

bill both to committee and then to the floor of the House. But I want to do that as we move the Patients' Bill of Rights along, as well as the prescription drug discount, and finally address the questions that Americans have asked us to address.

I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me and for bringing to the attention of this Congress the need for HMO reform. I am happy to yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague again, because there is no doubt that this Congress needs to address a broad range of health care. We have a bill that passed the House, that is a strong Patients' Bill of Rights; and we need to take one step at a time, Mr. Speaker. If the conference committee will come out with a strong Dingell-Norwood bill just like passed this House, then we can put this issue behind us and we can address health care for veterans; we can address mental health and get on to other issues that are important.

But, first of all, when people pay a premium, they have to make sure that they receive the health care that they are paying for; and that is what is so important about this Patients' Bill of Rights. They have to know that when they pay the money for their premium, that they are getting health care and not just getting a denial slip or delayed health care, because someone is making a decision that they are looking at the bottom line instead of the health care of that person.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank not only our Democratic leader, but also the colleagues of mine who have been here tonight.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, last session, this House passed a sound and responsible managed care reform bill with solid support from both sides of the aisle.

The conference committee has finally met and the appointees are now negotiating critical provisions such as direct access to OB/GYNs for women and direct access to pediatricians for children.

Faced with a daunting number of managed care reform bills, our fellow lawmakers in all 50 state legislatures are urging us to take action soon.

Their pleas echo those of millions of patients, family members, and providers who feel disenfranchised and exploited by the Big Business of Big Medicine.

These are real patients with real diseases, real pain, and real fear.

We have heard for so long about the onerous obstacles that patients face in getting the care they need.

We have come together as a House to pass sound legislative remedies.

Now let us finish the job we began last session without further delay.

Mr. Speaker, these patients don't have any more time to wait, nor should they have to wait . . . We owe it to them to finally deliver the relief that is promised in the Norwood-Dingell bill.

And the Patient's Bill of Rights isn't just about patients—it's about beleaguered health care providers gagged from speaking their expert opinion and prohibited from practicing to give the best medicine they know.

No single piece of legislation passed during this Congress has more support and more urgency than the Patients' bill of rights.

I call on my colleagues assigned to the conference committee to waste not one more minute in bringing this legislation to the desk of the President, so that the Patients' Bill of Rights can become law.

#### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNAUDITABLE DUE TO SLOPPY RECORDKEEPING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk tonight about some of the work that we have done in our committee over the last few months, and I chair a subcommittee that has oversight responsibility for the Education Department.

It was back in October, October 29, that me and some of my colleagues from the committee, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SALMON), walked down Capitol Hill. We walked to the Department of Education. We wanted to meet with some of the people at the Department of Education, and we wanted to meet with Secretary Riley to find out if we could help the Secretary find a penny on the dollar of savings. It was when we were going through the budget negotiations and a various range of activities. One of the things that we were saying is, can we find some savings in our various departments so that we can stay within the budget caps, make sure that we do not raid Social Security and actually develop a surplus in the general fund, as well as in the Social Security fund.

Well, when we went there that day, we found out some interesting things. For 1998, the fiscal year of 1998, the Education Department had just received their audit, the financial audit completed by Ernst & Young, which is a report that Congress mandated that every agency go through, that they bring in independent outside auditors to review the books. What did we find out? We found out that for 1998, the Education Department was 7 months late in meeting their statutory deadline. That is the good news. The bad news that we found was that Ernst & Young was not going to give them a clean audit. Actually, they did not render an opinion on any of the 5 financial statements that the Education Department was required to complete. So basically, their books could not be audited.

What we also found out is we went and dug through this, and we found that there was an account called the "grant-back account." It had \$594 million. This is money that is recovered or supposed to be recovered from schools and universities who have had some problems with the grants that they are receiving. They returned this money back to Washington; that is why it is called the grant-back account. It had \$594 million in it. The auditor stated that of this, only \$13 million could actually be attributed to grant-back activities, meaning that over \$580 million of that account could not be reconciled, that the Education Department could not tell us how the money got there, what accounts that this money had come from, or where this money was going to be used. As a matter of fact, under law, most of this money should have gone back to the Treasury, but it was still sitting at the Department of Education.

