

Times. Did he say that he would oppose tax increases? Did he say he would retract his words? Did he repudiate the notion that what this country needs is to weaken our military and raise taxes? No. He wrote, "I have no intention of proposing or supporting any tax increases."

No intention? The last time we heard that was 1992, only 1 year before President Clinton gave us the greatest tax increase in our Nation's history.

SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT IN NATION'S SCHOOLS

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

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, we can no longer ignore the disparities in our school systems and allow young people to suffer in cramped, outdated public school buildings.

Daily, Americans are forced to send their children to schools with leaky roofs and unsafe ventilation. With the classroom enrollment rate growing, children must endure overcrowding and dangerous conditions.

It is vital that we bring education to the forefront of our deliberations. We will not be able to meet the Nation's educational needs with temporary remedies. We must make this a non-partisan issue and create permanent solutions. By joining with other Members of Congress and supporting school construction and modernization, we secure the welfare of our children.

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It is imperative for the survival of this great Nation to prepare students to enter the global market and enable them to become productive members of the community. Reduced classroom size, qualified teachers, and new technology provide the opportunities students need to succeed.

Our future depends upon the schooling of the children who sit in American classrooms today. As a Member of the 106th Congress, I am duty-bound to protect the interests of the American people. The steps and directions we choose to take today will decide the future of our Nation. To meet the impending demands of the 21st century, we must do everything in our collective power now to ensure the education of our children.

OLD HABITS DIE HARD

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, as we just heard, the House Democrat leader said something the other day that might give American taxpayers cause for concern. A lot of people have been fooled by the talk about "new Demo-

crats" and the "third way" and other such deceptions that liberals must use to remain politically viable.

But every once in a while a Democrat leader slips and reveals what their party actually stands for, the same thing they have always stood for since the 1960s.

Listen again to this comment by the minority leader: "You've got to have a combination of taking it out of the defense budget and raising revenue. We can argue about how to do that, closing loopholes or even raising taxes to do it."

So there we have it. Cut defense and raise taxes. No wonder all those flag burners and left-wing activists from the 1960s found a home in the Democratic Party. It is a party whose leaders, after all these years it seems, do not support a strong military and simply cannot wait to get back in power so they can pass another tax hike.

Old habits die hard.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND MODERNIZATION

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I would like to certainly call upon all my colleagues to join us in bringing the issue of school construction and modernization up for debate this year.

In my home State of California, we are facing a very critical and potential crisis in providing adequate school facilities for our children. With the number of students increasing in grades K through 12 by about 270,000 during the next 5 years, California will need 10,000, 10,000, new classrooms. That is six new classrooms each day for the next 5 years.

In addition to building new classrooms, more than two-thirds of existing school buildings are in desperate need of repair. State and local resources are currently only covering half of these construction costs and modernization needs.

We, therefore, all of us, owe it to our children from throughout the United States to address this issue right here in Washington. The children of my State who are the future of California and the children of other States are depending on us to take action to build and renovate our schools.

FAILED CLINTON ADMINISTRATION POLICY ON NORTH KOREA

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, the Clinton administration's policy on North Korea has failed on several counts.

In exchange for making North Korea the largest recipient of U.S. assistance

in East Asia, Pyongyang promised to terminate its nuclear weapons program and any efforts to develop or deploy long-range ballistic missiles.

While there are several indications that the North Koreans have not kept their end of the bargain, last summer's launch of a three-stage ballistic missile over Japan is the most egregious example of this rogue nation's disregard for their commitments.

With Pyongyang calling for further concessions from the U.S., I believe it is important for Congress to make it clear to the administration that we will not provide additional money or ease economic sanctions unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the North Koreans are living up to the requirements of the 1994 Agreed Framework.

To do anything less would be a severe abdication of our responsibility to defend the national security of the United States.

NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP WEEK

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

Mr. VENTO. Madam Speaker, I rise to hail National Homeownership Week.

Homeownership is one of the core values we have, I think, as Americans and one of the most fundamental bases for stability in our communities. This record homeownership rate of over 67 percent did not happen without leadership from the Clinton administration, from former Secretary Cisneros and current Secretary Andrew Cuomo.

I think we all should be very proud of this accomplishment and the focus that led us to this result. Since 1993, we have nearly 8 million new homeowners. That is a million more families each year that have achieved homeownership. That has come about, obviously, because we have made the right decisions with regards to our budget since then. We have lower mortgage rates and higher employment, and new policy has helped in many areas for first-time homeowners, minority homeownership and, of course, dealing with senior citizens and reverse mortgages contracts.

But we have much work to go before we are done. Many of our cities, for instance, have less than 50 percent homeownership. And by, of course, establishing a stake in these communities, we can be very helpful to changing the success of these urban areas. But we have to keep programs like CRA and HMDA in place, the FHA program, which has been so important, to continue the progress with regards to homeownership. These policies work hand in hand with the partnership approach involving the private sector, home builders, realtors, mortgage bankers, title insurers, Fannie Mae,