

having 18,000 fewer sailors than at the appropriate levels for which I marked up as chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. We have later-deploying Army divisions that have been hollowed out because the Army lacks the resources to man them. We lack the E-5, E-6 sergeants to properly man five of the follow-on divisions. And when we are short these sergeants, we cannot just grow a sergeant overnight.

So, I am very concerned about our, quote, national military strategy to successfully fight and win nearly two simultaneous major regional conflicts. So I am pleased that in this budget agreement we will be plussing up defense. I applaud the President for being a good listener to his Chiefs. He had sent us a letter saying that he wanted to plus-up defense by a billion on readiness shortfalls. Then he learned that that billion was really in excess of 25 to 30 billion is what we really needed.

So, I am not going to stand here in the well and attack the President, because I am glad that he has been a good listener here in these budget negotiations. I would have liked to have had a higher number for defense, because I have been out there with the sailors and the soldiers and the airmen and the marines and I see the equipment. I see the cannibalization of our aircraft. I see that our ships are going to sea and they are going out there at levels that used to be called C-1 battle readiness. Now they go at levels called C-2. At C-2, they are not just going out C-2, they are going out C-2 plus 1, which means that when a ship goes out and one person has a workplace injury, now they end up at C-3 level of readiness. It is deplorable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and I appreciate the negotiators working out an increase for defense.

REASONS TO VOTE "YES" ON OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I had heard the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) saying that a "yes" vote on this apparently, I guess the implication was it would be not an educated vote. I can tell my colleagues that in order to vote "no" on this bill tomorrow, they ought to be make sure that is an educated vote as well.

Both of those votes demand that we pay attention to this budget bill, that we look through it closely and, if necessary, burn some midnight oil. I do not mind it. In fact, I get a little excited dealing with this budget. We can find any budget this Congress has ever voted on and we will find that there are a lot of good reasons to vote for it and there are some reasons to vote against it. I would suggest that tomorrow this bill will have more reasons to vote for it than to vote against it.

Every one of us probably every month, some of us every week, sit down with our own family and we budget. There is a lot of times, at least in my own family, where I do not get necessarily the spending money that I would like. Lori, my wife, does not get what she would like. Our three children, two of whom are in college, do not get what they like. But through talks and negotiations, even in the family negotiations, we come up with a budget. That is what we are doing here.

Let me highlight a couple of areas that I think are very important that this budget does do:

Number one, no tax increase. None. Zippo. No tax increase. Now, people who want to vote "no" say there is no tax cut. Folks, we do not have the tax cut in there. We did our best. We got it out of the House, but the fact is at least we stopped a tax increase with this bill.

The next item that is important is important for each and every one of us. We have got to invest in our infrastructure in this country. Our infrastructure in this country, the most important infrastructure I can think of, are our young people. And the most important thing in investing in our young people is their education.

This bill does a lot for more teachers, but do my colleagues know what the Republicans insisted on and now, as a result of joint negotiations, that we have come up with? We are going to hire more teachers, but they are not going to be hired at the Federal level. They are not going to be hired at the State level. This money goes directly into the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, I have a sister that is a schoolteacher. At times in the past, she has had to go out with her own money and buy school supply material, even though the budgets in Colorado have gone up for school supplies. Why? Because it does not get down to the classroom. These negotiations over the last 24 hours are now driving this into the classroom, and the gentleman from Mississippi should realize that. A "no" vote put its back to the Federal bureaucracy.

There are some other issues. Defense is very important to me. We do not have a defensive missile system to defend this country. If Russia or Iraq or North Korea or China or some other country launched a missile against the United States of America, contained within the boundaries of the State of Colorado we could detect it within 3 or 4 seconds, we could tell what kinds of missile and where the missile is going to hit, when it is going to hit, and what kind of load it is probably carrying. And then all we can say is good-bye, because this country does not have a missile defense system.

