

observed on a date to be chosen by each Member State.

Women around the world have assumed positions of influence in all sectors of society, Mr. Speaker, and also have contributed to economic and social advancement. Yet, women face discrimination in many areas of society, and violence against women is part of everyday life for many.

Women constitute the majority of the world's poor. Eighty percent of all refugees are women. One in every three women have been beaten or abused in some way.

□ 1845

Two million young girls are introduced into the commercial sex market each year. 130 million girls have undergone female genital mutilation. Every year 5,000 women and girls are victims of the so-called "honor killings." Four million women and girls are bought and sold worldwide, either into prostitution, marriage or slavery. Two-thirds of the 300 million children worldwide without access to education are girls.

In Africa, HIV-positive women now outnumber infected men by 2 million. In India, it is estimated that more than 5,000 women are killed each year because their dowries are not enough. Women are still underrepresented in governments and political parties.

Despite slow progress in some areas, the advances that have been made in the status of women in society must not be underestimated. Female genital mutilation has been outlawed in several African countries. Many Latin American countries have modified legislation to improve women's access to resources, education and health services. Several countries have adopted or amended their constitutions to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, South Africa and Venezuela adopted various forms of domestic violence legislation. Chile, Cyprus, the Sudan, and Zambia outlawed discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or childbirth. Egyptian women gained divorce rights similar to men's.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the gains that women have made internationally and to acknowledge that we still have much to do in the struggle for equity and justice.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise tonight to participate in a discussion with my Democratic colleagues

on the subject of special education. All of us have been traveling through our districts talking to teachers and parents and students and school administrators, and we have found over and over again that the number one concern is the failure of the Federal Government to live up to its responsibility to pay the full 40 percent of the special education costs that were mandated by the Federal Government 26 years ago.

But we need to set this debate about special education in context, and particularly in the context of the debate over taxes we had here today. For all of the sound and fury of the debate this afternoon, the differences were fairly simple. On the one hand the Republicans were advocating for an important part of what is an overall \$1.6 trillion tax cut over the next 10 years. \$1.6 trillion.

On the other hand, the Democrats were arguing for a corresponding part of what overall would be an \$800 billion tax decrease over 10 years, half the size of the Republican tax cut.

Now, the reason the debate was so intense and the reason Members on the Democratic side of the aisle felt so strongly about this subject is that the numbers were not being put forth accurately.

For example, if we are going to give back either \$800 billion as the Democrats proposed in terms of tax cuts or \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts as the Republicans proposed, those are not the amounts by which the debt is reduced because if you have a substantial tax cut, then that money is not available to pay down the Federal debt and, therefore, interest on the Federal debt would be higher than it would be otherwise.

On the Republican side, that \$1.6 trillion tax cut, if enacted as passed by the House today, means that we will have over 10 years \$400 billion of interest that we have to pay on the national debt that we would not have to pay if that tax cut were not enacted. On the Democratic side the corresponding number is about \$100 billion to \$150 billion extra in interest that we will have to pay, and what is true for tax cuts is true for spending.

Here is the fundamental problem. If you set aside the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare trust fund, the Bush tax cut, \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts plus \$400 billion in additional interest on the national debt plus \$300 billion in order to fix the alternative minimum tax, very quickly you find that the Bush tax cut reduces the surplus by about \$2.4 trillion to \$2.5 trillion.

If that tax cut passes the other body in the form that it passed here today, we are in trouble as a country because that tax cut slams the door on any effort to provide a Medicare prescription drug benefit for our seniors any time in the next 10 years if current projections hold. That tax cut, the Republican tax

cut, slams the door on the use of general revenues at any time in the next 10 years to shore up Medicare and Social Security and extend the life of those two vital programs.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the program that we are here to talk about tonight, the Republican tax cut slams the door on any ability to fully fund special education.

I know we have a number of Members on our side wanting to speak, but just to lay this in context and say it simply, right now in the year in which we are in, we spent \$6.3 billion on special education. The mandate that we required the States to meet 26 years ago to provide a free and appropriate education for children with disabilities, and when we said 26 years ago that the Federal Government would meet 40 percent of the cost of that program, we do not even come close. This year \$6.3 billion represents just under 15 percent of the total cost of special education in this country. That is a long way from the 40 percent that this Congress talked about when the mandate was imposed.

In our districts, teachers, school administrators, parents, and even students understand that there is not enough money for special education, that local funds are being drained out of regular education programs in order to pay for special education, and that the local property taxpayers are taking a hit. We can help all of these groups if we would simply step up to the plate this year, reduce the tax cut and fully fund special education.

The last thing I will say is this. If we do not do it this year, it is not likely to happen any time in the next 10 years. The reason is that full funding is an extra \$11 billion. We do not run surpluses most years. It has taken a hard climb to get to them, and now we have the opportunity to use some portion of this Federal surplus to meet the Federal Government's obligations. This is not a new program. It is simply doing what we are obligated to do, what we ought to do for our children and for our school districts, our parents and teachers around the country.