Mr. Speaker, they receive \$35 billion a year. As they were going through the process, the auditors had found an instance where, in 1998, as they were adjusting their books, they had made a \$6 billion, that is with a B, a \$6 billion adjustment in their books. Now, this did catch the attention of the auditors, and they went back to the Education Department and said, could you please explain to us why in this preliminary statement it was *x* amount, and why in this follow-up statement you had made a \$6 billion adjustment.

Can you perhaps explain to us and give us the paperwork and the background so that we can understand how this first statement was so totally inaccurate and where the documentation was and why it was not there in the first place, and the answer coming back from the Education Department is no, we do not have the backup data to explain exactly why we needed to make this \$6 billion adjustment.

We found out that in 1998 in the audit that there were \$76.8 million in improperly discharged student loans. These are young people who had received student loans, but the Education Department, rather than expecting these students to repay these loans, had improperly discharged \$76.8 million worth of student loans, a great deal for these students. The problem is, we expected these students, and these students had agreed, to pay us back and the Education Department discharged those student loans. They said well, let it go. These are kids that completed college, not a big deal. It is a big deal. The \$76.8 million could have funded 20,000 new loans for students.

There was \$177 million in improper Pell Grant awards. That is enough for Pell Grants for 88,500 students.

□ 1745

There was \$40 million, and this is one that is very interesting, there was \$40

million in duplicate payments in August of 1998 alone. What does that mean, duplicate payments? It means that the Department of Education has a list and says, hey, we have to cut checks. We have to write checks to these students, to these organizations today. They cut the checks, they cut checks for \$40 million, and they run it through again, and they run another set of checks for \$40 million. In many cases, they find these duplicate payments.

But the problem in this, and we will talk about what happened in 1999, is that these duplicate payments have now continued for a period of over 13 to 15 months, meaning that on occasion after occasion after occasion, the Department of Education continues to make duplicate payments. I believe in most cases they are catching them, but we do not know if they are catching them in all cases or not.

Again, it is gross mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars, of some of perhaps the most important dollars we are spending in Washington: It is the dollars we are spending and investing in our kids' education.

So what do we find now in 1999? There was a hearing, and probably one of the more disappointing hearings that I have had since I have been here in Washington. It was last week. We will also talk about a hearing that we had on Friday, because it was one of the most exhilarating hearings that I have had and have had the opportunity to participate in since I have been in Washington, but it is a sharp contrast.

On Wednesday, we brought in Ernst & Young, the auditors. We brought in people from the Department of Education. We brought in people from the General Accounting Office and the Inspector General's office to tell us about the results of the 1999 audit: Could the Department of Education now account for where their \$35 to \$38 billion of money went that the taxpayers gave them to invest in our kids in 1999?

That was on Wednesday. On Friday, we brought in some individuals who are having an impact on education at the local level, three people who are running charter schools in their local communities, one from the Los Angeles area, one from Colorado, and another from Washington, DC.

What a sharp contrast between the answers that we got from the Department of Education on Wednesday as to what they were doing with their \$35 billion, and these individuals who are running charter schools in their local communities, in some areas going to some of the toughest neighborhoods in the communities and reclaiming those kids, those schools, and those neighborhoods through their activities.

Obviously, what happened on Wednesday was not good news. The Department of Education came in and said, well, we have made progress. At

least this year our report is not 7 months late. Actually, it is the Inspector General who is responsible for doing the audit work. They came back, and she hit the date. She was supposed to be done by the end of February, and she worked with Ernst & Young, and the Inspector General did a great job to inform Congress as to the status of the Department of Education books for 1999.

The good news is they hit the target. The bad news is, the books cannot be audited. They have to, again, do five statements. Four of the statements have qualified opinions. The fifth statement the auditors did not render an opinion on, meaning the fifth statement again cannot be audited.

On the other four statements there were serious concerns about each one of those statements that would lead one to question the accuracy of the numbers as to what they represented, as to whether they accurately represented what went on in the Department of Education in 1999.

They call these material weaknesses. Some might say, it is a material weakness, but you have the statements. What are you worried about?

What I am worried about is that if this would happen in the private sector, if there were a company that was listed on NASDAQ, a publicly-held company, and they came back and said, here is what our auditors say about our books, we asked the auditors what would happen.

