

H.R. 4094, AMERICA'S BETTER
CLASSROOM ACT OF 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, the challenge confronting us today and the future of education in America is before us. We, as a Nation, must put education as the number one priority if we are to meet the needs of the 21st century, if we are to look at where our children are going to be. We need to invest in education. We need to make sure that class size reduction is in our classroom.

We need to make sure that we do modernization in our classroom. If we look at today's society, if we look at where we were, many years ago many of us were very fortunate, that when we went to school, class sizes were small, we were able to have the relationship between 25 and one ratio. In today's classroom, we have 45 to one ratio. It is ridiculous.

How can we have our children learn? How can we get them to progress and how can we hold accountability when we have so many students in our classroom? We have to put a high priority, that is why we have to look at modernization. We have to look at classroom reduction. If not, what is going to happen to our children? And if we look at modernization, we also have to look to create an atmosphere that is good for our children as well.

When they go into the classroom, we want to make sure that the faucets work well, that there is no broken window, there are no leaking roofs. If we look at technology, we want to make sure that everybody is competitive, that our children and others have the same opportunity that other individuals have. It can only happen if we fund education at the highest level.

What we also have to make sure that we do is, if we have 100-some teachers that we have the accountability. If it is not there, what is going to happen to us? What is going to happen to our children? Our children are at stake. Our future is at stake. They are our future. They are our future taxpayers. They are the ones that are going to guide our Nation, but it is our responsibility to provide for them; and if not, we fail America, we fail our children.

Let me tell say, Mr. Speaker, we have to invest more, and the agenda by the Democratic Party right now and the bipartisan H.R. 4094 deals with a lot of these problems right now, deals with the classroom size, deals with modernization, deals with teacher training, deals with incentives, deals with tax breaks; and at the same time we also have to provide incentives for students to go on to our community colleges and our State colleges.

In California alone, we have over 6 million students in K through 12. If we

do not begin to take steps to build additional schools, what is going to happen to our children there? And these children that are ready to go on to a 4-year institution or community colleges where they are overcrowded, what is going to happen to them? Are they going to have access to our community colleges or State colleges or universities?

The answer is no. That is why we also have to provide a tax incentive and tax break and a tax tuition to make sure our children have that opportunity. We all have to come together. This is not a partisan issue. This is a bipartisan issue. This is about America. This is about our children. This is about investment.

Let me tell my colleagues, when I hear teachers telling me that they are out buying supplies because we are not providing the funding. My son is a teacher at a junior high school and he is going out and spending money. He just became a teacher this year, and let me tell my colleagues he is going out and buying supplies. They should not have to buy supplies. We should fund education. We are not investing enough in education.

The Republican Party plan right now does not invest enough money in education. We have to put more money in education. It is an investment in the future and at the same time we have to deal with Head Start programs, preschool programs, after-school programs, provide the incentives so our children have that opportunity to learn in an environment that is conducive. How can someone go to a school in our ghettos and some of our other areas where they are not even fixed and they are not compared to other institutions, and they look at TV and they see a modern school in that area and they say the environment is great?

Well, teachers have to also be motivated. They are motivated when they know they have good schools, they have the equipment, they have the tools and the instruments to teach our children. It can only happen if we provide those funds.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of work ahead of us. We have got a big agenda ahead of us right now, but we have to come together; and if we do not come together, America will lose.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION PROPOSED RULE FOR AUDITING FIRMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the rule proposed by the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, that would affect the consulting affiliates of auditing firms.

The proposed rule was brought to my attention over a month ago by con-

stituents concerned about its effect on large accounting firms who also perform consulting services for their clients.

In response to the concerns raised by some of my constituents, I wrote to SEC Chairman Arthur Levitt and asked that the comment period on the rule be extended past its September 25 deadline and that the rule be modified to address the concerns raised by members of the accounting industry.

Under no circumstance was it my desire or intention to delay the ultimate decision to next year and a new commission. I particularly want to go on record as opposing any attempt to require a delay through legislative means.

I continue to believe all parties involved, including the accounting industry, should strive to reach a workable and mutually agreeable compromise before a final determination is made. It is my hope as the SEC moves forward with this rule they will remain open to the comments and concerns raised by the accounting industry and the challenges it faces.

OUTRAGE AT STATE DEPARTMENT'S DISMISSAL OF SAILORS WHO DIED ON THE U.S.S. "COLE"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my outrage at our State Department's callous and thoughtless dismissal of the young men and women who died on the U.S.S. *Cole*.

I will quote from an October 16 State Department memorandum telling Voice of America to quash an editorial on terrorism, and I quote from that: "The 17 or so dead sailors does not compare to the 100-plus Palestinians who have died in recent weeks."

Since when are American lives less valuable to our State Department than Palestinian lives? Yes, my colleagues heard me right: our State Department dismissed the lives of our young sailors who died on the U.S.S. *Cole*. Something is really wrong when the Federal bureaucracy is writing off our servicemen while the rest of the Nation is mourning.

Mr. Speaker, I do sincerely grieve for the Palestinians and Israelis who have lost their lives in the tragic conflict over the recent weeks; however, when our own State Department dismisses the lives of our young men and women protecting our national interests overseas, something is truly wrong and heads should roll.

Mr. Speaker, I will submit the State Department's memorandum for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and would like to thank C-N-S-News.com and its executive editor Scott Hogenson for breaking this important story and shedding