Mr. Speaker, I am joined tonight by a number of Members, and it is a particular pleasure to recognize the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) who helped organize this special order tonight.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague from Maine, and I thank you for yielding.

The gentleman from Maine set the stage very well. What happened on the floor here just a matter of a couple of hours ago was really putting the cart before the horse. There are certainly justifiable tax cuts. I know that my constituents back in New Jersey are only too eager, as the President says, to get a refund on overpayments. The President came here and said in the

joint session when he gave what would be called a State of the Union address that he was asking for a refund. But the reason this was the cart before the horse is because it is hard to know what the amount of overpayment is because we have no budget proposal that comes in advance of this tax cut vote. We have had no debate about really what are the obligations that this Federal Government has in front of us and which of those obligations are we going to honor and in which order.

Certainly our obligations are more than what some Members would say, and that is the obligation of the Federal Government is only to provide national defense. No, we have many other important obligations as well. For example, we have an obligation, a promise, to America's veterans to provide health care for them. We have made a promise to seniors to provide health care, and that certainly should include in this day and age prescription medicine. And we have made a promise, a national commitment to excellent education for all. And that is where we get to the subject at hand here.

Education has not been discussed in advance of today's vote on changing the tax rates. But, in fact, to really provide a free, appropriate public education for America's children is an expensive proposition. School districts are discovering this. Property taxpayers have certainly discovered it. As my colleague has pointed out so clearly, for the Federal Government to provide funding at the level of 40 percent of the cost of educating the special education students under the IDEA program would, over the 10-year period that we are talking about in all of these estimates about tax cuts and so forth, we have been talking about a 10-year period, in that period it would be on the order of a hundred billion dollars.

This is not a footnote. This is not lost somewhere down the decimal point line. This is real money, and it is something that we have, I believe, an obligation to provide and to provide now. For years, since 1975, the Federal Government has made excuses about why it could provide only 5 or 7 percent; or now, as we have in the current year, provide about 14 percent of the cost of educating the special education students, but those excuses do not apply any more when we have a surplus, an honest-to-goodness surplus, and we are debating what we should do with it.

Well, we have obligations; and we should have those obligations out on the table along with the obligation of paying down the national debt, along with the obligation of returning any surplus funds to America's taxpayers.

I am pleased that we have the opportunity to get this out on the floor for discussion now at least before the other body makes its decisions so we can have a good debate about America's obligations.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments; and I appreciate all that the gentleman from New Jersey has been doing in his State to try to, there as well as here, to try to get full funding for special education students.

I do not know if you heard during the debate how many times our friends on the other side of the aisle said what they were trying to prevent was having the Federal Government spend money here in Washington. Special education funds are not spent in Washington, they are spent in our districts and States across this country. They are not wasted and put away here in Washington. Special education funds go to teachers, school districts, in our States in our districts across this country. They make it better and easier to provide a good education for special education students, provide a good education for regular students, and they help. If we could ever fully fund this program, they would help to relieve the stress that property taxpayers feel all across this country right now.

□ 1900

And it is not even a new program. This is money that goes back to our States and back to our districts. But when we listened to the other side during the tax debate today, it sounded as though this money is buried somewhere here under the Capitol and never gets out to the districts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend, the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY). It is very good to have her here tonight.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

As we talk about this issue, the gentleman is right when he talks about our not burying this pot of money somewhere in Washington, D.C. We send it out to our districts, and we send it out to our States and to our local school districts. And as we talk about the needs of special education, again the gentleman mentioned that this is a program that is 26 years old. We have said that we should fund 40 percent of the excess costs; yet we are up to under 15 percent. And this is the best we have ever done. And if we do not pay our fair share, then the burden goes someplace else.

Again, as the gentleman has gone across and talked throughout his district and throughout his State about what is important to them, I too have talked to people in my district. This is important to school administrators, it is important to teachers, it is important to those that have special-needs children, it is important to the general population because we are all impacted by this.

This issue, plus the issue of smaller classroom sizes. We know if we have fewer students in a classroom between

kindergarten and third grade that kids do better, and when they do better in those grades they also do better in the upper grades, high school and even into college.

But tonight we are talking about special-needs children, children with disabilities. And one of the things that is happening, particularly in our rural communities, and I represent a lot of small rural communities, is that there can be a special-needs child that will cost over \$100,000 if they have multiple disabilities. I have one with autism and also has other disabilities that costs about \$120,000 a year. If this is a small rural community and there is only one student with disabilities, all of a sudden, to give that child a free and appropriate education, which is what we should be doing, we have to hire a teacher for that child, and we have to provide transportation for that child. For some of our small schools, it really does break the bank.

