the outcome of the Voices Against Violence conference, that we can look to America’s youth for solutions and guidance to understand why violence happens and what we can do to avert it.

For the record, I am submitting an essay written by Ms. Joanna Manuel giving her views on the causes of violence among teenagers.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AMONG TEENAGERS TODAY?

As anyone who listens to the radio, watches television, or reads the newspaper knows, violence has become a cause for nationwide and worldwide concern. Of particular concern is the alarming increase in violence among children and youth. The rates of youth-initiated violent crimes are rising dramatically, as are the numbers of young victims. Many teens are pressured into doing things they don’t want to do. One of the hardest parts of growing up, is the same today as it has been for years, peer pressure. It is a part of every teenager’s junior and high school years. Some peer pressure is actually quite good in working towards developing a teen’s sense of right and wrong. Negative peer pressure, the kind we most commonly associate with the concept, can be devastatingly corruptive. Positive and negative pressure can total different things. Positive pressure includes encouragement to use drugs, to smoke, or other things that harm. Positive pressure has many benefits such as helping teenagers develop a sense of morality. Part of being a teen involves learning to make decisions. One of the things that affects decision-making is pressure from friends. Teens should make decisions based on their own morals and values. Daily, teens are persuaded to participate in activities that statistics report may harm their well-being. These activities include: smoking, drinking, using drugs, having premarital sex, and even cheating on schoolwork. Many teens are pressured into taking drugs and smoking by “friends.” Teens today need to learn to make their own decisions. They can say no to drugs, smoking, and other things they know can harm them. Our communities and schools have to work together to help prevent negative peer pressure among teenagers. There are many other things that cause violence among teens today. Troubled teens are gradually increasing these days and may be caused by problems stemming from home. Counseling is a great way to find the problem and solve it before other problems arise. While I was in middle school, we had a peer counseling system. Students who needed help or just needed someone to talk to would go to the counselor’s office and fellow students would talk and lend a helping hand. It was a great system and it worked. I think that the government should set aside some money to establish and maintain this type of system in every school in the nation and maybe even worldwide. We all have to work together to make a brighter future for all of us and the generations to come.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

November 19, 1999

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS SLIPPING IN HONG KONG

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am greatly concerned over the growing reports from Hong Kong that freedom of the press is increasingly at risk under Chinese rule. When Hong Kong was turned over to China in July of 1997, it was expected to become one county but remain two systems. Unfortunately, after less than two and a half years, we are already seeing example after example of Beijing’s power and its communist values being exhibited throughout Hong Kong and imposed on the citizenry.

The most recent example of this clampdown was the abrupt reassignment of the well-regarded, outspoken director of the government owned Radio/Television Hong Kong, Cheung Man-ye’s last month. Ms. Cheung was named economic and trade representative to Japan, a post equivalent to that of ambassador. This action took place just days after she drew a rare public rebuke from the Chinese Deputy Prime Minister, Qian Qichen. Recently, the station had also aired a senior Taiwanese official seeking to explain President Lee Teng-hui’s shift in policy toward China.

The Hong Kong government is becoming increasingly critical of all local media. Statements from the chief of executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee-hwa such as “while is freedom of speech is important, it is also important for government policies to be positively presented,” show the direction in which freedom of the press is headed.

This “reassignment” of a qualified journalist is a scary first step. The international community must stand up and take notice when the slipping away of a vital freedom begins. The freedom of the press is the cornerstone of a strong democracy. If Hong Kong loses its free press, I have great fear for what is next.

THE TRUE GOAL OF EDUCATION

HON. JAMES M. TALENT
OF MISSOURI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I insert the following eloquent speech entitled “The True Goal of Education” into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.
The True Goal of Education

By Gov. George W. Bush

It is a pleasure to be here, and to join in marking the Chamber of Commerce Bi-centennial Celebration Month. New Hampshire is a state of small businesses. Many of them here in the north country are prospering, and this organization has played an important part. I am honored by your invitation.

I am an optimist, I believe that the next century will be an incredible prosperity—if we can create an environment where entrepreneurs like you can dream and flourish. A prosperity sustained by low taxes, undistorted regulation, energized by new technologies, expanded by free trade. A prosperity beyond all our expectations, but within our grasp.

But this hope, in the long run, depends directly on the education of our children—on young men and women with the skills and character to succeed. So for the past few months, I have focused on the problems and promise of our public schools.

In September, I talked about disadvantaged children left behind by failed schools. The diminishment of our current system is sad and serious—the soft bigotry of low expectations. Schools that do not teach and will not change must have some final point of accountability of truth. If their federal funds, intended to help the poorest children, are divided up and given to parents—for tutoring or a charter school or some other help.

Last month, I talked about raising the academic ambitions of every public school in America—creating a culture of achievement. My plan has three features. It reduces the federal bureaucracy, and gives states unprecedented freedom in spending federal education dollars. In return for this flexibility, each state must adopt a system of real accountability and high standards. Students must be tested on the basics of reading and math each year—and those results posted, by school, on the Internet. This will give parents the information to know if education is actually taking place—and the leverage to demand reform.