They said, this would be a huge problem, because what you would be telling your shareholders is, we cannot really tell you what your investment is worth because your earnings per share, your costs, your net worth, and all of those types of things, are not accurately reflected in the statements. Most likely what would happen is that the trading of the stock would be suspended until the company could get its financial house in order.

In 1998, the books cannot be audited. In 1999, a failed audit. What the Department and what the other people told us is that the reason they are failing their audits is because they do not have systems, automated systems, in place that provide protections that indicate that the way you are spending the money is an accurate reflection of actually what is really happening.

How does this then manifest itself? How does this make a difference to the people back in Michigan, the people back in Colorado, or whatever? It is kind of like, well, the money is coming out of Washington. It is getting to my schools, right? If they are just a little off on their numbers, what are you worried about?

Number one, I am worried about it because it is \$35 billion. It is a lot of money. The second thing that I am worried about is, coming from the private sector background, we know that

when we have an organization that does not have the correct systems in place to manage its business and its activities, we are creating an environment that is ripe for fraud and abuse, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and mistakes.

Do we see any of that in the Department of Education? Here are just some recent examples: In 1998, duplicate payments. What did we see in 1999? In December, because their fiscal year starts on October 1 of 1999, they had duplicate payments in 1998, they had them in 1999, and they have had them in this current fiscal year. They had them in December and January of what would be their fiscal year 2000. Duplicate payments are continuing.

Sloppy management leads to mistakes. The Department, for student loan applications, printed 3.5 million forms incorrectly. They need to be scrapped. We know there is fraud in the student loan program. The auditors have reported that as they have tried to work with the Department of Education to try to identify how this money got into this grant back account, this \$594 million, and they have asked for the backup data. The Department of Education still cannot provide the appropriate backup data to say how money flows in and out of this account.

Fraud? In our hearing on March 1, the IG, Inspector General, and the Department of Education indicated that they have, and we cannot go much beyond this, but they currently have a vigorous investigation that is ongoing to investigate the theft of computers within the Department; that the controls for maintaining their capital assets, for the purchasing of computers, technology, software, that the controls were not in place to enable the Department to track and monitor its computer equipment, so they currently have a vigorous investigation that is ongoing.

Perhaps one of the most disappointing things that indicates how sloppy management, failed audits for a \$35 billion agency, translates itself into having an impact on an individual within one of our districts, here is an example of what happens when we have sloppy management and we do not have good controls in place.

The Jacob Javits scholarship program, this is a program that is awarded to students who are graduating from college and provides them with the opportunity to continue their work in graduate school, it can be up to a 3- or 4-year program, and in some cases providing benefits to the students of up to \$30,000 per year, because there is a living stipend along with an agreement to pay for the student's tuition.

So we have these students out there. They see this Federal program out there, a Federal scholarship program, the Jacob Javits scholarship program.

They are going to go out and compete for it. I know what is going on because I have an 18-year-old at home who is looking at going to college next year, and she is competing for some scholarships.

I know the excitement on her face when I call her at night and she says, hey, Dad, I just got notified last night that if I go to XYZ college, I have a \$3,500 scholarship for each of the next 4 years. She is excited. She feels great. I feel great because it means that maybe my investment will be a little bit less, but she is excited because of the recognition that institutions and others have made on her achievements.

What happened with the Jacob Javits scholarship this year? Failed audits, \$35 billion, an agency that does not have proper controls in place, how does it affect these students applying for the Jacob Javits scholarship program?

It was not all that long ago, in the last few weeks, that 39 students, college students who had applied for one of the nicest and most plum scholarships that one could get, 39 students were notified that they won the Jacob Javits scholarship. The bad news is that two or three days later, these students were notified and were told, sorry, it ain't so. Really, you didn't qualify. You didn't win the award. You have really just been selected as alternates, and if some of the real award winners have gotten other scholarships or have decided they are not going on to graduate school at this time or whatever, then you are in line to be eligible for a Jacob Javits scholarship.