We need a shored up defense. We need to have a missile defense system. This bill puts a billion more dollars into the security of this country and this country's future on missile defense.

It does some other things. It increases student loans. I have a couple

of kids in college. Most out there are either facing it, have faced it or are now facing it. These student loans are critical. A lot of our kids could not go to college if they did not have a loan to do it. This increases the student loans. Again to the gentleman from Mississippi, another reason to vote "yes." A "no" vote cuts those student loans back.

Talk about the government ID system. They wanted to put in an ID system so that Uncle Sam in Washington, D.C., could keep track of us. This bill wipes it out. They wanted to put in a computer system, a database, to follow all college graduates. The government does not need to know that. It is not the Federal Government's business. This bill stops it. Another good reason to vote "yes" on this bill.

For the self-employed out there, and it has been a consistent and a very legitimate complaint that unlike other people in our society, they cannot deduct their insurance premiums for their medical insurance. This bill is putting us back on track to allow that deductibility for them.

Mr. Speaker, by digging in a document this thick we can very easily find a reason to vote "no" on this bill. But we have a fiduciary duty, a responsibility to look in that bill and see if there are not more good reasons to vote for it than against it. I suggest after we do that, we will support this bill.

EDUCATION PRIORITIES SUPPORTED BY CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Republican colleagues tonight on the other side when they started to talk about the agreement that has been reached between the House and the Senate and between the Democrats and the Republicans and the President, and I must say that I am pleased also that this agreement has been reached. Particularly, because it does include one of the major Democratic initiatives, and that is to add 100,000 teachers across the country to our various school districts.

But I do want to say that although I am happy with that result, the bottom line is that the Republican leadership has refused, really, to address the Democrats' education initiative. For a long time, they were opposed to 100,000 teachers. They continue to be opposed to the school modernization plan. Do not let them kid you and suggest that somehow from the very beginning they were interested in having the Federal Government more active in education and helping our local school district, because the fact of the matter is they have been slashing funding for education on a regular basis here for the

last 4 years since they have been in the majority.

I would also point out that the record of this Congress, even with this budget agreement, is dismal. This is clearly the do-nothing Congress. This Congress has not addressed managed care reform. This Congress has not addressed the need to increase the minimum wage. It has not addressed campaign finance reform. It has not addressed teen smoking. It has taken no action to safeguard the surplus for Social Security. And, essentially, this has been a do-nothing Congress.

□ 1930

The fact that in this last few days, because the Democrats have insisted that we include this additional funding for the 100,000 teachers, while that may be good, it does not take away from the fact that there are so many other initiatives that the American people have been crying out for that simply have not been addressed.

I heard some of my colleagues on the Republican side tonight talk about the Republican education initiative. Let me just indicate that over and over Democrats have tried this year to talk about initiatives to reduce class size and modernize our classrooms for the 21st century. But each time Republicans have rejected them. So do not let them come to the floor now and tell you that they were for 100,000 teachers and this Democratic initiative.

On two occasions this year Democrats offered amendments that would have given local school authorities billions of dollars worth of new low cost bonding authority to build new schools and modernize their existing classrooms, and Republicans rejected this amendment both times, in May and again in June of this year. Several weeks ago Democrats offered an amendment that would have started the effort to reduce class size in first through third grade classrooms to 18 children per class and Republicans opposed this proposal, too. That was in September.

I heard some of my colleagues on the other side say, we were always for this 100,000 extra teachers initiative. We wanted the Democrats to show how they were going to pay for it. It was not until the last couple days, when the Democrats agreed that they would pay for it by making cuts elsewhere, that we agreed to it.

From the very beginning of this year, when the President introduced his budget and he talked about the school modernization initiative and adding the 100,000 teachers, the President's budget in January of 1998 included all the offsets that were necessary to pay for both of these education initiatives. In fact, the 1998 Democratic budget resolution provided funding for hiring the new teachers and \$21 billion in low-cost construction bonds for local school authorities while staying within the guidelines set by the 1997 balanced budget agreement. And Republicans re-

jected this budget and instead adopted a budget that cut education by \$5.7 billion.

