

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, later today Members will have an opportunity to vote on the Miller-Kildee amendment to the ed flex bill which will provide for stronger accountability on behalf of the States. We will be voting later this year to send the States \$50 billion additional in title I moneys. We have sent them \$120 billion over the last decade, and the results at best are mixed. In some cases they are shameful. We need to have accountability. The Miller-Kildee amendment simply does what George W. Bush did in Texas. He told the Federal Government in exchange for flexibility, I am willing to set the following standards, all children in Texas or 90 percent of the children in Texas will pass the State exam in 5 years, 90 percent of the African Americans, 90 percent of the Hispanics and 90 percent of the poor children. I do not know what the governor of my State could say and I do not know what the governor of Louisiana or New York could say, but they ought to be able to tell us what their goals for achievement are, how they will measure them. No longer should the Federal Government continue to enable lax accountability for our children's education.

SUPPORT THE ED FLEX BILL

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say that the White House talks a great game when it comes to education reform, but it turns out there is more going on behind the scenes that you will never see on the network news. The White House has been working with Democrats in the Congress to take the "flex" out of ed flex. The whole purpose of this program is to give the States their own authority to assess their programs instead of Washington telling them what they need. Now, 100,000 new teachers is a great slogan but trying to handcuff our governors like this is not exactly the kind of flexibility that reformers have in mind when they advocate ed flex. This program is supposed to allow local schools to spend Federal dollars as they see fit. The special interests will have none of that. But the special interests are not putting the education needs of our children first. Ed flex does. It is a commonsense reform overwhelmingly supported by all 50 governors across this country. Today we will have the opportunity to support it as well.

ON EDUCATION PRIORITIES

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the greatest gift a parent or elected official even can provide our children is a quality education. Education is one thing that nobody can ever take away from someone. For years we have debated on this floor the most effective way to provide our children with this gift. Later today we will likely pass the ed flex bill that allows States the opportunity and the flexibility in spending their Federal education dollars. Since my home State of Texas already participates in this program and has a great deal of success with it, I support the bill.

However, the benefits of all of the flexibility in the world will be limited if we do not modernize our schools so our children can have a safe learning and clean environment, reduce the class size for each child so they can get the attention and the guidance they need, provide state of the art technology so that all students can benefit from today's best tools in education, and finally we have a responsibility to know that each State is meeting the needs of their students. This can be done by supporting the Miller-Kildee amendment later today and not forgetting that the original reason for Federal assistance for education was to help those children most in need.

REVERSE THE CLINTON CUTS TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the Clinton administration has backed away from the Federal commitment to fund special education adequately. For the second consecutive year the administration has chosen to cut special education funding. For those who have any doubts, I urge them to look up the figures for themselves. By the time you factor in inflation and new children coming into the system special education students will receive less. Despite Clinton cuts to special education, congressional Republicans have worked hard to see that we make progress toward filling the IDEA program or the Individuals with Disabilities Act mandate. Over the last 3 years, Republicans have fought for and achieved dramatic funding increases for this important program. We will fight for another increase this year. Children with special needs should not be shortchanged by the Federal Government and the political priorities of the White House should not prevail at the expense of America's children. I urge my colleagues to reverse the Clinton cuts to special education.

PASS THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to challenge all of my colleagues, Democrats, Republicans and independents, to pass legislation that would provide all Americans with the health care protections that they need and deserve. I am very concerned that patients from my district are being denied the health care coverage they need to lead productive lives. It seems that I cannot pick up my local newspapers, the Beaumont Enterprise or the Texas City Sun, without reading about someone who was denied care because some insurance company bureaucrat decided that a procedure was not necessary. It is one thing to keep down costs, but it cannot be done at the patient's expense. That is why I support yesterday's reintroduction of the patient's Bill of Rights. I am confident that the Bill of Rights will give residents of Hotel Beaumont, a senior citizens community in the heart of my hometown, the right to choose a specialist and to see the same doctor throughout treatment.

It is time for us to put our money where our mouth is. Let us prove to the American people that this Congress can work together to address issues they really care about. Let us pass the Patients' Bill of Rights.

VOTE YES ON ED FLEX BILL

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, Republicans and my colleagues on the left know that the biggest and best investment we can make as a nation is in the proper education of our children. But one of the greatest debates that is taking place in Washington right now concerns the future of our children's education and how scarce Federal education dollars can most effectively and efficiently be spent to improve that education.

I ask, should the money of hard-working parents be left in the pockets of Washington bureaucrats, and should every important decision be left to the red tape bureaucrats in Washington to develop the plan to educate our children in our schools across America? Of course not. We all know the answer. Local control wins out over Washington bureaucracy. As a parent, I know. I want the best education possible for my children. And I envision a national goal on education, a goal that offers every child in America the best education possible. The Republican plan puts our teachers, our parents and our school boards in the education