

He recently scored a perfect 800 in English on the SAT and a near perfect 750 in math.

As a result, Matt has been accepted to the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora, IL, which is a school for 10th–12th grade Illinois students who excel in mathematics and science. I want to wish Matt the best as he begins this new chapter in his life. He is an amazing young student who I know will go far and do great things.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4577) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes:

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote to move this bill forward but also to express my concerns about what I consider to be seriously inadequate funding levels for education, health, and job training.

Chairman JOHN PORTER did an admirable job constructing this bill considering the difficult 302(B) allocation he was given in the budget resolution. I opposed that resolution because it inadequately funded so many agencies. But as in years past, the Senate has more generous subcommittee allocations and therefore will fund many programs at higher levels than the House. Furthermore, the President has consistently advocated higher spending levels, though he has funded them through unacceptable taxes and cuts in key programs that members of both parties reject. Hence, as this bill moves through the process of Senate consideration and then the House-Senate conference, allocation levels will rise to what I believe will be sound funding levels appropriately funded. Therefore I vote in favor of this bill to move it forward in the process. I would note that last year's House Labor-HHS proposal provided only \$35.6 billion for education programs while the President proposed a total of \$37.1 billion. Ultimately, the process produced a bill that provided \$38 billion for education and tied to that level of funding was greater flexibility so communities could meet their own needs. I have no doubt the same result will occur again this year which is why I am willing to put aside my concerns with this specific bill and move this legislation forward.

H.R. 4577 provides funding increases for a number of programs of importance, including many health initiatives. I am very proud that Chairman PORTER has targeted community health centers for support as these facilities are the only source of affordable health care in many neighborhoods. Helping people se-

cure health insurance should be a priority for this Congress, but that health insurance will not be helpful unless people have a medical facility they can use. The House proposal increases funding by \$81.3 million, \$31 million more than the President's request.

This legislation also provides critical funding increases for programs that help communities provide HIV/AIDS education and prevention services. We must be vigilant in our battle against the spread of this disease. H.R. 4577 provides \$130 million for the Ryan White AIDS Prevention and Education programs, \$5 million above the President's request.

In some cases, our bill is far more generous than the Senate. The House provides \$86 million more than the Senate and \$156 million more than the President for the Centers for Disease Control. While we were not able to provide the full 15% increase previously agreed to for NIH, Chairman PORTER's bill does increase funding by 5%, the same as the President requested. Chairman PORTER also has made a commitment to work toward the full 15% increase in conference with the Senate. The House bill is also much more generous to SAMHSA providing \$50 million more than the Senate, a \$60 million increase over last year. SAMHSA funding is critical to helping deliver substance abuse and mental health services to communities.

JOB TRAINING/WELFARE

While I am very happy to see an increase in funding for Job Corps programs, residential facilities that provide job training, placement and support services to at-risk youth, I am deeply concerned about funding cuts to many of our other job training programs. While the economy is experiencing its highest rates of growth in our history and unemployment and welfare rolls are at an all time low, job training is more important than ever. Many families moving off public assistance can only become economically independent and secure with help to develop their skills and to win their battles against addiction. They urgently need these job training programs if they are going to successfully transition off of welfare. The cuts to the one-stop career centers as well as WIA adult training grants are both going to undermine our effort to move families off of welfare and to help low wage workers move up the skill and wage ladder. I urge my colleagues to visit a one step center in their district to see how effective they are.

Another area of great concern is the underfunding of the Social Services Block Grant, used by states to fill funding gaps in their social welfare programs. States use SSBG to fund domestic violence shelters, adoption services, meals-on-wheels, elderly and disabled services and child and adult protective services to name a few. During the debate over welfare reform, Congress guaranteed the states that it would fund SSBG at \$2.38 billion and that states could transfer 10% of their TANF dollars into SSBG to develop the support network necessary to families in transition from dependence to independence. However, to pay for last year's transportation bill, SSBG's authorization was cut to \$1.7 billion and the transfer was reduced to 4.25%. While the level is lower than that I advocate for in my legislation, H.R. 4481, the House actually funded SSBG at its new authorization level of

\$1.7 billion. The Senate however cuts the program by \$1.1 billion to \$600 million. A cut of this magnitude will be devastating to the community organizations that serve some of our most needy constituents. I urge my colleagues to restore full funding to \$2.38 billion and the transfer to 10%.

EDUCATION

The House proposal provides additional resources to many important education programs but its failure to increase the allocation for Title I should be of concern to all Members. Both the President and the Senate provided increases which would enable us to reach as many as 260,000 more children. Further, H.R. 4577 would fund the Teacher Empowerment Act, a block grant of the Eisenhower Professional Development program, Goals 2000 and the President's class-size reduction program, at \$1.75 billion instead of the proposed \$2 billion authorization level. If Republicans are going to advocate for block granting similar pots of money—which I support—we must adequately fund the whole. As we have seen with TANF, Congress must abide by our promises and fully fund these programs if the new flexibility granted is to matter to kids, teachers and taxpayers. This cut of \$300 million sets a very dangerous precedent for those who strongly support block grants and I hope my colleagues will reconsider this funding level.

However, there are many programs which received increased funding from the Committee. The bill increases the average Pell Grant to \$3,500, its highest level in history. Republicans have increased the Pell Grant, which saw cuts when the Democrats controlled both the White House and the Congress, by \$1,200, or 50% since assuming the majority in 1995. Further, while the bill doesn't provide the additional \$2 billion in funding agreed to by the House for IDEA, it does increase funding by \$500 million. If there is one program that comes up in every meeting I have had with teachers and administrators in my district, it is IDEA. The increase of \$500 million is a step in the right direction. I also applaud the Head Start increase of \$400 million or 7.5% and the TRIO program increase of an additional \$115 million over FY00.

Given the challenge presented to the committee by the budget resolution, they did a commendable job on this bill. However, many of its funding levels are inadequate and must grow through the process or I will vote against sending this bill to the President. Again, I will support this proposal because I believe that in the end we will have a bill that reflects our priorities—education, health care, and job training.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under