So do not let them tell you that they did not come to this dragging and screaming. They did.

I know we have gone through these various attempts that the Republicans have made over the last year to try to destroy public schools and eliminate equal education opportunities. I am not even going to talk about all of them, but I want to mention some of them.

First, eliminating the Department of Education. From the very beginning they have been continuing to talk about the need to eliminate the Department of Education. They have also spent a tremendous amount of time, wasted time all year trying to divert billions of dollars in public school funds for private school vouchers, taking the money away from the public schools, giving it to private schools. That failed. But do not forget that that was a major part of their efforts this year.

Also cutting school lunches for poor children, block granting critical education programs, destroying bilingual education, eliminating the summer jobs program, eliminating school to work opportunities for high school students, and eliminating the safe and drug free school program. So again, I am very pleased tonight to hear them all say that they are now for the 100,000 teachers initiative. But all along they were against it, and all along this year they have been trying to slash education funding.

I am joined this evening by some of my colleagues. We are going to talk a little bit about the Democratic education initiative and some of the other things that we have wanted that have not been enacted in this Congress.

I yield to the gentlewoman in California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding to me.

The last Republican that was up here talking spoke about how wonderful this bill was and how there might be a few problems in this large bill but that if we would read it, we would understand that there is more good than bad.

Apparently he has been able to read it, because I do not know about my colleague from New Jersey, but we have actually been asking for 24 hours to be able to get a written bill and to be able to go through it and see what is in the bill. So hopefully the Democrats will have their wish honored by the other side and will actually get a copy of this bill that is supposedly being written right now, because I would like to vote on something, and I would like to have at least read the bill once before I need to take a vote on it.

I sit on the Committee on Education and the Workforce. I have gotten to see the struggles between both sides about what is important. Let me tell you, these guys were not for 100,000 teachers

in the classroom, just as a few years ago they were not for 100,000 cops on the streets. We have seen that to be one of the most effective programs that the President has been able to push in this country, and we have neighborhood after neighborhood asking for more of this neighborhood policing that is going on. At least that is the way it is back in Anaheim and Garden Grove and Santa Ana.

One of the issues I want to talk about tonight is this whole idea about school modernization. Because while we will now get our 100,000 teachers program, the fact of the matter is, probably the most important thing that you have in the classroom is a teacher that is eager to teach, one that is eager to help students, one that makes that comfort zone, that nurturing that must happen with the student in order for that light bulb to go on and for a student to say, I can make something of myself. I am really interested in these science projects and I can work on this.

But the other issue is also about what type of a classroom they sit in when they are getting that instruction. And I will tell you, from personal experience, I am one of those fortunate Members that get to represent their own hometown. That means that the schools that I represent, the children and where they go, those are the schools that I attended. And it is a shame to see what is going on in California.

First of all, California is one of the five fastest growing student enrollment States across the Nation. While that is over 15 percent over the next 5 years, the fact of the matter is that the school districts that I represent are almost twice that growth rate with enrollment. That means we have a lot of kids coming through the system and still the same number of elementary schools that existed while I was going through the system over 30 years ago. So there is a major problem.

We need to look not only at modernizing those elementary schools and middle schools and high schools that we have in our town, but also creating more, because we have such a large enrollment coming on. In fact, in Anaheim alone, we grow at over 1000 students in the elementary school system a year. That is the equivalent of at least one elementary school.

So it is really important that we address the modernization and the new construction of new classrooms.

I go back to schools, and when they build the schools in my town, they build the elementary schools all off the same pattern. So the same elementary school had the same pattern as any of the others that you would go around to in town. I have been to them. And that place where the custodian used to wheel his wheelbarrow full of mops and brooms for the night is now a classroom for 6 special ed children and a teacher. The broom closet is a classroom for students in my school district. Or worse, where we used to walk

through the silent tunnel to get between classes so we would not have to go all the way around the entire school building, that now has a wall slapped up and a door and that has become a large classroom for students. We are really looking for more space.

