

When the Capitol and member's offices were assaulted with anthrax, the Comptroller General and the GAO employees generously shared their office space with the members of the House of Representatives and their staffs. GAO employees made quite a sacrifice in doing so. Many were displaced from their own offices in order to provide the House of Representatives with workspace. Because of the selflessness of these employees, the House of Representatives was able to continue to do their work on behalf of the American people and help our nation fight against the evils of terrorism.

Today, I am pleased to join my colleagues in thanking the Comptroller General and the GAO for their assistance. They have been a great help during this very difficult time and their assistance will be remembered.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to express my strong support of this resolution.

Fortunately, it's not every day that the members of this House, and their staffs, must evacuate the House office buildings due to the presence of anthrax.

Let's hope it never happens again. Steps are certainly being taken to ensure it never happens again.

This House indeed owes a debt of gratitude to the General Accounting Office for making it possible for the people's House to continue its work during those two critical weeks.

The chairman's resolution eloquently expresses the sentiments that should be expressed, and I urge all members to support it.

As one whose office is in the Longworth Building, I spent considerable time working at the GAO. I found it to be a hospitable place, staffed by hospitable, dedicated Federal workers. I want to express my personal thanks to David Walker, the Comptroller General of the United States, for throwing open the doors of his agency to the House. I also want to thank Dick Brown, the GAO's comptroller and chief administrative officer, for spending many hours working to ensure the whole enterprise went smoothly, which it did. And I generally want to thank the dedicated employees of the General Accounting Office who were relocated, or otherwise inconvenienced, to accommodate me and my staff, and other Members and their staffs. Their sacrifice did not go unnoticed, or unappreciated.

Mr. Speaker, we should note that as hundreds of us descended upon the GAO headquarters, GAO's own important work continued, despite the disruption. This is a grand tribute to the professionalism of GAO employees.

The GAO's mission is to support the work of the Congress as our budgetary watchdog. The leadership and staff of the GAO can now say, with pride, that they have supported the work of the House directly as never before. This incident rightly belongs in the annals of congressional history. This resolution ensures it will be properly recorded.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that the House express its gratitude to the GAO and its wonderful employees for allowing us to continue our operations during this time. I applaud the chairman for bringing this resolution to the floor. I urge an "aye" vote on the motion.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H.Res. 294.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of House Resolution 294, the resolution just agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

#### THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ASSIST STATES TO MAINTAIN ADVANCEMENTS IN EDUCATION

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, due to the faltering economy, State education budgets are being squeezed all across the country. According to last week's report of the House and Senate committees which deal with education, this year States will cut \$11 billion in real education reductions. More cuts are likely, since State budgets are now showing a deficit of some \$25 billion, and this does not take into account the full impact of the September 11 attack.

Elementary and secondary education is one-third of the States' budget, so obviously they are going to have to be cut. But we ought to do all we can in the stimulus package to make sure that we support education.

Over the last couple of years, schools have started to make progress in closing the achievement gap between poor and minority children and majority children and suburban children. We have made efforts on education reform. Children are doing better on the State exams and on the national exams.

We ought to make sure that we do not lose this progress that we have made. We must understand that we cannot allow our children's education and the educational resources of this Nation to be set back because of the short-term recession.

The Federal Government ought to do all it can to help States out at this

time so we do not lose the advancements that have been made.

California faces a \$4.5 billion budget shortfall this year. California's revenues are projected to fall by 12% this year, the largest decline since World War II.

To balance the budget, Governor Gray Davis has been forced to propose \$843 million in education cuts, including after-school programs and initiatives to help low-performing schools.

The cuts are likely to be worse next year, when the state projects a \$12.4 billion shortfall.

According to Brett McFadden of the Association of California School Administrators, "It took years to recover from the budget deficits in the early '90s. If we have to go through that again, that is going to create lasting damage to the entire system." (San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 15, 2001).

Yesterday's New York Times described the impact the cuts will have on Harvey Elementary School in Santa Ana.

After-school literacy classes for native-Spanish speakers has helped increase the proportion of fourth-graders reading above grade level from 7% to 25% in two years.

One teacher called the progress her students had made in just three months "remarkable."

But state and local budget cuts may force the program to replace certified teachers with college students, and cut the number of students served in half next year.