The reason it breaks the bank is because we are not paying our fair share. It is a little easier for some of the larger schools, where they may have several students and so they can have one teacher for several students, or transportation for several students. But it is still expensive and we have to acknowledge that. I think no one can deny that it is an expensive program, but it is an important program. And some of the special-needs children are not that expensive, some are \$400 or \$500 or \$600 a year.

What has also happened is we have waiting lists in our schools. Now, we have guaranteed a free and appropriate education for every child, including those with disabilities; but we have a waiting list where some children cannot get their needs taken care of because we have not paid our fair share. As a result, all of us have to deal with this problem. Again, this is a huge unfunded mandate that we made an obligation to fund. I think we need to do it, and this is the time to do it.

I have introduced a bill, and I know there are a lot of bills with special education trying to get IDEA funding, Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, but the bill I have introduced is H.R. 659. I have introduced it with the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON). And what we are trying to do in our piece of legislation, and the gentleman talked about we need \$11 billion this year, this piece of legislation would ask that over the next 5 years we get up to the point that we are paying the full 40 percent of our obligation. That takes about \$3 billion a year. Is that a lot of money? Absolutely. Do we need to do it? Yes.

This is a promise we made. And I am one of these people that believe when promises are made, they should be kept. So we made this promise 26 years ago, and I think it is time that we invest in every single child and make

sure that they have an appropriate education.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her commitment to this issue. The gentlewoman was talking about the importance of driving the special education to full funding either this year or over a period of years. All of us would love it to happen this year. It may or may not.

The important point that I want to make right now is that if we look at the proposal from the Bush administration, there is only one sentence dealing with special education and it says special education will be increased. Maybe by \$10. Who knows? Maybe by \$100; maybe by \$10 million. Who knows? What is clear is that in his proposed increases for the education department there is not enough money to even come close to what the Clinton administration did in each of the last 3 years. Because in each of the last 3 years we increased special ed funding by about \$1 billion a year, and that simply cannot happen unless we finally get some real numbers.

Maybe we will be pleasantly surprised. But looking at what the President has sent to us so far, it looks like this is an area that could easily be shortchanged when, in fact, it should be fully funded.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Let me try to put that in some perspective. I talked about my piece of legislation. Whether it is this or something else, it really does not matter as long as we live up to the obligation. If we look at fully funding it over the next 5 years, it costs an additional \$3 billion a year. In the budget this year that was presented to us, the number in there to take care of inflation, just sheer numbers of additional people in the entire Department of Education, is \$2.4 billion, and there are several new proposals that President Bush has for education. So it gives you an idea, just to fund this is \$3 billion. In the budget for everything is \$2.4 billion.

So we have not really put our money where our mouths are, and we need to do that and to live up to those commitments.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield now to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPs), who has been a real leader on this issue, fighting for her constituents back home, trying to make sure that we can make some real progress and get full funding for special education. I yield to her.

Mrs. CAPPs. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I am honored to be here with my colleagues from Maine, from New Jersey, from Oregon, and from California; all across the country.

Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed that we spent the entire day discussing a tax package that is not right for this country; and the passage of such a

large tax reform bill out of a budget context will mean, no doubt, that we will have fewer dollars to pay down our national debt, to strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and to improve our education system. And of course a centerpiece of education in our country today and for the past 26 years has been IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

I travel up and down the central coast of California, which I am proud to represent, and I spend time on school campuses. And when I do, I hear a common refrain: we need to fully fund IDEA. I hear this from parents, I hear it from classroom teachers, from administrators, from school boards, and I hear it from the community. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires the inclusion and equality of one of our most disenfranchised groups, kids with disabilities.

IDEA ensures, and this is a good thing, it ensures that children with disabilities can attend a public school in their hometown alongside their peers. In my years of being a school nurse, I saw the value and the importance of this wonderful idea, IDEA, that we in Congress, our predecessors in Congress, put into place. This is a value for families and for a community, for children with and without disabilities, to have this kind of education within the least-restricted environment.

With over 6 million students in our schools who have special needs, we should be appropriating over \$17 billion in Federal funds each year. We promised that when we authorized this education act. And what are we giving them? Only \$6 billion, as the gentleman said. Because this is a right that we declared, that these children will have this opportunity, local and State budgets are forced to absorb the shortfall. That is a terrific cost to our communities.

While the Federal Government is authorized to pick up the tab for fully 40 percent of these costs associated with special education, currently we are only paying 14 percent of these costs. It was in 1975 that this law mandated that all children receive a free and appropriate education, public education, and that 40 percent would be attached to it; that that was our fair share as a Federal Government. But in the last 25 years, we have failed to provide the necessary funding to support this pledge that we made to local school districts. I believe, along with my colleagues, that it is time to put our money where our mouths are and to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

When States and schools, local schools, are forced to pick up the difference in the costs for the needs of these children, they often have to shortchange other children. We should not have to be forcing them to make such a choice in providing an appro-

priate education for one group of children and not for the other. It is our responsibility to provide a good, free education to all of the students in this country.