For example, there were four portable, we used to call them bungalows when I went to that elementary school, there are now more. And they are sitting right there on the blacktop where I used to play tether ball and on the grass where we used to play football and dodge ball. This keeps going on and on in almost every single elementary school in Anaheim and in Santa Ana and, yes, even in Garden Grove. And so it is a real problem, the facility needs that we need.

I hope that before this budget deal is cut that we will be able to find the monies that we need to help local school districts with their modernization and their new schools.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER.)

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to me, I share the concern of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) about not having a bill. We have heard a series of Republican speakers this evening in these special orders discussing this great bill. This is the bill that we have right now, an empty table. So we hope it is a great bill, but we have not seen a great bill.

I hope that there is time to study this bill. I hope the country has some time to study this bill. We have been embarrassed before by going home and finding things in the fine print that we all wish we had known before. I hope that we will have some time this week-end to look at this bill before any vote.

On this issue of schools and education, I visited a school recently in my district. I visit a lot of them. The superintendent was talking to me about the decisions that they had made as a district to pay their bills. And he said some years ago, in fact it was before he became superintendent, the district was having such a problem, rapidly growing district, such a problem paying the bills, they made a decision, we are going to push class size to the legal max. We cannot keep up, we cannot keep up with the buildings that we have to do, the new classrooms we have to put on. We are going to put our classes as large as they can be so that we can get this district out of debt and be financially sound. He acknowledged to me, we think there was a loss by doing that.

He said he is convinced at this stage in his career that people cannot be thinking about more teachers separate from the issue of school buildings. And it is a very obvious math problem. If he has classes in the elementary level of one to 24, for example, and all his classes are 1 to 24 and he wants to get them down to 1 to 18, how does he do that? He pulls 6 kids out of 3 classes. So he

goes from three classes of 1 to 24 to three at 1 to 18. But what does he have? He has 18 kids standing in the hallway because they do not have a classroom.

These two issues go hand in hand. That is what is so confusing to me, why our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been so resistant to helping local school districts with school modernization at the same time they seem to have agreed in the last 24 hours to go along with helping them hire more teachers. You have got to have a place for these folks to teach. If you are going to reduce class size, you have to create additional classrooms.

That is a separate issue from problems we also have in Arkansas with just the need for improving our school buildings. I am sure, like all the Members here that are interested in education, I visit a lot of schools. The problems fall into two areas. You have districts that are rapidly growing and every year they are having to add additional classrooms because of rapid growth, or you have either urban or rural districts that are old buildings. And I followed a superintendent around as we went from building to building and he said, this one was built in the 1930s and then we did this addition, we think it was around 1945. And then this section was in the 1950s, but now the heating system we think was in the 1960s, but it is old and out of date and just these horror stories, at the same time discussing the problems that they have in financing these improvements.

So I appreciate the opportunity to be with you this evening to discuss this important issue. I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have not given up on this school modernization. I know the American people have not. I know the people of Arkansas have not. Those folks that visit school buildings anywhere in the country know of the tremendous work that needs to be done.

If we are going to reduce class size by hiring more teachers, we have to have places for them to go and teach with these reduced class sizes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman and I want to emphasize again, as you have, that the arguments that our Republican colleagues are using with regard to the school modernization really make no sense. From listening to some of the speakers on the other side tonight, after saying that somehow they were in favor of the 100,000 teachers, which we know they were not, because we know there were votes taken that I mentioned before that they actually voted against 100,000 teachers or additional teachers, one of the other arguments they were making, which is not a legitimate argument, was that somehow the Democratic proposal was giving control to the Federal Government and that we were going to be controlling these 100,000 teachers, how they were hired or how they were going to be administered, whatever. And then they used the same argument with re-

gard to school modernization, that they are not in favor of this program because it is Washington bureaucracy and walking away from the local school boards.