Can Members imagine these 39 young people and the excitement that they must have felt on the day they got the call that said, you have qualified for a 3- or 4-year scholarship of \$30,000 per year? It is like, yes, the work that I have done for the last few years has been recognized and the dream that I have for the next 3 or 4 years of continuing my education has been realized, and all of a sudden, you are knocked off the pedestal and your dreams are shattered when someone calls you back and says, I am sorry, we made a mistake. You really did not qualify.

Now, the Department of Education is going to make it right. They are going to provide these students with the scholarships that they promised them. That is probably the right thing to do. But the problem is, they do not have the money to do it. They award  $x$  number of scholarships because that is how much money they have. If they are now going to give 39 more, they are going to have to come up with this money from someplace else. They are probably going to come back to Congress and say, well, it is only \$1 million.

Yes, for Jacob Javits, it is only \$1 million. But how much have the duplicate payments cost? How much have the 3.5 million forms that were printed

incorrectly, what has that cost us? What has the computer theft within the Department, what has that cost us? What is the cost of the fraud in the student loan program? What is the cost of the grant back account?

What we are finding here is that this is an agency that gets some of the most important dollars and is focused on one of the most important issues that we are dealing with in Washington, and they are not meeting the basic test. They cannot keep their books, and they cannot even tell the students which ones received a scholarship and which ones have not qualified.

□ 1800

The bottom line when one takes a look at the Department of Education is that, what this is, and we ask ourselves the question, is this an agency that educates kids? How many kids are enrolled in schools run by the Department of Education? Zero. The Department does not educate kids. The Department does not run any schools.

What the Department does is it distributes roughly \$35 billion around the country. What we are now finding is that, after the last 2 years, and based on the feedback from the external auditors, that for at least the next 2 years, there is a high probability that they will fail their audit for 4 years in a row.

What the Education Department is, it is not a school educating our kids, it is a bank, it is a financial institution; and it is not doing that job very well. It is failing some of the basic tests. It is failing some of the basic tests at a time when the Education Department should be one of the most exciting places to work in in Washington.

Why do I say that? I say that because of the hearing that we had on Friday. The hearing on Wednesday was an absolutely miserable hearing where the Department of Education came in and told us that their books could not be audited. On Friday, we met some people where the rubber hits the road. These are the people who are running some public schools, in this case, they were running charter schools, in Los Angeles, in Colorado, and in Washington, D.C.

To listen to what they are doing in their communities, in Los Angeles, this is a group of teachers and administrators that went out and said, we are going to take this school, and we are going to turn it into a charter school. It is going to free us up from some of the bureaucratic red tape and the rules and regulations that just encumber, at least in that case, encumber them from achieving what they wanted to get done in their local schools.

What did they do? They went in, they formed their charter school, and their kids' test scores have improved. They used to have a high turnover rate. The families would move and the kids

would just transfer from one public school to the other. Families are still moving. But the kids in some cases now are traveling an hour to go to this school because of the results that they are getting. Significant improvement in the test scores and in the performance of the students in these schools.

It is the same story in Colorado, and it is the same story that we have heard about Washington, D.C. Committed teachers, committed administrators, committed parents, and committed communities going out and making a difference in their kids' lives.

The other exciting thing is, in many cases, they are all breaking the mold of education for their kids. In Los Angeles, again, they have embraced technology. The computer-student ratio in this school is one to one in the seventh grade. They are taking new models of learning for their kids.

One can see the interaction as these individuals who are running these schools, as they were talking to each other, and as they were sharing with the panel, the excitement that they felt as the woman from Los Angeles was talking about the one-to-one computer-student ratio, as she was talking about the learning that was going on, as she was talking about the improved test scores, and how kids were commuting up to an hour to come to that school.

One could see the excitement and the enthusiasm in the other two as they were saying, when we leave here, I have got to call her and find out exactly what she is doing because I think there are some things that I can maybe learn from her that I might want to take and put into my charter school.

Then as the other two talked about the programs that they were running, the woman here in Washington, D.C. talking about the 15, the 20, the 30 students that they take to Cornell in the summer because, for many of these kids in this neighborhood, going to a prestigious school never even was a dream that they could think about. It was the impossible dream. It was the impossible dream because they could not even think about escaping the environment they were in or believing that, when they graduated from school, when they graduated, that those kinds of opportunities would be available to them.

