

and Purple Heart for his service to his Nation and the cause of world freedom.

Mr. Speaker, Sylvia and Julie Wetter are two individuals who exemplify what is good and right about our Nation. They have served their Nation and community with pride, they have raised a wonderful family and they have shared a love that has lasted more than 50 years. I also want them to know that I love them very much.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and congratulating Sylvia and Julie Wetter on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, and I know that their Congressman and my colleague, JOHN LEWIS, shares my heartfelt sentiments in wishing them the best.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SAY NO
TO THE REPUBLICANS' BUDGET

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 1995

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Republicans' budget. According to the polls, the American people believe that the Republicans' budget cuts go too far.

Despite the fact that the American people continue to say no, to making seniors pay more for less health care; despite the fact that the American people continue to say no to taking health care services away from children and pregnant women; despite the fact that the American people continue to say no to gutting Medicare, Medicaid, and education; despite the fact that the American people continue to say no to destroying the environment; despite the fact that the American people continue to say no to tax cuts for the wealthy; and most important, despite the fact that the people have spoken; the Republicans still want to force their life threatening budget down the throat of the American people.

Because the GOP budget cannot stand on its own merit, the Republicans are still trying to tie their budget mess to a continuing resolution. Because the President will not agree to the Republicans' devastating cuts and wants to protect Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, once again, the Republicans have shutdown the Federal Government. This is the Republicans' second shutdown in 2 months. The GOP's blackmail approach to budgeting is not just shameful, it is irresponsible. The GOP must not be allowed to continue to hold the American people, and the country hostage to their life threatening budget.

TITLE I, AN EDUCATION TOOL
MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 1995

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of an education program that is relied upon as an integral component of the Federal Government's commitment to ensure quality education for every American, title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Funds

from title I enable schools to provide additional academic assistance to at-risk students. These children are our most vulnerable students. They are children who are more likely to fail or slip behind academically, and they are moderate- and low-income families that often lack the network of support and enrichment that contributes to successful education and schooling.

A major element of the title I program is the involvement of families in the education of their children. Parents and educators share ideas and opinions through the title I Advisory Councils where innovative solutions are developed to help these at-risk students learn. Furthermore, the parent involvement continues into the classroom setting and the home through parent classroom visits and the heightened awareness the parent takes home with them regarding the child's educational needs. Seventy-five percent of the funds Minnesota spent to educate poor children in 1995 came from the \$81 million title I fund, which Republican reconciliation and appropriation measures propose to cut. If these budget cuts are enacted, Minnesota is set to lose \$14 million in title I assistance in 1996.

Title I is to education what preventative medicine is to health care. It assists students just slipping behind in their level of learning and achievement in school. By providing this extra assistance, especially early in their school years, students are less likely to be held back, and, therefore, benefit more fully from the schooling being provided to them. This type of key investment, made possible by title I resources, is a very important part of ensuring that students do not fall through the cracks and that all children receive the help they require and deserve to succeed. Unfortunately, prior year funding levels and demographic changes in our school settings across the Nation, including an increased number of children in need, have translated into a gap of needs that are going unmet.

Today, the shortfall will be compounded by the misguided attempt to shift our Nation's priorities away from making investments in our Nation's children. The new Republican majority's budget package targets title I for a 17-percent funding cut. Urban areas like the Twin Cities will be more severely impacted by these proposed cuts due to the higher number of low-income families housed by our Nation's cities. Schools that currently rely on these funds to give added attention to at-risk students will be forced to decrease the number of students receiving this aid, or reduce funding in other areas of their curriculum to maintain the same level of service.

Furthermore, when reductions in title I are considered together with the cuts being proposed to other programs that assist disadvantaged children, the impact becomes enormous on this vulnerable population. Funding cuts in programs such as welfare assistance, Supplemental Security Income for disabled children, health care coverage and even nutrition programs are included in the new Republican majority's budget plans that would hit low-income children on all sides at once, placing significant new hurdles in the already difficult path to educational success for these vulnerable students.