I just want to say, nothing can be further from the truth. I even heard the similar argument used with regard to the cops grants, that the cops grants was no good initially because we were going to control the cops grants from Washington. But once it was decided that the local authorities would control it, then it was okay.

Well, this is just a lot of garbage, frankly. From the very beginning with the cops grants and also with the 100,000 teachers, the Democrats were saying that we were simply providing the funding. The teachers would be hired locally just like the policemen were hired locally. There were almost no strings attached other than you had to use the money for teachers or you had to use the money to hire the police as opposed to just giving a block grant where the towns can do whatever they want with it.

The same is true for the school modernization. The way the Democratic program is set up, we are essentially giving money to basically pay the interest on the bonds for the construction of the school, which lessens the cost for municipalities that have to build new schools or renovate the schools. But local school boards are going to decide what to do with the money, whether to renovate schools or wire schools or build additional classrooms.

□ 1945

There is just no basis at all to some of the arguments that they are using.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, just to talk a little bit about that, the gentleman spoke about the fact that they think the money is going to somehow be filtered through an administrative process and never get to the school system. The fact of the matter is that the building program is not talking about money from Washington.

What it is really talking about is not sending taxes to Washington because it is a tax cut. It is a tax write-off on an income tax form. We have already got that program in place for some modernization of schools. We passed it in this highly touted 1997 Tax Relief Act that the other side voted for and some of us on this side voted for.

The fact of the matter is that we have an existing program in school construction that says, if a local school district and the community decides it is important enough to modernize a school, and they take it upon themselves, they take the responsibility of doing that, that in fact, when they float the bonds, they will be able to get a tax break.

The tax break will be equal to the interest that they would have had to pay for borrowing the money. That is a tax

credit from Washington. There is no money that comes to Washington. So there is no administration process. It is one line sitting on a tax form. It is already there, because we already have the modernization bonds.

Now what we want to do is to pass a program that would create new schools because some districts need more schools, not just modernization of their buildings.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments. What she is pointing out we are just basically saving the local school districts money, and that lowers property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, that comment, I mean it is exactly right. It lowers local property taxes, and that is so critical. My State of Connecticut, people feel like they are choked with taxes; and property taxes are particularly onerous.

So I commend the gentleman and the gentlewoman for making that point so particularly. It just shows how convoluted our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are, how they want to obstruct the meaning of these programs, and their intent, and, in fact, really throw up a smoke screen about programs that could help, not only to make sure, as our colleague, the gentleman from Arkansas said, that we have modernized schools, afford the increased numbers of teachers, to be able to assist our children, and to be able to do something for local areas with regard to the tax burden that they have.

I just want to say that, over the last several days, I have been so proud to join with my colleagues while we have talked about these issues on the floor of the House, with the entire Democratic Caucus, for standing so tall on this issue of education and our kids and their future and with the President.

Because despite what our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying tonight, and I understand psychology, but I think the American public has heard loud and clear over the last few days where the Republican leadership in this House was on the issue of 100,000 new teachers, and where the President of the United States and the Democratic Caucus has been on this issue.

We won this particular piece today for the children of America, 100,000 teachers, because, and I want to set the record straight, because the Democrats fought very, very hard to make it happen. It was not because the Republican leadership in this House felt that this was worthwhile fighting for.

I will tell my colleagues what they did think was worthwhile fighting for in these last few days. They wanted to put more money into the defense budget for a study of chewing gum. Chewing gum. Something called Stay Alert, which may have an effect in keeping people awake, keeping even our troops awake.

I use that little point to say that, no matter what they say today, we need to take a look at their remarks from yesterday and the day before and the day before and over this last year of what they felt about adding 100,000 new teachers, about reducing class size, and about modernizing our schools. There is a lengthy record, and I believe the American people understand it loud and clear.

