

collected, analyzed and reported to relevant Congressional Committees.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not a partisan issue, but it is a good government issue because it not only assures that the people's money is spent wisely but empowers the SBA to ensure that the laws are followed. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and I look forward to being able to vote on this bill on the house floor.

RURAL EDUCATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2001

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to reintroduce the Rural Education Development Initiative (REDI) Act which calls for an increased focus on rural education and provides assistance to the many small, poor, rural schools in our country. As the House begins the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, REDI will ensure that the educational opportunities for rural areas are not forgotten.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that 46 percent of our Nation's public schools serve rural areas, yet they only receive 22 percent of the Nation's education funds annually. In addition data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) consistently shows large gaps between the achievement of students in high-poverty schools and those in other schools.

Another critical problem for rural school districts involves the hiring and retention of qualified administrators and certified teachers, especially in special education, science, and mathematics. Consequently, teachers in rural schools are almost twice as likely to provide instruction in two or more subjects than teachers in urban schools.

More importantly, many small school districts often can't qualify for federal programs based on their small enrollments, and some money-distribution formulas do not fit many states' county-wide system of school districting.

All these problems add up to one thing: our rural schools need more funding opportunities. REDI provides this opportunity and gives our rural students a chance to succeed. This legislation creates a grant program to assist rural areas with technology efforts, professional development activities designed to prepare teachers who are teaching out of their primary subject area, academic enrichment programs, and activities to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in special education, mathematics, or science.

REDI is bi-partisan and is supported by the National Education Association (NEA). I look forward to working with my Colleagues to enact REDI and realize our goal of parity for rural students.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

POLITICIZING THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2001

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, "Bipartisanship." "The rule of law." A judiciary that "looks and feels like the diverse country" we are. All ideas that then-Governor Bush's campaign promised to deliver on during the fall campaign.

Many believe that these slogans were just that: Bromides intended as camouflage, as feel-good dressing for a right wing agenda far outside the political mainstream.

President Bush's actions with the federal judiciary in just the past week—when the White House may believe that everyone is distracted with the tax cutting plan for the rich—may in fact prove just how far out of touch with the mainstream, and its own campaign rhetoric, this administration really is.

First, the White House has floated a balloon that it's considering abandoning the long-standing practice of soliciting comments from the ABA for judicial nominees. This could be the clearest signal that ideology and a crass desire to politicize the judiciary—rather than judicial competence—will be touchstone for Bush nominations to the federal judiciary.

And then today, the Bush administration has announced that it would rescind nominations for the federal bench made by the Clinton Administration. Among the casualties, African American judges who bore the stamp of enthusiastic approval from the ABA and from Republicans. Judges such as Roger Gregory, who had support of two Republican senators in Virginia, and who would represent the first African American appointment on the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Gregory was appointed to the court in a recess appointment after the Republican Senate would not schedule a confirmation vote.

Both actions speak loudly to African Americans. They portend a plan by this Bush White House to politicize the judiciary. They both turn the clock backwards.

Today's Detroit News has the following article which is on point.

[From the Detroit News, Mar. 20, 2001]

BUSH WITHDRAWS MICH. JUDICIAL NOMINEES

(By Jesse J. Holland)

WASHINGTON.—President Bush on Monday dumped former President Clinton's last judicial nominees, including two Michigan women nominated for the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals who never got a hearing.

Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Helene White waited for a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing for four years—longer than any other judicial nominee in history.

And Detroit attorney Kathleen McCree Lewis, a partner in the Dykema Gossett law firm who often argues cases before the 6th Circuit, was nominated in September 1999 but never had a hearing.

"I'm very disappointed," she said. "I knew it could happen, but because there had been statements about bipartisanship, it was my hope that it wouldn't."

Bush officially withdrew 62 executive and judicial nominations.

Besides Michigan, the 6th Circuit includes Ohio, Tennessee and Kentucky.

"Both of these nominees were not only very qualified and widely respected, but would have been excellent members of the federal bench," said Rep. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing. "While the President has continued to talk about the need to reach out to Democrats and foster greater bipartisanship in Washington, it's time he needs to follow-up his words with bipartisan deeds."

Stabenow and Sen. Carl Levin, D-Detroit, had been pushing for a hearing for the two Michigan nominees.

"Some of these individuals will be considered for positions in the Bush administration," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said. "No one should be considered ruled in or out at this point."

The decision to withdraw the Clinton judicial nominees comes as Bush starts to look at filling the remaining vacancies with his own nominees.

White House counsel Albert Gonzales and Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft met with top officials from the American Bar Association on Monday to discuss the nomination process. A committee of senior administration officials led by Gonzales has interviewed more than 50 candidates in a drive to fill nearly 100 vacancies with judges who share Bush's conservative philosophy.

LASTING PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, last week was Saint Patrick's Day and Irish events all around our country and the globe, commemorated the patron Saint of Ireland. The Irish in America proudly celebrated their heritage and prayed for lasting peace and justice in the long divided and troubled north of Ireland. Along with Ireland's many friends around the globe, we joined in that prayer for lasting peace.

Former President Bill Clinton played an important role, along with former Senator George Mitchell, in bringing about the historic Good Friday Accord of April 1998 that has the best chance for making that peace a reality, if the accord is carried out and honored by all sides.

Now, I am pleased to note that our new President, George W. Bush, has willingly and aggressively picked up the mantle of our continued U.S. support for finding and sustaining a lasting peace and justice in the north. Unlike any President of the United States in my memory, President Bush last week at the White House ceremony for Saint Patrick's Day stated, "It is in our national interest that there be lasting peace, a real lasting peace, in Northern Ireland."

I join with all of the Irish American community in thanking President Bush for that strong and unambiguous statement of our continued U.S. interest and support in the long and difficult struggle for lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, I request that the full text of President Bush's remarks at the White House ceremony for Irish American Leaders held on