According to the schools' principal, "There was a window of opportunity here, and that is closing."

Congress is planning to spend tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars to respond to the economic recession and the effects of September 11.

Clearly, we must make sure that we provide adequate assistance to our public schools so that they may continue the advancements in quality that we expect them to make.

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 20, 2001]

SCHOOLS LACK FUNDS, STUDY WARNS

(By Michael A. Fletcher)

The slowing economy is preventing states from spending the money needed on education to keep pace with inflation and surging enrollments, and the federal government should do more to fill the funding gap, according to a report by congressional Democrats.

The report said that education spending in 47 states has fallen a combined \$10.5 billion behind what would be needed to keep pace with rising costs. Also, 11 states have cut a combined \$800 million from their budgets, in some cases eliminating remedial classes, after-school tutoring and summer school.

The budget problems are likely to multiply as states confront the economic problems they have suffered in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the report said. California alone is facing \$843 million in proposed education spending cuts to help balance a \$12 billion revenue shortfall over the next two years.

"The faltering economy is putting at risk the advancement that many states are making to improve the quality of their educational systems," said Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), the ranking minority member of the House education committee.

The report was released by Miller and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), the key

Democrats involved in negotiating an education package that overwhelmingly passed both chambers of Congress but is now making slow progress in a conference committee.

The bill, one of President Bush's top domestic priorities, would require annual testing of students in grades three through eight and hold both students and educators responsible for the results. The bill also would give states more flexibility in spending federal education aid and increase the amount of money the federal government spends on literacy programs and on programs for the disadvantaged.

But while there is wide agreement on many tenets of the bill, congressional Republicans and Democrats have clashed over the amount of money needed to make the reforms effective. The conference committee is expected to meet again next week, and despite the disagreements on funding and other issues, members have expressed optimism they can produce a final bill by the end of the year.

"Education reform is a high priority in Congress and a high priority for the American people," said Kennedy, chairman of the Senate education committee. "But we need to provide more than lip service in dealing with this challenge. This report will be a wake-up call that persuades both Congress and the administration that greater federal investment in the nation's schools is an indispensable part of education reform."

Republicans countered, however, that money is only one element of what is needed to improve schools. Moreover, they said, the federal government provides just 7 percent of the nation's education funding and significant increases have already been approved.

"The education reform bill isn't just about money. It is about what happens with that money," said Dave Schnittger, a spokesman for Rep. JOHN A. BOEHNER (R-Ohio), chairman of the House education committee. "What's essential is not just that states have new resources, but that they have the flexibility of using those resources as efficiently as possible."

Amy Wilkins, a lobbyist for the non-partisan Education Trust, called the report an attempt by Democrats to bolster their case for increased education funding—a goal she supports. But, she added, "money will not solve everything."

[From the New York Times, Nov. 26, 2001]

#### ECONOMY PUTS SCHOOLS IN TOUGH POSITION (By Jacques Steinberg)

SANTA ANA, CALIF., Nov. 19.—Nearly all 600 students at Carl Harvey Elementary School arrive for class for the first time speaking Spanish, not English, which is why the school's three-hour after-school literacy classes have been so critical.

But with substantial budget cuts coming from the state and the local district, and the prospects of federal help uncertain, Harvey Elementary's principal has already projected that after-school enrollment will have to be cut in half, if not more, by next fall.

"There was a window of opportunity here," the principal, Christine J. Anderson, said of the classes, which the school has given for the last two years, "and that is closing."

Having capitalized on a swelling economy to initiate new programs aimed at improving student performance, schools across the country like Harvey Elementary are now being asked to curtail those very efforts because of the nation's shrinking economy. In response to budget cuts, schools from New York to California are undertaking such measures as increasing class sizes, trimming

bonuses for good teachers, putting off purchases of faster computers, postponing monetary rewards for high test scores and, as is the case here, scaling back after-school classes.

For the schools, the timing could not be worse: at the very moment that states and school districts are demanding greater academic performance, particularly by insisting that students make the grade on an array of new standardized tests, the states are asking students and teachers to make do with less.

In New York City, where a substantial part of a \$400 million school budget shortfall is a result of tax losses since Sept. 11, administrators have pared Saturday sessions for struggling students, extra training for thousands of new teachers and art classes.