Investing in our Nation's children is an essential component for the future prosperity and competitiveness of our Nation, and education is an integral part of that investment. Scientific

research has repeatedly demonstrated that sound educational investments early in the schooling years positively impacts not only a child's academic future, but it strengthens their post-school years as well. Every child has the potential to succeed, and title I gives at-risk students the opportunity to achieve that success. As a society, we should make these type of investments today. So-called savings by cutting education programs means less success for our Nation's children and, therefore, our Nation's future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter two outstanding articles by Thomas J. Collins and Bill Salisbury into the RECORD. They appeared in the St. Paul Pioneer Press on December 10, 1995, and I think they are very accurate accounts of how much schools in the Twin Cities value the activities they are able to pursue through title I and how essential this program is to the students who receive extra help from it. We must provide these extraordinary teachers, Ray Simms, Mary Bakken, Paula Mitchell, Deirdre Vaughan, Audrey Bridgeford, Jean Jones, Myrtis Skarich, and Jeff Maday, adequate tools so that they are able to serve the needs of our children, our Nation's most important resource.

[From the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Dec. 10, 1995]

TITLE I'S TIGHTROPE: WILL POOR KIDS LOSE?

(By Thomas J. Collins)

For a fleeting moment Tuesday evening, the glass-enclosed vestibule of the Naomi Family Center in downtown St. Paul offers a silent, fishbowl view of lives in turmoil.

Teacher Ray Simms is about to step inside, as he does four evenings each week. Silly, isn't it, he says to himself. The better I do my job, the less need there may be for it in the future, he thinks.

In the lobby, he walks past the cacophony where young women and their children flood toward a counter to get evening meal tickets amid the heavy cafeteria odor of dishwasher and cooking meat. Up a clanky elevator to the second floor, Simms on this night will test his sixth-grade student's ability to tally time.

Simms and Eugene Booker sit in overstuffed chairs for two hours, counting hours, minutes and seconds like those that have measured the sixth-grader's life since he and his family lost their home in April. Later, the two move on to complicated math problems.

This isn't a classroom. It's a homeless shelter. And to Simms a teacher at Benjamin E. Mays Magnet School, it's not the familiar clanging of lockers or chatter of students he hears outside this door.

The special instruction Simms provides, as well as one-on-one sessions he and other teachers offer to poor kids in schools throughout the city, is part of a program that makes up one of key education targets for those trying to keep the federal budget in line.

The bulk of education money in the United States comes from state and local sources. But when the budget cutting is finished in Congress, education, like many other services, will feel the pinch. And Simms' program, known as Title I, is likely to feel it more than most.

It won't be eliminated, but enough will be trimmed around the edges to allow some kids who cannot read or write to slip away.

Under a proposal in Congress, Minnesota's share of Title I money would decrease by \$14 million next year from \$81 million. The money pays for programs in every one of the state's 400 school districts, aimed at supplemental support to low-income or transient students at risk of failing in school.

As public schools increasingly come under attack for failing low-income and minority children, Title I has been a life raft for teachers trying to whittle classes that are too large, implement new teaching methods, extend school days if needed, shore up flimsy graduation standards and simply help kids keep up with their peers.

JUMP-START FOR LEARNING

Mary Bakken drapes her left arm around a tiny first-grader at Prosperity Heights Elementary School as he sounds out a simple sentence. She gets the magnetic letters that form the words and he pieces them together.

She mixes up the letters and he rearranges them, an act repeated several times. One of the words he is supposed to know is "how." Bakken asks him to write it and he does, finishing the "w" with panache.

Nearby another boy is struggling with the word "have." Paula Mitchell and her pupil go over and over the word, rearranging and writing the letters until he, too, move on.

For an hour each morning, the two boys have the undivided attention of their teachers—a jump-start if you will—before they rejoin their regular classes.

"It has been wonderful," Mitchell said of the experience later. "These children are the most in need. They can be helped right away before they feel like they are failures."

Deirdre Vaughan, who coordinates Title I programming at Prosperity Heights, said about half of the school's 418 students need the extra help that the federal program finances. These are students who are scoring below the 30th percentile in national reading and mathematics tests, she said.