Now, what they are doing is they are going there for a week in the summer, and they are experiencing it, and they are also learning that, when they go, they are knowing they have got the background, the knowledge that they have completed the learning that will enable them to be successful when they graduate from high school, that they can dream about going to Cornell, that they can dream about going to some of our prestigious universities, or they can just think about going on to college.

They will know that, when they get there, they will be successful. That is what education is about. I think, as we take a look at the Education Department and where it needs to go, I think there are some things that we need to recognize, that there is a role for a Department of Education.

But what the role of the Department of Education should not be is distributing dollars and managing dollars. We do not need an agency that is just distributing and trying to be a bank and not doing a very good job.

What we need is we need a Department of Education that can be a resource to the types of individuals that testified at our committee on Friday, that they can be a resource so that, as people at the local level either are dealing with challenges, opportunities, or have some significant breakthroughs, that they can communicate with the Department of Education and say, you know, we just did this great program, we have got a great model for integrating technology into the classroom for seventh graders, here is how we are doing it, you know, please share this with other schools so that, if they have got some questions or comments, we have got a great resource here.

Or if they have got a great challenge that they are facing, perhaps the community, the face of the community is changing, and the school board or the administrators are struggling with how do we change this or how do we face this changing face of the community, how do we deal with it in our schools, that they can go to the Education Department and say, you know, have you got other school districts that have faced these kinds of challenges or these kinds of issues that we can talk to, not for them to tell us what to do, but that we can talk to them, and they can tell us what they tried, what worked, what did not work, so that, as we design a school and a school system that meets the needs of our community, we can learn from others that have already done that. An Education Department that funds basic research in to learning.

We see a lot of the people now talking about how technology can impact the learning process. Have we fully researched the broad, new avenues of learning that technology opens up for us? I do not think so. But that is an area where Department of Education, perhaps through grants to the private sector or whatever, can foster the basic kind of research so that, as schools are contemplating integrating technology, they can go somewhere and get the latest research that says, if you are going to try to teach reading in this kind of environment, here is how perhaps you can integrate technology. Here is how you can use technology for math. If you have got a problem with class size, maybe technology can deal with an issue of large class size.

So there is a wonderful role and a potential role for the Department of Education to kind of like become the National Institutes of Health, a research-based, a learning organization that is on the cutting edge that others can learn from and that others can take the research and apply to their learning opportunities in their local community.

What a different vision for a Department of Education that is a cutting edge, research-based department that helps local parents and school administrators learn, learn about how most effectively to teach our kids.

That I think is a future vision for the Department of Education, compared to a Department of Education today which has \$35 billion per year going through it along with another \$80 billion to \$85 billion in student loans; and what they actually cannot do is keep their books. An organization that consistently is failing their audits versus one which is on the cutting edge, which is a breakthrough type of agency.

There is a role. It is time to reform that role. Why is it time to reform that role? It is time to reform that role, number one, because the current model is broken. The other is that we are not doing nearly well enough with our kids' education.

The TIMS study, this compares our kids with kids on an international basis in the 12th grade. How do our kids rank? In math, out of 21 countries, our proficiency, we are 19th out of 21. That is not good enough. I spent a lot of time going to high schools and different schools throughout the district over the last 9 months. Actually, I have been doing it much of the time I have been here in Washington.

But when looking at these kids, they want to learn, they want to be successful, and they are going to be competing against other kids from around the world as they enter the job market.

What is their vision about their educational system? Being 19th out of 21 is not good enough for them. Whether we are in the Bronx in New York, and we have had hearings in 19 different States with our Education at a Crossroads Project, whether one is in the Bronx, whether one is in Cleveland, whether one is in Milwaukee, whether one is in Muskegon, Michigan, whether one is in L.A., whether one is in Albuquerque, these kids all have the same vision. They want to be number one, not selfishly, but what they want to have is they want, as they are going through the education process, they want to be the best educated kids in the world; that when we put them through a battery of tests on math or reading or any other kind of measurement, they want to be at the top. Because they know that, if they are not at the top, they may not be prepared to compete in a global economy.

The TIMS study for reading, how did we do in reading? We did better than

what we did in math. In math, we were 19th out of 21. In reading, we moved all the way up to 16. We were 16th out of 21 countries.

