

happening now, even today, in many of our schools throughout this country.

When I was elected to Congress earlier this year, I conducted a survey of the schools in my district on the central coast of California. The results were distressing. The average high school class now holds 30 students per class. Over half of the schools conduct classes in rooms not meant to be classrooms. And over 80 percent of the schools use temporary or portable classrooms. I have personally visited and spent much time in classes being held in hallways, in teachers lounges, in utility rooms and even in janitors closets.

Mr. Speaker, let me highlight the Santa Maria Bonita School District, which is in desperate need of funds for school construction. This district was built to House 6,700 students but the current enrollment is 10,500 students. To accommodate growth, 12 of the district's 14 schools have converted to a four-track, year-round schedule and 175 portable buildings have been added. To add more would mean taking away all the playgrounds that now exist. The children, teachers and parents of this community are stretched to the limit. They are calling out for some help from Congress so that they can build better facilities. I believe that we must answer that call.

If our students are to have any chance of competing in tomorrow's economy, we must not shortchange them today. Even a small investment in school construction, bonds, in the ability of school districts to borrow money without having to pay interest, a small investment like this in our body this week will pay enormous dividends for our Nation in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I implore us to put politics aside and think of our children. Let us stop these partisan fights and put our resources into the most important challenge of all, the education of our children.

#### HONORING JOAN ZIMMERMAN FOR A QUARTER CENTURY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of a valued employee, Joan Zimmerman.

I feel fortunate to have had Joan on my staff since I was first elected to Congress back in 1987. But her time on the Hill did not start with me. She worked for my predecessor, the Honorable Stewart B. McKinney, as well as Stan Parris from Virginia and Robin Beard from Tennessee.

Joan has worked for the United States Congress for a quarter century. She is a witness to many major changes in this institution and has seen many things: from Watergate to the Iran hostage crisis, to the end of the Cold War and seemingly never-end-

ing budget deficits to an eventual surplus this year.

Joan is not just a friend and colleague in our office but throughout the buildings of the Capitol. She talks to her loading dock buddies about possible dates of adjournment and counts many of the Capitol Police force as dear friends.

When the tragic shooting of officers John Gibson and J.J. Chestnut at the Capitol occurred earlier this year, Joan offered her advice, guidance and sympathies to the many friends she has on the force who were deeply shaken by the death of these two American heroes. I know they appreciated her support as we appreciate her years of dedication.

Joan, our office sage, after years of dedicated service is retiring this December and so many in our Capitol community will miss her.

She always approached her job with a calm and consistent demeanor, steadfastly getting the work done in an often hectic environment. Her perspective and wisdom about this House has soothed the jagged nerves of a generation of young staffers.

We will remember her for her sweetness of manner and her quiet determination, and a wonderful love and devotion to her two cats. We know our office will never be able to properly replace her.

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#### MAJOR WORK REMAINS UNDONE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, what a difference a week makes. Last week the Republican leadership was cruising toward an early adjournment after the Congress had worked only 107 days despite the fact the Congress' work was not yet done. They had hoped to roll it all into one giant bill that none of us would have been allowed to read or understand under a special rule, and vote on it, and leave town, and go home and spend their special interest money to get reelected.

Well, things have changed. Here we are, Day 111. Pretty heavy lifting for this Republican led Congress. We have now worked 111 days in Congress with our \$137,000 salary. Of course the average American working for \$40,000 or so has worked 202 days so far this year, and they have had to finish their job day in, day out, every day of the year before they go home to their families. But this Congress has not.

But there is a change of heart in the Republican leadership. Maybe? No, not really. They have not decided to address the major work left undone, not at all. They are held here against their will.

They still refuse to address health maintenance organization insurance industry reform, patient provider

rights so people can have a right of appeal when they are denied tests they need to restore their health, and when their doctors order tests to restore their health and is denied by the insurance industry. They will not touch that with a 10-foot pole because of the tens of millions of dollars flowing in from that industry to help their reelections.

Teen tobacco prevention? That has dropped off the charts, too, because the tobacco industry is providing one heck of a lot of money for their reelections. Social Security? The only time they addressed Social Security was to attack the trust fund to attempt to give it away by calling it a surplus and spend it as tax cuts.

Now, held in D.C. against their will, they have discovered something. The people of America would like to see an investment in the public education, in the investment of their kids, in the education of their kids.

Let me say the Speaker earlier, the President has just come recently to this; he just discovered education. The President proposed back in January smaller class size, 100,000 new teachers and a major reconstruction program for the one-third of our schools that are falling apart and the other one-third that are obsolescent. They are the ones who did not discover it until this week, until they had to discover it. There has not been a single hearing held by the Republican led Congress on the issue of 100,000 new teachers, smaller class size or the crumbling state of our schools and federal assistance for them. They had ample time. We took three votes, three votes in this Chamber on school vouchers, taking our tax dollars and transferring them to private religious institutions. That is their agenda: do not help the public schools, help the private schools, help the religious schools despite what the Constitution might say.

They have spent a lot of time trying to eliminate the Department of Education that administers the Head Start program and the student loan programs. They have attempted to cut, and we blocked, school lunches for small children. They have enacted or tried to enact tax cuts for wealthy taxpayers to send their kids to private schools, again abandoning the public system, eliminating the summer jobs program for kids, eliminating the school to work opportunities for high school students, eliminating the in-school interest subsidy for student loans, and I heard someone over here wax eloquent about what they have done to lower the interest rate on loans. Yes, a tiny, tiny, tiny bit, but you were really drug kicking and screaming to that, too, because the banks did not want to give up anything on these loans where they never lose a penny that are guaranteed by the Federal Government. They cannot even be discharged in bankruptcy. They still want outrageous rates of interest. So finally the Republicans paid them off. The banks are still going to get the