"Personally, I see great success with these children," she added. "I see children who like coming to school, whose attendance is improving, whose parents are involved in the program as well as the community."

Nationally, the programs have yet to be proved effective in raising test scores for low-achieving children. But experts claim they are a good start.

"A substantial portion of the enormous number of dollars spent annually on marginally, if at all, effective special education programs needs to be redirected toward preventing initial reading failure," said John Pikulski, who teaches courses in literacy education at the University of Delaware in Newark.

That makes sense to Trish Hill, whose 6-year-old daughter Alisha is a first-grader at Prosperity Heights. Alisha started school without knowing her alphabet.

"I tried working with her a bit at home but it didn't help," Hill said. After several weeks of the Title I regimen, in which Alisha reads simple sentences to her mother each night and reassembles a sentence from words that have been cut out in class, she is catching up.

"She's really excited about school now," Hill said. "The program makes kids like Alisha feel good about themselves."

ELIGIBILITY TEETERING

Prosperity Heights on St. Paul's East Side is hanging on by its fingernails to the cusp of the Title I program. Seventy-five percent of its students receive free or reduced lunches; any fewer and it would be ineligible.

Prosperity Heights could be cut from the program next year as the district struggles with a reduced Title I budget. Teachers like Bakken and Mitchell could disappear as well.

"I would be very concerned about meeting the needs of our students if Title I was not here," Principal Audrey Bridgeford said.

Teachers Jean Jones and Myrtis Skarich say they couldn't meet those needs.

They now address them by pulling low-achieving students out of class for an individual tutoring or by breaking classes into

small groups with the help of other instructors.

"I started teaching 25 years ago, and until we got this model I was never able to intervene when I needed to when a student was missing something," Jones said. "It's really less frustrating for me and for the children."

Richard Christian has a twin purpose when he visits Jones' class every Monday morning as part of the schools' Title I funded package. Sure, he wants to help his son Shawn and other first-graders improve their reading skills. But he's also on a mission to heighten the visibility of black men like himself in schools.

"It's very important for African-American males in particular to have a place in the classroom," he said after he finished helping another student with a difficult sentence. "The kids are too important for everyone not to be involved."

Jeff Maday barely has time to visit his own daughter between substitute teaching in St. Paul and working as a Title I tutor in homeless shelters six days a week. Tuesday he was trying to explain the symmetry between 24 inches and 2 feet. But his sixth-grade student, recently arrived from Chicago, is skeptical. How could 24 of anything equal 2?

They go over and over the concept until a broad grin breaks out on the student's face.

"The opportunity to work one-on-one doesn't happen in the regular classroom," Maday said. "You can't just write these kids off. It would be such a waste of potential."

[From the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Dec. 10, 1995]

THE BUDGET ISSUE

(By Bill Salisbury)

One in five public school students in Minnesota has a stake in the outcome of the budget battle between President Clinton and congressional Republicans.

Those 80,000 pupils get special help from a federally funded program, called Title I, that tries to provide children from poor families with the basic skills they need to keep up with their classmates.

House Republicans, in their drive to balance the budget and shrink the federal government, voted to slash Title I funding by 17 percent this fiscal year—a cut that could for example eliminate funding for intensive reading services for nearly 14,000 Minnesota children who are at risk of failing in school.

President Clinton, a strong proponent of the program since his early days as governor of Arkansas, is resisting the cuts. He has proposed a modest increase in funding for the program.

Education funding is one of the five budget areas where Clinton and congressional Republicans have fundamental disagreements. The others are Medicare, Medicaid, the environment and tax cuts.

Title I is the biggest and most critical federal education program at stake in the budget negotiations. "It is our flagship program in elementary and secondary education," Marshall Smith, U.S. undersecretary of education, said in an interview last week.

The federal government provides only a tiny fraction of the money U.S. schools spend on kindergarten through 12th-grade education. But it supplies \$3 of every \$4 spent on special services for poor children.