I also think it is very, very relevant to this debate that, after they have caved in on this issue, because of the strength of the Democratic will on holding firm, they take it as a badge of victory as to not have moved on the issue of school modernization. They claim that is a victory.

I mean, what kind of a victory and where are my colleagues' values if they believe that modernizing our schools is not a direction that we ought to be going in and to make it possible for our kids to have the opportunity for advanced technology, for wiring to the Internet, for an environment which is an excellent learning environment.

The fact of the matter is, is that we are here, and we have been here for the last several days because of a Congress that is controlled by the Republican Party that has failed to do anything, not only on education, but on HMO reform, on saving Social Security, on campaign finance reform, on tobacco legislation.

I would like to just read, not a quote from any Democrat, not a comment from any Democrat, but this is a quote from Jack Kemp. As far as I know, he has not changed his party in the last 24 hours.

He says, "Today, the Republican Party is adrift, without an agenda and without purpose beyond its seeming preoccupation with saving the congressional seats of its incumbents."

That is what they are about. It is not about meeting the needs, not only of our children, but America's working families and the people who send us here to do a job on their behalf. So I know we are happy about the 100,000 teachers. But we do not have enough time to sit back and say it is done. It has only just begun. We have to stand tall every single day and every single night and be on this floor to talk about those issues that the American people care about.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to also say, because I know the gentlewoman brought it out, and both the gentlewoman from California and the gentleman from Arkansas pointed out that we have to beware, so to speak, the next few days when we look at this document to see what is in it.

The gentlewoman mentioned how we have not addressed the issue of teenage smoking, one of the issues that has not been addressed here. Yet, the other day, I was at an event where we had the copy of the amendment or a portion of this omnibus bill that was supposedly going to provide \$10 million to promote the sales of tobacco or cigarettes overseas.

So there are all kinds of things that we have got to look at to see what is in here. We may very well find, as we proceed, that they put in things that are actually contrary to the Democratic initiatives that we have talked about and have not actually been included and have not been addressed here.

So I want to mention the early speakers that have pointed out about what we do not have in the bill. We need to beware.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding to me. I could not help being in my office and listening to this debate and discussion.

I wanted to first acknowledge my colleagues the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), because I would hope that, as we discuss this, the realization would not be any form of mean-spiritedness or that we got you, because I think we need to sort of reflect on where we have come from.

Frankly, let me applaud the persistence of the President, because all of us are reminded that it was in his State of the Union address that he clearly enunciated a plan to help America's children, to help educate them.

I am always believing in the concept that education is the great equalizer. Over and over again, he noted the problems or the weaknesses with our education system, at least in the primary levels, no teachers, large classes. I think he was wise enough, and Democrats were wise enough in their analysis, to recognize that no teachers, large classrooms, and crumbling buildings.

We did, just a couple of months ago, a massive transportation bill, because the very arguments were made about America's crumbling highways. So I thought that it would be a logical nexus to say that we have the same conditions dealing with education, the potential engineers and architects and contractors and mathematicians and scientists who will be the ones that take us into the 21st century.

We are sitting in classrooms where there were curtains drawn to separate classrooms, where teachers did not have to tell them about the log cabin days, because there were more grades in one class or more students in one class who sort of understand what it meant to have a bunch of people in one room and different ideas being taught because there was not enough space.

My own high school in Houston, Texas, in my district, with outstanding students, Jeff Davis High School does not have a library. We are fighting for a library for high school students. It pains me that I have to say to these students, well, wait a few more months, a few more years.

I am gratified that our local community is going to rise to the occasion.

But like my colleague, the gentlewoman from California, where is the tax relief that we would have been able to present to them with the modernization program so we would have been able to give a big package, one to help rebuild the schools, the crumbling schools, and then put those talented professionals in the classrooms, teachers, to make a difference?

Out of that would have come the opportunity to professionally enhance these teachers as well, meaning that we need professional development. So I am gratified that this long journey from the State of the Union has finally come to the point where we have the 100,000 teachers.