What else is going on? We know that at the fourth grade in reading, 38 percent of our kids are below basic. In eighth grade, 26 percent are below basic skills. At 12th grade, still 23 percent are below basic. That means that they have not achieved what we consider the basic skills necessary or required at that level.

How about in math? In the fourth grade, 36 percent of our kids are below basic. In the eighth grade, 38 percent of our kids are below basic. By the 12th grade, we are still at 31 percent, or roughly one out of every three of our kids are below basic levels.

That means we are in danger of losing almost a third of our kids because we have not provided them with an environment of academic excellence that will allow them to achieve, not only at the basic, but well beyond the basic. Thirty-one percent of our kids at the 12th grade in math are still below basic.

Is it any wonder that, as we have gone around the country with our hearings, Education at a Crossroads, that one of the fastest growing programs in our colleges is remedial education. We talk to different college administrators, and it struck me when we started this process 3½, 4 years ago, some of the first hearings that we had where the college administrators came in and they said, you know, whatever you do, do not cut out remedial education. If anything, we need more money for remedial education. They told us that in California. They told us that in Arizona. They have told me that in Michigan.

Finally, one kind of steps back and says, you know, why do you need remedial education? These are kids that you have accepted into your college programs. What is the need for remedial education for kids going into college?

The answers come back reflecting the test scores. Well, 23 to 25 percent of the kids coming into college are not proficient in reading at 12th grade proficiency when we get them. So we need to catch them up in reading. A third of the kids coming in are not at 12th grade proficiency for math. So what we have to do is we have to catch them up. Those are roughly the numbers. Roughly somewhere between a quarter and a third of the kids entering college have to go through some type of remedial education.

□ 1815

So we are seeing the standards. We are seeing how our educational system and our students are stacking up. On an international basis, we rank 19 out of 21 in math and rank 16 out of 21 in reading. And then, as we compare our kids to a standard that we have established for reading and for math, we

consistently find that by the 12th grade we are still having a quarter to a third of our kids leaving our high schools without basic proficiency in reading or math.

It is not good enough. And the Washington response has been an education department that does not give our people at the local level a lot of information about how to improve their systems. It just funnels money back and forth and ties a lot of strings and a lot of red tape to it. It is not working.

Washington has hundreds of programs in the education area, each of these going back to a local level, telling people at the local level that if they want this money this is what they need to do. These are the forms that need to be filled out so that we can see that you actually did what we said had to be done. And, by the way, at the end of the year we will send an auditor in to make sure your books are auditable even though ours cannot be.

There is a better way to do it. We talked about one of the elements of a new vision for an education department and a reformed education department, which is that we have an education department that is a leading-edge educational department; that it can identify best practices so that it can be a resource to parents, teachers and administrators at a local level.

What is another part of our vision? Another part of our vision says that perhaps we can increase funding not by spending more but by being more efficient in how we spend it. What if instead of having 200 or 300 K through 12 education programs in Washington that really control how local schools are run, what about consolidating some of those programs and giving States and local schools a tremendous degree of flexibility in how they can spend those dollars and on what programs and in what areas they will spend those dollars?

By consolidating, perhaps we can save 5 percent of the dollars that we spend on education and ensuring, in the process, that rather than spending this 5 percent here in Washington, we spend 5 percent where the real leverage point is; that we spend 5 percent in the classroom, with a teacher that knows our children's names. That is one reform that we can make: getting more money out of Washington and getting it into the classroom with a much higher degree of flexibility.

A second thing that we can do is eliminate some of the red tape. As I said, when we have all these programs, local school districts have to find out about the programs, they have to apply for the programs, then they have to report back, and they have to be prepared to be audited. What if we can cut out some of that red tape and some of that bureaucracy through that process and give those local schools a whole lot more flexibility.

And, really, what we are going to be focusing on will not be on the process of how they spend the dollars; we will not focus on the process of did they do the right reports at the right time and get the money back and report everything correctly. But what we are going to do is we are going to focus on whether they actually improved the learning of the students in their school. Has their performance improved or has their performance declined or has it stayed the same? Where we still have young people at 31 percent below basic in math, where we have 23 percent below basic in reading, are we turning out students where we have 95 percent at basic or above in both reading and math so that we are not letting kids fall behind?