In Las Vegas, which has one of the nation's fastest-growing school systems, district officials have cut alternative education programs for elementary school students with disciplinary problems.

School administrators in Fairfax County, Va., have delayed some textbook purchases and placed limits on teachers' salary increases, all to help the state absorb an estimated \$80 million in education budget cuts. In Memphis, schools have been told to prepare to delay all but the most pressing classroom repairs, as the state government tries to wean itself from dependence on dwindling sales tax revenues.

In California, which was already experiencing a costly electrical power shortage before the economy turned downward, Gov. Gray Davis on Nov. 14 announced plans to delay support for poorly performing schools, cut assistance for novice teachers and reduce after-school programs like those here in Santa Ana, which is among the poorest districts in the nation. Those cuts are expected to exceed \$800 million.

All told, the Education Commission of the States, a nonpartisan research organization, has identified education cuts of more than \$3 billion in at least 15 states. Those are among the cuts detailed in another report, by the Council of Great City Schools, a coalition of the 60 biggest districts.

"It's the poor schools that are so badly hit," said Delaine Eastin, the superintendent of education in California. "They were starved for a quarter-century. They were just starting to come back."

If there is a silver lining for the schools, it is that Senate Democrats have taken note of the states' retrenchment on education spending, and are trying to use the schools' plight to wring more money from the Bush administration and the Republicans who control the House of Representatives.

Senate and House leaders have been deadlocked for months over how much to spend on elementary and secondary schools in the next year. House leaders have agreed to spend nearly \$30 billion, an increase of about \$5 billion over the current year. But Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the Massachusetts Democrat who is chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, has called that figure at least \$10 billion too low.

To buttress his argument, Mr. Kennedy's aides released their own study of state education budgets on Nov. 16, which predicted that states will spend \$11 billion less on schools this academic year than is needed, when inflation and enrollment growth are taken into account.

Representative George Miller, a California Democrat whose staff worked with Mr. Kennedy's said, "The faltering economy is putting at risk the advancements that many

states are making to improve the quality of their educational systems."

Given the realities of the economy, few districts have sought to challenge the state and local governments that are often ordering the cuts.

"What are we going to say?" said Anthony Shorris, the deputy chancellor of the New York City Board of Education. "This is a terrible catastrophe that hit New York. Our goal is to live with what we've got, and still help our students meet these new demands."

In California, the more than \$800 million in school budget cuts identified by Governor Davis have jolted systems that had grown accustomed to receiving more money from Sacramento each of the last few years.

Ms. Anderson, the principal of Harvey Elementary, a wood-beam-and-stucco building that is crammed to four times its intended capacity, said she was sometimes inclined to agree with those researchers who have found that more money does not necessarily lead to improved student achievement. But, she said, the \$300,000 the school spent on its afternoon literacy program in each of the last two years—it now serves 150 students, most of them Mexican-American—was followed by a relatively steep rise in reading scores.

Last year, the school's students, who are among the most disadvantaged in the state, exceeded the overall scoring target set for them by state officials by a factor of five. Driving that improvement were the school's fourth graders, 25 percent of whom were found to be reading above grade level last year, compared with 7 percent three years ago.

Amy McDonald, a third-grade teacher who sends 16 of her 19 students to the intensive after-school program, said that the impact on their English in just three months this year had been remarkable. She said that her students arrive in class in the morning eager to discuss what they learned the previous afternoon.

Lizbett Mejia, 9, whose mother was born in Mexico and can barely communicate in English, said she had become hooked by her after-school teachers on a popular collection of books known as the "Little Sister" series.

"I didn't know that much of reading," Lizbett said. "Now I know how to read more."

By replacing certified teachers with local college students, Ms. Anderson said, she believe she can keep this year's after-school program running at full capacity. But when the proposed state cuts, including those to badly needed subsidies for school electrical payments, are combined with anticipated reductions in public and privately financed grants, Ms. Anderson estimates that she will have no more than \$90,000 to spend next year on the program, which would probably cut enrollment in half.

"These last few years have been heaven," she said. "Hopefully we've learned enough to be able to sustain what we think works without having the money we thought we needed to pay for it."

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.