Let me say this as someone from the "fourth largest city in the Nation," this 100,000 teachers is not a rule versus urban or suburban, it is a need issue. It is wherever the need is.

I want my friends, wherever they might live in America, to understand we fought for this for you so that, wherever you raise your hand and say I have need, you are going to be right in the mix just like you were for the 100,000 police officers.

There were no biases going out of here. Those police officers found themselves in large metropolitan areas. But they found themselves in communities with 10 police officers or less. They found themselves in suburbia. So we fought to ensure that our Nation's teachers would have the opportunity.

I would just simply say that I am gratified, I am committed to the fight on modernization. But I do believe our work is still to be done.

Frankly, I am delighted that we have helped farmers. I am from the urban district, but I live in the State of Texas, and farmers are suffering. I know there is more we have to do.

I am also delighted, having a community that has suffered heat disaster, which no one can understand what happens with heat, and then had on the back heels of that a flood, that we were able to ensure that we had the right kind of disaster funding that we were missing.

Also, lastly, I heard a lot of people talk against the International Monetary Fund, and it does not play well. It would probably be well for me not to even speak of it. But I think people understand loss of jobs. They understand a trembling economy.

I think it is good that we handle the IMF in a way that we are comfortable. But I do not think Americans want us to turn our back and close the door on an international monetary crisis that we can be of help.

I am glad we stayed strong so I can protect jobs in Iowa or Austin, Texas or Houston or protect them in Atlanta or New York, because I want Americans working, and I do not want them to be undermined by an international monetary crisis.

I would simply say to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that we waged an enormous battle for the

Nation's children, no matter who they are, no matter where they are educated, and for the Nation's teachers.

I have often said to a teacher whenever I have met them, I am what you have made. I am only the product that you have produced. I could not be here without the Nation's teachers.

I am so grateful that we stayed here, and we will stay here tomorrow so we can make sure the T's are crossed and the I's are dotted. The Democrats worked so hard, and we believe in collaboration, to ensure that we had 100,000 teachers as we walked out of here for our children in America.

□ 2000

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman and particularly what she pointed out about the transportation bill. Because we have heard Republicans say many times on the floor in the last few days how the Federal Government should not be spending money on education infrastructure, yet it is okay to spend money on transportation infrastructure. There is really no reason why we should not do both.

I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. I would like to elaborate a little bit about why modernization and new schools are so important. I alluded to the fact that our school districts are actually working very hard with the little that they have. They have created new classrooms out of what were not classrooms. They have put portables on school grounds to have more children come in. They have done other things. They have gone on different tracking. That means instead of the regular school year that you would have, September to sometime in June, there are now four different tracks and they go year round, so that while a student is on vacation for 3 weeks, a different set of students is using those buildings. Our school districts have done that. The other thing that they have done is to also go into double sessions. The elementary school district of Anaheim had to do that in July of this year. While it is important to understand that we need to modernize facilities because maybe it might have asbestos or maybe the roof is falling in or maybe we have got curtains and too many kids in the classroom or maybe there is no air conditioning and now because we are going year round in southern California we are hitting 100 and 102 degrees, we need air conditioning, et cetera. But the fact of the matter is that there is also a safety issue. When you have two sets of students going to school, one earlier in the morning and then one starting later in the morning but going later at night, when you get to the short days of the year, you are sending your kid in the dark to walk home. This is about personal safety for our children. It is also about personal safety within the classroom.