I want to share a local story to tell my colleagues about a situation in San Luis Obispo County and their school district. They are currently working with and providing resources for 13 children with autism. These children need special assistance to be able to reach their educational goals. In my district, the minimum cost of service for a child with autism is \$40,000 per child per year, and the San Luis Obispo school system has only \$200,000 for this program. They need more than twice that amount to adequately provide the educational resources for these children.

Because of situations like this, this particular school district, San Luis Obispo, ends up spending 25 to 30 percent of their general funds for children with disabilities. The kind of resentment and tension that that creates within a local school setting is one of the unfortunate by-products of our lack of taking on our own responsibility. So school districts across this Nation are facing these terrible choices. It is putting an unnecessary burden on the local school district, costing them precious dollars, and it is pitting parents with students who have disabilities against parents of children who do not. What an unnecessary and unfair burden.

I am committed to working with all my colleagues here in Congress so that we can assure that all of our children get the best education, the best resources that our public schools have to offer them. One way, one very specific and concrete way that we can do that is to own up to our own responsibilities here in Congress and to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

So I thank the gentleman for holding this session so that we can express our concerns about this matter, particularly timely, I believe today, in the face of this enormous tax budget cut, which is really going to wreak havoc on our opportunity to do this very thing.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments, and I appreciate the point she has made, which is so important, that when the Federal Government fails to live up to its funding responsibilities there are real consequences for real people. The tensions the gentlewoman describes between parents of special ed kids and parents of other kids in a school district can be really quite serious.

In my State of Maine we have about 230 or 240 school districts. We only have 1.25 million people in the State of Maine; but we are geographically so large, we are so spread out, we have

relatively small school districts, certainly compared to Virginia or Maryland or California.

□ 1915

It is a tremendous burden. I really thank the gentlewoman for making that point.

Mrs. CAPPS. If I could just respond in saying that when we are doing this in Congress, when we fund to 14 percent, we are not saving money by doing that. These are obligations and responsibilities that local school districts have. They bear the bottom line. It is the children in the local communities who have the right and come up to the school door and say, or the family say, here is my child, these are the needs, now you provide the resources. We ask them to do that, sometimes in very difficult circumstances.

When we do not meet our needs, it just foists that responsibility on overburdened districts that have many other obligations to make as well.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments. That is also why we did not hear our friends on the Republican side of the aisle mention special education today, because they really do not want it to be part of this debate. But in truth if you pass a tax cut, as we did today, if the tax cut passed today by the House Republican majority becomes law, where will we ever in the next 10 years find the money to meet our responsibilities created when the Federal Government laid down the special education mandate 26 years ago?

I yield now to one of our outstanding freshman Members on the Democratic side of the aisle, Mrs. SUSAN DAVIS, who now represents San Diego, California.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I thank the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) for giving me the opportunity to rise today and urge Congress to make a priority in this session of budgeting sufficient funds for special education costs. I know it has been suggested that we look at the first of five annual steps this year, so that we work towards funding 40 percent of these special education costs.

This is about children. It is about children who have been challenged orthopedically, challenged physically in the full use of their senses or in the thinking processes that block their learning. We owe them a free education that accommodates their needs, even when these are in the high cost/small incidence category. We know that the effect on school district budgets of providing this court-ordered civil right can be enormous. Inevitably, meeting these moral and these local obligations leaves fewer resources for all the other educational purposes that we have.

In the California legislature, I worked for many months with educators and concerned groups to author

a formula for California to distribute its available funds more equitably. It was about 17 years that they have been trying to find a way to do this. The goal for Federal funding would only reach 40 percent of the assumed average additional cost, and it would only reach this level in a way that we are talking about today several years down the road.

Some have argued that this might be too much money in some districts or that if the Federal Government assures these funds that a district might somehow identify more students as qualifying. I just do not believe that these are legitimate concerns. From my work in the California legislature, I know that the actual costs of educating special needs students varies a great deal. To receive an appropriate education, some children need full-time assistance or must be taught in special, sometimes private facilities. Children with severe disabilities may be a higher percentage of the disabled student population in one district than in the average nationally. I know that as a school board member in San Diego, we were always aware that military families were stationed in San Diego because of our special ed program, so that in many ways we attracted children to the district, and other children should not have to pay that price. We ought to fund the program properly.

Costs for special needs students can differ, we know, from community to community, because many States and communities have high costs of cost of living and spend a great deal annually on the costs for each pupil. Teacher salaries we know too may reflect that high cost of living and certified special education teachers are in short supply in many communities of our country. Such limited resources in other States and communities provide much less money per child on average and even after the Federal contribution, the unmet needs of disabled students create a much larger debt in their budgets.