The House bill would reduce Title I funding by \$1.1 billion, to \$5.6 billion in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. (The Senate has not passed an education appropriation measure, although a Senate committee approved a 10 percent cut in Title I.)

"With that \$1.1 billion, we could provide intensive reading services to every kid in first grade who is in the bottom 25 percent of his class," Smith said.

Minnesota, which got \$81 million from the program this school year, would get \$14 million less next year.

"The bulk of our Title I dollars go for teacher aides that work with (kindergarten through fourth-grade) students who are struggling in reading and math," said Jessie Montano, director of the office of state and federal programs in the Minnesota Children, Families and Learning Department. "If those funds are cut, some of those aides would be laid off, and many more children who are eligible for special assistance would not get it."

While all Minnesota school districts get some Title I money, Minneapolis and St. Paul schools would be hardest hit by the cuts because they get the biggest shares of the federal money, based on their large concentrations of students from poor families. St. Paul stands to lose nearly \$2 million in Title I funding, while Minneapolis could drop \$2.1 million. St. Paul school officials say about 1,250 students would be dropped.

Minnesota schools also face cuts in a variety of smaller federal programs. For instance, the House bill would reduce federal support for programs to combat drug abuse and prevent violence by 60 percent, or \$3.5 million for Minnesota schools, according to the U.S. Education Department.

The House would eliminate all funding for Goals 2000, a program intended to bring schools up to higher academic standards. Minnesota, which is using the money to develop and implement new high school graduation standards, would lose nearly \$1 million.

The House and Senate both would consolidate more than 100 separate job training and placement programs into three block grants to the states. Under that plan, Minnesota would get \$1.3 million less for vocational education next year, the Education Department estimated.

Schools in the state would also get less federal aid for bilingual and migrant education, dropout prevention, staff professional development, experimental schools and several other small programs. It's highly unlikely that states or local school districts would replace the federal dollars they lose, said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. He said schools in the nation's 45 largest cities, which stand to lose the most Title I funding, are least able to replace it because their budgets are already tightly squeezed.

Republicans say Title I, along with most other domestic programs must be cut to balance the budget.

"Our bill cut \$9 billion from education, and we're proud of that," said Elizabeth Morra, spokeswoman for the House Appropriations Committee. "Just about every program took some kind of hit" to balance the budget.

Education could use some belt-tightening, Morra said. "Those programs have been growing out of control in recent years."

The federal government is funding 240 separate education programs this year, up from 120 programs in 1983, and that growth needs to be reined in, she said.

She predicted Congress would settle on \$6 billion appropriation of Title I, which would be a \$700 million cut from this year's level but almost as much as the program received in 1994. "It's hard to argue that \$6 billion is not a lot of money," she said.

Title I is "generally thought of as a good program," she said, but it does not appear to be closing the learning gap between the rich and poor.

Smith, the undersecretary of education, agreed. He said the program was closing the gap in the 1970s and early 1980s, but has not made progress in recent years, for two reasons.

First, he said, the Reagan and Bush administrations weakened the program.

Second, he said, "poverty, crime and a whole lot of other things got markedly worse in the cities during that period."

To improve the program's effectiveness, Clinton and Congress last year changed the law to focus more money and effort on improving needy students' basic skills, especially in reading and math, Smith said. It's too early to measure the results of that change, he said, and too early to dismiss the program as ineffective.

Montano said the program has been effective in Minnesota. Minnesota student participants have always exceeded the national average in gains in reading and math skills, she said.

Morra also criticized Title I for wasting money on school districts that don't need it. Ninety percent of the nation's school districts receive money from the program, including those in the nation's 100 wealthiest counties. "Title I needs targeting," she said.

"She's right," Smith said. The administration proposed targeting the money, but

House Republicans and Democrats "shot it down for political reasons," he said. The lawmakers didn't want to take money away from the wealthy school districts they represent.

Rep. David Obey of Wisconsin, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said Title I cuts are unnecessary. He noted that while the Republicans slashed \$1.1 billion from that program, they voted to pay for 20 more B-2 bombers than the Pentagon requested at a cost of \$1.2 billion per plane.