Let us focus not on the process. It is time to focus on the results. We should not have a department focused, and we, as a Congress, should not be focused on telling local schools what to do. We ought to be talking to States and local school districts and holding them accountable for what they have achieved. Because this is not about managing process. If it is, we know this education department cannot do it. This is about something much more important. It is about educating our children.

So we give the schools more flexibility, and we eliminate the red tape, which gets more dollars into that local classroom. And from a practical sense, what does this mean? It means that a school, rather than getting money for class-size reduction or hiring teachers and getting another pot of money for technology, getting another pot of money for some school construction or school modification, getting some other money for the arts, getting some other money for some other kind of training and these types of things, it is giving the money to the States and to the local schools and telling them that if they need to focus on technology, if they think technology is the answer, that we will give them the flexibility to improve the technology within their school.

That may be exactly what some of the schools in my congressional district would need, and they would have the flexibility to go out and do that. For others, they might say that they have invested in technology; but when they did, they found out that what they really needed to do, in addition to that, but they do not have the money to do it, is they need to invest in teacher training so that they could use these tools to be most effective with our kids. Let them use the money for teacher training.

If they need to use some of the money for school construction, let them use the money for school construction. But allow them the flexibility of designing the programs that are most effective for the problems, the issues, and the opportunities that they

have in their local schools. Because this is about our kids. It is not about process. It is not about the education department. This is about how do we get the maximum impact in learning for our kids.

Are we going to get it by mandating from Washington and controlling from Washington; or is it going to be by continuing to invest in education through Washington, through an education department, but allowing a great degree of latitude and flexibility to the people at the local level? The local people know our kids' names, they are the people that know the school, the problems, the opportunities, and the issues that they face. The local people know the neighborhoods, know the communities, knowing exactly, maybe not exactly, it is not a science, but the local people will have the best idea as to how they could improve education in their local community.

And if they then had a resource of a Department of Education where they could go to for best learning practices or best teaching practices, what a great partnership that might be. Local decision-making; research-based data and information to empower people at the local level to make the best possible decisions for our kids.

It is not an issue about money. We have spent and invested a lot of money in education over the years. This is a question of how we invest that money most effectively. Not even necessarily most efficiently, although that would be nice, but how do we invest it most effectively. Do we invest it through a Washington-based model or do we invest it through a locally based model?

The difference was so striking last week. The Washington-based model, with quality individuals working at the Department of Education, who have the best interests of our kids in mind, but for the second year in a row cannot even be held accountable for how they spent these education dollars on our kids. Compare that picture with the education department who cannot even take the time to put in place the policies, the procedures and the practices to track \$35 billion. Compare that to the caring and the passion that we saw on Friday where we had these individuals coming in and talking about what they were doing, improving test scores; integrating technology; reclaiming their kids; reclaiming their neighborhoods; and making a difference in their communities.

There was a concern demonstrated in attention to detail. A Department of Education that does not have the right policies and practices in place sends out erroneous information to 39 young people telling them they have a scholarship, when they really did not and then has to call them back, versus the local decision-making where the people that we saw last Friday are concerned about each and every child in that

school and making sure that each and every one of those children is going to be successful, and doing what needs to be done to ensure that that is the result, forming the partnerships with business leaders, forming the partnerships with parents to make a real difference in their communities and these children's lives.

It is a really sharp contrast; a department that erroneously identifies scholarship winners, a department that makes duplicate payments, a department that prints forms wrong, a department that currently has a vigorous investigation into computer theft, a department that has fraud in a student loan program, and a department that has an account with over \$500 million in it, or at least in 1998, that they cannot tell us how it got there or where it is going.

Then compare that to the passion that, in many cases where these are charter schools, they are facing a lot of odds against their success. They have to build those schools. They do not get construction dollars. They just get their per-pupil funds. And in many cases they do not even get all the Federal dollars. The Federal dollars do not follow these students. But in each one of these cases, they are people passionate for what they are doing in their communities.