I have yet to see a school district that would consider even 40 percent of additional special education funding as an incentive to identify students inappropriately, because doing so commits them to an extensive and expensive program of evaluating and meeting these children's needs. I believe that it is our fundamental responsibility, and I am pleased that my colleagues have spoken to this as well, that we commit today to a plan for meeting the 40 percent funding goal without taking the dollars from other ongoing educational programs.

I thank the gentleman from Maine for bringing this to us. In truth, this is a bipartisan issue. We know that, because there are a number of bills that have been introduced in the Congress from both Democrats and Republicans.

We all recognize there is a need. We have heard from our communities for years and years and years on this issue. But we must look at it within the context of the larger budget and our tax debate. I thank the gentleman very much for bringing this to our attention and for being part of the dialogue today.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentlewoman very much. Her comments certainly are correct. There are certainly many on the Republican side of the aisle who believe this is an important issue and who have joined with us in legislation to encourage full funding. The problem is that when it comes time to do the appropriation bill, the money turns out just not to be there. Now for one of the few times in our history as a country, we are sitting with a surplus, driven by the hard work of the American people and the fact that this economy has been growing extraordinarily rapidly by historical standards over the last 8 years. This is a moment of opportunity, a moment of opportunity to meet our obligations as a Federal Government to the States, to the school districts, to the children, to the parents and to the teachers to provide a better education not just for special ed students but for all students. If the Republican tax cut becomes law in the form in which it passed the House today, that opportunity will be lost and it may be lost for a decade. That is why this is such an important issue. I really thank the gentlewoman very much for being here today.

I would like to turn now to my good friend the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER), who has been a real leader on a variety of education issues and a variety of other issues in this Congress.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SNYDER. I can assure the people of Maine that the gentleman cares so much about this topic that we were discussing it at 6:30 this morning as he was bench pressing several hundred pounds, which I thought was very impressive.

Let me just make several points here. First of all, this is about unmet needs and there are a lot of unmet needs in our country and in our States and in our towns. But it is also about unmet responsibilities. Not only is the need there but the responsibility is there, and we have not met it, as my colleagues have so eloquently been discussing. We see this several places in this process here, in this budget. I am on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. On Tuesday we had our new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a fine guy, a Vietnam veteran, he was there to discuss the overall budget number in the President's budget. It is the feeling of everyone on the committee and every veteran services organization, VFW, the American Legion, that that number is clearly not adequate, the budget number for veterans, for the veterans

health care system and the other veterans responsibilities. There is a need there but it is also not just a need, it is a responsibility. We have not kept our responsibilities to veterans. The following days the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met and unanimously, Republican and Democrat, passed a resolution to send to the powers that be in primarily the Republican leadership that we need to add money, that this is our recommendation, higher than what the President recommended, because we think that not only are there unmet needs in the veterans community but there are unmet responsibilities. This is another example, this funding for IDEA for those kids in school districts that have these special needs.

In Arkansas, we have 310 school districts spread over our almost 2.5 million people. A lot of them are very small districts. A lot of them struggle. I was talking recently with one of the school superintendents. I brought up this topic of IDEA. It was actually a very moving conversation because he told me, he said, they absolutely know that they have a responsibility to do a good job with these kids, and they are going to do whatever it takes to do a good job with those kids. But because we the Federal Government do not meet our responsibilities, they have to pull money from other programs. For every Federal dollar that is not there, a State sales tax dollar, or a local property tax dollar has to go in to meet the responsibilities on those kids. These are all great people, they do a good job, but you can also sense there is some, I do not want to use the word bitterness but they are very uncomfortable with the fact that they know that they have agreed to this partnership with the Federal Government and we have not kept that responsibility.

The third point I would make is there is a long-range benefit to us all to meet this responsibility, because these are special needs kids, and these are kids if we make that investment now in their education and in the things that they can learn, it will be better for them and their families and for us in the future. Working with these kids, the earlier the better, with the best resources, the best technology, the best teachers, all that takes money.

The fourth point I want to make, and this is where I get a little bit baffled here, because it seems to me that what could happen is that we all just converge one day, Republican and Democrat, right down here on the floor of the House and say, by gosh, if we want to do nothing more in education but meet this commitment overnight to fund IDEA, we would accomplish what both sides of the aisle want and what our school districts want.

What do I mean by that? I think there is some bipartisan interest in putting additional money into education. I think that is great. I attended

a forum with the President in Arkansas last week at a school, a grade school, and it was a great forum. He is talking about he wants to put additional money in education. Where we are arguing about is, well, will it be money that goes in kind of in the form of a block grant or will it be money that goes in with a little more control and how do you account for it? We are going to have that discussion and debate and I think it is a good debate, but one way to resolve it is to say, wait a minute, if we did nothing more than to make this commitment of resources to IDEA, both those ideas would be met, because the school districts are going to have flexibility because those Federal dollars would free up their State dollars to do with them what they want to. Right now their hands are tied. They do not have the flexibility to use their own State dollars because they are obligated to put them into this program that we have mandated on them, and they are also having to do our Federal share.