My education goals are bound by a thread of principle. The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools. It must be strong enough to require school districts more authority and freedom. And it must be strong enough to require proven performance in return. The federal role in education is to foster excellence and challenge failure with charters and choice. The federal role in education is not to serve the children. It is to serve the children.

Yet this is only part of an agenda. Yes, we want our children to be smart and successful. But even more, we want them to be good and kind and decent. Yes, our children must learn how to make a living. But even more, they must learn how to live, and what to love. "Intelligence is not enough," said Martin Luther King, Jr. "Intelligence plus character—that is our goal of education."

So, today, here in New Hampshire, I want to make the case for moral education. Teaching is more than training, and learning is more than literacy. Our children must be able to make the case for moral education. "Whatever,"

Academics like Professor Robert Simon report seeing many students—nice, well-intentioned young men and women—who refuse to take on the values of the adult worlds seriously when adults take those values seriously. And this goal sets an agenda for our nation.

First, we must do everything in our power to ensure the safety of our children. When children and teenagers go to school afraid of being bullied, or beaten, or worse, it is the ultimate betrayal of adult responsibility. It communicates the victory of moral chaos.

In an American school year there are more than 4,000 rapes or cases of sexual battery; 7,000 robberies; and 11,000 physical attacks involving a weapon. And these are overall numbers. For children attending inner-city schools, the likelihood of being a victim of violence is roughly five times greater than elsewhere. It is a sign of the times that the same security company used by the U.S. Mint and the FBI has now branched out into high-school security.

Surveying this scene, it is easy to forget that there is actually a federal program designed to confront school violence. It's called the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. The program spends about $600 million dollars a year, assisting 97 percent of our nation's school districts.

What's missing from the program is accountability. Nobody really knows how the money is spent, much less whether it is doing any good. One reason that federal money had gone to pay for everything from motivational speakers to clowns
to school puppet shows to junkets for school administrators.

As president, I will propose major changes in this program. Every school getting this funding will report their results—measured in student results—will be evaluated. If schools do not meet their targets, their funding will be cut.

In the past, -tenth educational.” And many schools, now referred to as “schools of last resort,” are valuing discipline over academic achievement. The federal government should not be an authority, after-school programs.

Schools must never impose religion—but they must not oppose religion either. And the federal government should not be an enemy of voluntary expressions of faith by students.

Religious groups have a right to meet before and after school. Students have a right to wear Stars of David and crosses, and discuss religion with other willing students. Students have a right to express religious ideas in art and homework.

Public schools that forbid these forms of religious expression are confused. But more than that, they are rejecting some of the best and finest influences on young lives. It is noble when a young mind finds meaning in the Talmud or Koran. It is noble when a young mind finds meaning in the Bible.

Character education is a theme throughout our public schools the virtues of discipline. At St. Bonaventure Elementary School in Maryland, children take a pledge each morning to be “responsible, responsible and ready to learn.” Character education is a theme throughout the curriculum—in writing, social studies, and reading. And discipline referrals were down by 70 percent in one year. At Marion Intermediate school in South Carolina, virtues are taught first by the figures and characters in literature.

Consideration is encouraged, good manners are expected, and discipline referrals are down by half in one year.

The federal government now spends $8 million on promoting character education efforts. My administration will triple that funding—money for states to train teachers and incorporate character lessons into daily coursework.

We will require federal youth and juvenile justice programs to incorporate an element of character building.

Our government must get its priorities straight when it comes to the character of our children. Right now, the Department of Health and Human Services spends far more on teen contraception than it does on teen abstinence. It takes the jaded view that children are nothing more than the sum of their drives, with no higher goal than hanging out and hooking up. We owe them better than this—and they are better than this. They ask for bread, and we give them a stone.

Abstinence programs show real promise—exactly because more and more teenagers understand that true love waits. My administration will elevate abstinence education from an afterthought to an urgent goal. We should spend at least as much each year on promoting the conscience of our children as we do on preventing desire with contraception.

As well, we will encourage and expand the role of charities in after-school programs. Everyone agrees there is a problem in these years. Of some 3,900 violations reported between 1997 and 1998, only 13 were prosecuted. It is easy to propose laws. Sometimes it is easy to pass laws. But the measure of our seriousness is enforcing the law. And the safety of our children merits more than lip service.

That hope, of course, is not created by an Executive Order or an Act of Congress. I strongly believe our schools should reinforce good character. I know that our laws will always reflect a moral vision. But there are limits to law, set at the boundaries of the heart. It has been said: “Men can make good laws, but laws can not make men good.”

Yet a president has a broader influence and a deeper legacy than the programs he proposes. The measure of our nation’s greatness has never been affluence or influence—rising stock market, advancing technology. It has always been found in citizens of character and compassion. And so many of our problems as a nation—from drugs, to deadly diseases, to crime—are not the result of chance, but of choice. They will only be solved by a transformation of the heart and will. This is why a hopeful and decent future is found in hope and decent children.

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