I think the final element of a reform package in education is reforming the Department of Education into a research-based learning think tank that is a resource to the rest of the country, freeing up dollars within the bureaucracy to invest in our kids. So taking money out of Washington and putting it back in the classroom, that is the second step. The third step is taking money out of the process and moving it back to the local level, out of the red tape. And the fourth part is investing more in education by providing parents and businesses the opportunity to take credit, tax credits, for investing in education.

There is a formula for improving education, but it is taking decision-making out of Washington and moving it back to parents and local school districts where we can really make a difference.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject matter of my special order and the special order of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### GLOBAL HEALTH ACT OF 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, we here in the United States, and throughout the world, are celebrating International Women's Day.

□ 1830

Unfortunately, too many women in the world today have no cause for celebration. Nearly 600,000 women die each year from complications of pregnancy and child birth. That is one woman every minute. Of these deaths, 99 percent take place in the developing world, where maternal deaths account for up to one-third of all deaths of women of child-bearing age.

According to the World Health Organization, for every maternal death that occurs worldwide, an estimated 30 additional women suffer pregnancy-related health problems that can be permanently debilitating. A woman's lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy-related complications or during child birth can be as high as one in 15 in developing countries, as compared to one in 7,000 in developed countries.

Mr. Speaker, more than 150 million married women in developing nations still want to space or limit child bearing but do not have access to modern contraceptives. Yet, Mr. Speaker, despite these startling estimates, the U.S. commitment to women's health remains woefully inadequate. And that is why I, along with 22 other colleagues, have introduced legislation to increase the U.S. commitment to women's health by \$300 million as part of a legislation known as the Global Health Act of 2000.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3826, the Global Health Act of 2000, authorizes additional resources to improve children's and women's health and nutrition, provide access to voluntary family planning, and combat the spread of infectious diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS.

Only the Global Health Act represents a comprehensive, balanced approach that builds upon proven existing programs to increase the U.S. commitment to go balance health as effectively as possible.

Over 100 groups, such as the Global Health Council, Save the Children, the Salvation Army World Services, and the Global AIDS Action Network support the Global Health Act 2000.

Mr. Speaker, in August of 1999, my constituents were shocked to learn that an outbreak of West Nile-like encephalitis had surfaced for the first time in the western hemisphere in the heart of my congressional district in Queens and the Bronx. This outbreak was a wake-up call for every American, not just New Yorkers. It illustrated that the Global community has truly become a local community.

As demonstrated by HIV/AIDS, West Nile-like encephalitis and tuberculosis, a disease, Mr. Speaker, respects no borders. An outbreak in Africa, Europe, Asia, or South America can travel to U.S. shores within days. No longer can diseases occurring in far-off lands be ignored. They pose a direct threat to the national security of our great country and must be addressed by the U.S. Government, this Congress, and the international community as a whole. Diseases cannot be seized by Customs, and they do not apply at the U.S. Embassy for a visa. The only way to stop them is to target them at their source.

The Global Health Act recognizes this and emphasizes the interconnectedness of global health by calling for increased funding for child survival, women's health and nutrition, reducing unintended pregnancies, and combating the spread of other infectious diseases. It also calls for increased coordination between the different government agencies administering health programs.

Mr. Speaker, with the resources provided under the Global Health Act and the assistance of other nations, we can make a profound difference in the health and well-being of millions of the world's poorest citizens, especially women, and protect our own national security at the same time.

We are the greatest power the world has ever known. We cannot continue to keep our head in the sand on this international issue. We have to recognize that we do not live in a cocoon. We can tackle this problem as a Nation and as a world, but first we have to face up to it.

I had the great opportunity this afternoon to meet with the present Miss Universe. Her name escapes me at this time. But she is from Botswana, Africa. She came to talk to me today about the bill that I am sponsoring, the Global Health Act 2000.

To lend her voice in support, I know that she met with a number of Members of the House today, I believe also Members of the Senate, to bring attention, much needed attention, to this issue. She spoke personally to me about her homeland and about her home continent.

She is headquartered today in New York. She sees it and I view it myself as the headquarters of the world. We will not say the capital of the world, but certainly it is the headquarters of the world. It is convenient in that it is the home to the U.N. But also, New York at times can command international attention.

We are happy that she is in New York working on this very, very important issue and, at the same time, sparing some time from her busy schedule to come down here to Washington to lobby Members of the House and the Senate on this important issue to get