I think also folks from this side of the aisle that sometimes want more accountability, they would say, "Wait a minute. We understand the school districts. We told them that we would give them this money. Let's step forward and give them this money because it is going for these special needs kids and that frees up money in the whole district."

I think that this is an area that if the President wants to improve flexibility for school districts and how they can spend their dollars, all we have to do is just dramatically increase our commitment on IDEA, as we should do, as we are morally obligated to, and that would help kids, help all kids, help those special needs kids, give school superintendents flexibility and free up those State and local dollars that are in such short supply.

I appreciate the gentleman's efforts in this regard and I proudly have signed on to the bill of the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) today that attempts to do this.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentleman for his comments. His point about the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, looking at the proposed budget for veterans and finding it falling short is a real lesson to all of us. The one thing that is absolutely clear about this tax bill that the Republicans brought to the floor today is they brought it to the floor before the needs of our veterans, the needs of our kids, the needs of our transportation infrastructure, our defense requirements. None of that has even been laid out by this administration. Yet they are rushing through a tax cut which would basically eat up all, when you make the proper, reasonable assumptions, eats up all of the surplus for the next 10 years. I think a lot of the debate today was the concern that that is simply going at this back-

wards. It is dessert first, as some have said. We needed a much more responsible, more fiscally disciplined approach. We did not get it today, but we will hope for the best. I thank the gentleman for coming down here.

I would like to yield again to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for additional comments that he may have.

Mr. HOLT. The gentleman and our colleagues have made some very good points. I would just like to emphasize that someone has to pay for this. I actually take issue with this phrase that we hear so often, unfunded mandate. This is not something imposed by the U.S. Congress. What happened was in 1975 there had been a series of court cases that made it clear that the local schools had an obligation to provide education, had an obligation to provide free, appropriate, excellent education.

□ 1930

Among those cases was *Park versus State of Pennsylvania*, *Mills versus D.C. Board of Education*. Schools understood that this meant enormous expenses for them because more than 25 years ago, when Congress passed IDEA, it was to give hope to children with disabilities, and the law has been really very successful in that respect.

Before its passage, children with disabilities were either segregated from other students, given inferior education or too often received no education at all.

There is an American ideal of excellent education for all, and the courts made that clear. What Congress did in 1975 was to look around the country, find the average cost of educating students, the average cost of educating students with special needs, and made the average estimate that it was about twice as expensive on average to educate the students with special needs. So Congress codified this already-existing need. It was a moral obligation, as well as a legal obligation, and Congress said to help the States and the local school districts meet this need that was clearly going to be expensive, Congress would over time fund up to 40 percent of the cost, and this was codified in the bill called *Individuals With Disability Education Act*, IDEA.

As I mentioned earlier and as our colleagues have said, now we are up to only about 14 percent, a little over 14 percent, of funding the costs according to this formula that was laid out in IDEA. So someone has to pay for it.

We have an obligation to educate these children, and we have learned so much. As the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) said, Federal research shows that investment in education of our children with disabilities, starting in the very earliest years, starting from birth, throughout their school years, has rewards and benefits that are not only for those children themselves but for our whole society, and

research shows that promoting educational opportunity for children with disabilities directly affects their ability to live productive lives and to be productive, contributing members of our society.

Research also has taught us a lot about how to provide excellent education for these children. So through better diagnostics and through what we have learned about remedial activities, as well as what we have learned about how all children learn, of course, there are enormous variations. Today, because of IDEA, infants and toddlers are receiving early intervention and special education is working. It is helping all of society. So I take exception to this phrase, unfunded mandate. There is an obligation here. The Federal Government can and should help. Certainly, in a State like mine where almost all of the school expenses are paid through property taxes, the property owners feel the burden of this and are crying for help.

It is an important and a tough subject. The gentleman has put it in perspective very well. Today is a good day to be speaking about this. It is not a good day because I am not happy with what we have seen on the floor here earlier, but it is an appropriate time to be talking about it.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for his contribution to this discussion tonight.

It might be worth just revisiting sort of the basic numbers. Right now the current level of funding for special education from the Federal Government to the States, through the grants to States program, is a bit over 14 percent. It is the highest it has ever been, largely because in the last 3 years we increased that number by about \$1 billion a year to get to the \$6.3 billion in the current fiscal year.

