Some things are right, and some things are wrong, and these do not depend upon the philosophy of the day.

There was an article that appeared in the Washington Times about 4 years ago about Daimion Osby, Fort Worth teenager by the name of Daimion Osby. He was 18 years old, was charged with shooting and killing two other young men, Willie Brooks and Marcus Brooks. They were his cousins. Mr. Osby's lawyers came up with a pathetically cynical defense. The youth committed fratricide because he suffered from, quote, ''urban survival syndrome,'' they argued. In other words, he blew away his unarmed cousins because he thought they were out to get him.

This is not accepting responsibility for one's actions, and irony of all ironies, as I came into the office this morning and saw this letter from my constituent, I picked up Dic DeVos' book on rediscovering American values at home, and it fell open to the chapter on accountability. It is exactly what my client was calling for in her letter when she said:

''So you see I have a vested interest in seeing our leaders held accountable for their actions.''

And Dick DeVos says:

Some like to blame others for what goes wrong in their lives. Others blame God. When we hold ourselves accountable, we accept the blame for wrong choices. Accountability is part of my faith. I believe that we are all accountable to God for the choices we make. Thankfully God is forgiving, but we must acknowledge our mistakes before him. Accountability depends on honesty and humility as well as fairness and courage. This means simply recognizing and accepting responsibility and the consequences for past mistakes and for the state in which we find ourselves. Individuals can receive rewards for accomplishments and victories.

Mr. Speaker, it is accountability for one's actions for which my client has written this letter and which I am glad to share with this body today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BECERRA addressed the House. His remarks will appear in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRATS' APPROACH BEST SOLVES THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, time and time again, Americans have said that they want Congress to deal with the real issues, the issues that affect their daily lives and that affect the future of their young people. Education is such an issue.

We are here this weekend debating, and some say fighting, over the question of education and America's future. We on the Democratic side have a clear proposition. We believe that we need to invest more money in public education.

As my colleagues know, recently we got a wake-up call of sorts. In a battery of international tests, American students lagged behind their foreign counterparts. Moreover, as we talk about the global economy and the 21st century, what we realize is that we need more technical training for our students in order to compete in the global economy.

That is why education has become the issue of the day. That is why the debate rages.

What I would like to do is talk about the two perspectives and two approaches to solving the problem of education in this country.

On the Republican side they have advocated basically two things:

One, a voucher program. They want to use the District of Columbia as a laboratory in which to take money out of public schools, put it in private schools and say this new competition from the private school sector will create better schools. That is clearly erroneous because they do not put enough money into a voucher program to make it work. Private schools do not have to take all types of students; public schools do. We do not need to put money into a voucher program for private schools because 9 out of 10 American students will always end up in the public school system, and we need to make an investment in the public school system.

Next, they come up with the notion that they like to call dollars to the schools, to the classroom. What I call it is dollars from the classroom because what their proposal does by creating a block grant is to cut over $2 billion from public education and then tell us we are actually putting more dollars in the classroom.

Now we have to understand their premise is that too much money is being spent on bureaucracy. That is simply not true. The fact of the matter is only 2 percent of the entire Federal budget in education for the Department of Education goes to Federal administration. The rest goes to your State, your county and your city to administer education programs. So do not let them come up and suggest, well, there is too much bureaucracy. It is certainly not Federal bureaucracy. We do have that 2 percent, though, and that is used to monitor Federal programs to make sure the money is not wasted at the local level. So they want to take this money out of the Federal sector and take, basically cut it out, of the budget. That is what their dollars from the classroom does.

Let me tell my colleagues some of the things that they cut. They cut educational technology challenge funds. They cut the Eisenhower Teacher Training Program. They cut school to work. Why would you cut a school to work program that is helping students make the transition? They cut the After School Learning Program. Why would you cut a program that helps students after school hours when they are most likely to get in trouble? It does not seem to make a lot of sense.

Now they talk about their Dollars to the Classroom. I did a little research, and from my State of Maryland we will lose $10 million as a result of the Republican approach. So I do not call it Dollars to the Classroom; it is clearly for the State of Maryland and, for most other States, dollars from the classroom.

Now let us turn to the Democratic approach. We believe we need to do a couple of fundamental things to improve education in America. First, we need to hire a hundred thousand new teachers for the elementary school, grades 1 to 3, to reduce class size. That is what we are fighting about over the weekend, whether we need to make that investment, because more teachers mean smaller classes, and smaller classes mean a better learning environment.

Second, we want to invest in modernizing our schools. Over a third of our schools need major repairs. That is to say that they need heating systems, air-conditioning systems, that their boiler systems do not work very well. Over half of our schools have major environmental problems that we need to confront and are not prepared to adapt to the Internet. They cannot be wired to the Internet.

So what we have is a situation in which outmoded, crumbling schools cannot deliver a quality education, and again we on the Democratic side believe we need to make an investment in public education to modernize our school system.

We also have a problem of overcrowded schools. The President came to my school district, we visited a school. The school was only 5 years old, but yet it had 6 trailers outside to teach kids. The trailers do not have air-conditioning, the trailers do not have restrooms. You do not have a proper educational environment.

So here we are. We are confronting the 21st century. We know that we lag behind our international counterparts, and we know we need to modernize our schools. I think the Democratic approach best solves the problem of education in America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CUBIN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BOYD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)