Now, to do full funding, what we mean by full funding is that the Federal Government would fund 40 percent of the costs of special education. We would need an additional \$11.4 billion in fiscal year 2001 for a total of \$17.7 billion. The reason this is appropriate to be discussing tonight is, we just passed, over our objection, a trillion dollar component of a \$1.6 trillion tax cut with no effort, no discussion, and nothing in the President's proposed outline of a budget that would suggest there is going to be anything like full funding of special ed.

Here we are at a moment of our history when we could meet that mandate, help out our towns, help out our cities, help out our kids, parents and educators, and we are just passing it by as if this topic were not to be discussed until the tax cut was passed. If the Republican tax cut passes in the form in which it went through this House today, I think it is safe to say that it will be a decade before we will be close to full funding of this mandate.

I would like now to turn to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD), who has been actively interested in this particular area and with whom I sit on the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) for his excellent leadership on this particular issue. This is exactly an appropriate time to raise concerns like this, especially those areas of educational activities which we have passed into national law. What a time to raise this, when in effect we have squandered an opportunity to take care of this amongst many other issues.

I would like to add my own personal support for full funding of IDEA. This is an issue which has come to me as a professional; I am a professional educator by trade. My wife in particular, Lorraine, also worked in special ed for a number of years in Guam, and in dealing with children with the severest conditions, particularly infant children, one of the unfortunate dimensions of not fully funding an activity like this is when one is in an isolated community like Guam, they are unable to secure the kinds of financial resources and professional attention that they need.

When they have a small community but they have these very strong needs and these are human beings and these are people that we have made a national commitment to, it is exactly the appropriate day today to raise this in the context of the fact that we have let an opportunity go by to raise this.

Again, I want to congratulate the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) on his leadership, very fine leadership, on this issue.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) for his support.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add a few comments about my recent experience. In the first 2 months of this year, I organized a couple of forums with educators who are expert in K through 12 in Maine and we had conversations. Some of them were principals. Some of them were businessmen and women. Some of them were university professors, and we talked about the problems in Maine with special education. Sixteen percent of our kids in Maine are identified as special ed. We take the obligation to give them a free and appropriate and excellent education very seriously, and, in fact, they are doing well. I mean, by the measures of the tests that we use to assess progress as students go through, our special ed kids are doing very, very well. We are proud of what they are doing.

As a number of Members tonight were saying, the cost of educating spe-

cial ed students is really substantial. On average, it may be about twice, that is \$12,000 as compared to \$6,000 per year but, in fact, some students require very special services and one can be looking at \$40,000 or \$50,000 or sometimes even \$100,000 a year to provide that free and appropriate education to someone with significant disabilities.

I then went out into my district and organized four forums in four different communities through the local PTA or through other volunteer groups, groups of volunteers in our schools. I sat at these meetings with parents who were volunteers typically, with school administrators, with superintendents of schools, a few teachers and a few students. It was interesting.

When one goes back to the grassroots and talks with people involved in education on a day-to-day basis, they really are not talking about testing as much as they are talking about three things. Number one, always number one, is the plea to give full funding for special education because so many other things fall into place if they can simply use some additional amount of the increased funds each year at the local level for the regular education programs and not have so much drain-off by special education activities.

The second plea they made over and over was a plea for assistance in finding, recruiting and retraining teachers, particularly in the math and sciences. Our school districts in Maine are having a very hard time finding, recruiting and holding teachers. The salaries are not high enough in many cases to attract the kind of people they want.

Third, school construction, we have a lot of snow up in Maine. Our buildings need to be very solid, very secure and they need to be well insulated. The fact is that many of our schools are old. As I mentioned earlier, we have about 230 school districts and we have some excellent schools in terms of facilities, some new schools. Then we have some which, frankly, really need help.

So the proposal that President Clinton made in the last couple of years of his term that the Federal Government pick up some of the interest costs on bonds that are floated for school renovation or construction was something that really resonated among people who are involved in education in my home State of Maine. I am not sure we are going to see the same kind of interest or commitment from this administration, but I will reserve judgment until we see a budget in some detail.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ALLEN. I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. HOLT. On that point, the gentleman talks about the needs for school construction. It is clearly a national need to find and recruit and train teachers and give them good, continual professional development, and there is IDEA and special education.

In his campaign, President Bush promised to increase the resources for special education, moving toward, as he said, full funding of the average per-pupil expenditures. Let me hasten to say, as I said earlier, I believe that there is money available to give people of this country a significant tax cut. I want to do that, but we want to get the horse before the cart, get our obligations out in front of us, talk about the debt, and then make our decisions. But to make room for this huge tax cut, President Bush's budget would provide \$44.5 billion for the U.S. Department of Education, a 2.4 percent increase, which is only 6 percent, which does not keep pace with the increase in the Department of Education over the past 5 years. In fact, compared with last year, which was 18 percent, it is a very small increase.

As our colleague, the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) pointed out, that increase is not enough to deal with special education only; even that, not counting school construction, not counting after school and summer school programs, not counting teacher recruitment.

There is, in the sketchy numbers we have about the budget from the President, for the Department of Education, it looks like it does not add up. Something has to give.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, we started this conversation about the discrepancy between a tax cut of \$1.6 trillion over 10 years and what that does to all of our other priorities. I thought that Democrats on our side of the aisle made the case very well today for a more balanced approach so that some money was there, both to protect against the uncertainty of future projections but some funds there to pay down the debt more than the President proposes, some funds there for spending priorities like a Medicare prescription drug benefit and for special ed. This is an opportunity that we will lose, we will lose for years, if we do not deal with it right now, before a tax cut is passed that will just simply slam the door on the opportunity for full funding for special education.

□ 1945

Mr. HOLT. If the gentleman will yield, in a conversation with school board members today in my office here in Washington, I said what is going on over on the floor right now is eating your lunch, not the school lunch program. Come back a month from now and they will say, I would like to help with special ed; but it is just not there, the money is not there.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, we have been joined by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), and we are very pleased to have the gentleman

here at the tail end of this Special Order on special education, and I am happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to express a view from the northwest on this subject. I have a child who went through special education, so I am particularly interested on a personal level in this. I just want to make a comment about what happened today with the tax cut as it broadly relates to a lot of issues, and not just special ed. I think it was a great opportunity missed by our new President, our new President who certainly has talked a lot about uniting the country; and yet we found today, with this tax cut brought to the floor of this House with no opportunity to talk to the Democratic Party about the tax cut, or the budget, whatsoever; it was rammed through this House. Frankly, the new President's tax cut had all the uniting qualities of a guillotine in cleaving this House right down the middle with no discussion with the Democrats or the Republicans, for that matter, on a budget, special ed or otherwise. I just want to note that I think it was a tremendous opportunity lost.

We are now going to hope that the President talks with us about special ed and some other issues.

Let me just mention one of the other casualties of this tax cut, without a budget first. On the very day we had a 6.8 on the Richter scale earthquake in Seattle, the President announced that as part of his efforts to make room for the tax cut, he wanted to kill Project Impact, which is a project that we used in Seattle to help get ready for earthquakes and have earthquake preparedness. We had efforts that went on in Seattle that helped us avoid any loss of life in Seattle as a result of that.

But in blind observance of this tax cut, without any consultation with the rest of his government, he wanted to zero out this \$25 million project. Why did he do it? The Vice President told us he thought it was an ineffective program. I went to Stevens Elementary School where a one-ton tank of water was over these kids' heads, it was secured and did not collapse, partially as a result of this earthquake preparedness money. Those kids thought it was an effective program. So it is interesting. We asked the FEMA director, Joe Allbaugh, what he thought of this, and he said, well, you know, nobody asked me about this project. They zeroed out a project in the FEMA budget and nobody asked the FEMA director appointed by President Bush and, on educational issues, this was rehab money for school districts, and in the seven schools where this money was used, nobody got hurt and no structures collapsed.

Mr. Speaker, I would just point out it is one instance where we had a loss today.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for participating.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of March's Women's History Month and March 8 as International Women's Day, which is today, here in Washington, D.C.; and I would also like to honor the late Honorable Cynthia Johnston Torres, a distinguished member of the Third Guam Legislature.

Women's history month is a time to pay tribute to the women of our Nation, an appreciation for their contributions to the political, social, economic and cultural development of our country, in recognition of the many struggles and obstacles that women face, and in honor of the integral role that women have played in American history. Women make up, of course, over half of our country's population and have changed our Nation in many positive ways, and women have made their mark in various fields such as science and business, education, health, the public sector, the arts and entertainment, and the list goes on and on.

The progress of women today must be considered in conjunction with continuing challenges. Today, women are affected by the major issues on our Nation's agenda, including and especially health care, Social Security, Medicare, tax reform, et cetera. Most recently, ergonomic issues impact women the most who represent 64 percent of the repetitive motion injuries that result in lost work time and, regrettably, the House voted to eliminate the most recent progress we have made on this issue.

It is encouraging that 6 out of 10 women participate in the labor force. However, employment discrimination and unequal pay still exists. The future, however, looks promising as women are demonstrating increased participation in all levels and branches of government. Unfortunately, we still have many who have unrealistic and outmoded expectations about so-called traditional roles.

Women's History Month has its own history that illustrates the gains that women have made in the last century. In order to reflect on international connections among women, some European nations have been celebrating International Women's Day on March 8 since 1911, following women's suffrage in 1920 and the valuable contributions made by women to the war industries during the 1940s and World War II. Women's issues were pushed to the forefront during the 1960s. The history of women has been finally acknowledged in schools and has become part of the regular curriculum in the 1970s; and in 1981, the National Women's History Project spearheaded the initiative