Last night I talked about the fact that in Anaheim an elementary school

district only has three telephone lines in. There is very little communication to each individual classroom on an on-time basis. So if something is happening in a classroom and, remember, some of these schools are rather large. There is a far-off classroom and there is a gun in that class or there is a teacher in that class who has got an off period who is grading papers and some intruder comes in, there is no way to get a message to the principal or the rest of the school that something is happening in one of these classrooms and that is dangerous, also. That is why we need to think about phone lines into the classrooms and intercom systems and everything that we do not have, at least right now we do not have it in Anaheim. So it is also about safety.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. To follow up on the gentlewoman from California, I have schools in my district where you start lunch for kindergartners or early, before-sixth graders, they start eating lunch at 10 a.m. because they do not have enough space and they have to stagger the lunch hour. So in order to get every child in to eat lunch, they actually start them eating lunch at 10 a.m.; one, interrupting the school day; but, two, feeding a child at 10 and they have to stay until 3. By the time you get to 3, those little ones can be very hungry and then possibly the other ones not eating until 1 or 2. You are so right about the question of what negative impact it has on a child. I think I read somewhere where children perform better in a better constructed environment. Clearly I think you have raised a very valid point on the safety but also the quality of life for our children where elementary school children are eating lunch at 10 a.m.

I wanted to say something that was not education-related, but I hope that we can work on the disarray of the interim payment system. I know that many of us have tried to work on that with home health care agencies. We did not get there. Those are the hardworking folk who have agencies that help the other hardworking folk to stay at home. It is a system that is breaking the backs of many of our poor home health care agencies. They need to be heard. Along with unfinished business, I hope that we will certainly take into account improving the health care of our elderly by providing them with home health care.

Certainly I just wanted to join the gentlewoman from California and say that I have been aghast at going to speak at my schools and they tell me, "Well, you have got to wait until the second graders get out of lunch," and I say, "It's 10 a.m.," they say, "Well, that's because we don't have the space in order to feed our children."

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman and also the gentlewoman from California really brought up one of the other points about this modernization program and, that is,

communications, technology, computer needs. A lot of this money where as you say is not really money but the tax breaks for the local towns would actually benefit the school systems because they would be able to upgrade communications, technology systems, put in computers, and that takes a lot of money. They just do not have it. It is not just bricks and mortar, it is obviously a lot of these other things that are important because of the communication and technology needs that we have today.

I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. SNYDER. We spend a lot of time, I think both parties do but particularly Democrats, we spend a lot of time talking about public education. I think sometimes it is important to step back and remind ourselves why do we talk about that. For a lot of us, we have to go back to our own backgrounds. Education in America is about opportunity, opportunity to dream, opportunity to support your family, opportunity to compete, opportunity to have the skills that were denied to your parents. For me personally I was raised by my mother in a single-parent household. If it had not been for quality public schools back in the 1950s, I would not have been able to become a family doctor. I depended on quality science classes throughout my public school career to prepare me to do well in medical school. Then I went to a public medical school, a State medical school, then got my residency in Arkansas at UAMS, a very fine public medical school. Our opportunity, our dreams as Americans depend on a sound public school system. Sometimes we get so focused in on the numbers, this many teachers, this kind of bond program for school modernization, how many kids per teacher, all that kind of stuff. We need to step back and think about, this is about the American dream. This is what all Americans have dreamed of forever, is the opportunity for your kids to do well through education.

I have worked overseas several times as a family doctor in some God-awful places. There are people there that literally are dying to have the opportunities that we have in public education. But we have to nurture it. We cannot take it for granted forever. I visit a lot of schools, as I mentioned earlier. I compare them with the quality that I had back in the 1950s and 1960s when I was a youngster. We have got some work to do. Some of the buildings are the same buildings. We all know that. All of us who go back home, the buildings are the same. They look about the same. They smell about the same. This is my soccer tie. It is just plain coincidence I wore it today. I paid on the street of Washington, D.C. five bucks for it and some people say I overpaid, but when I was a kid in school, we did not have soccer in school, it was something you had two days a year just to figure out what kids in Latin America did, but it is a sign of how much

change goes on around the world. Schools are now having to provide the kinds of technology that the gentlewoman from California was talking about, opportunities to build soccer fields that they never had to do. There is need for investment in infrastructure in our schools. The reason is to give our kids the chance to fulfill those dreams, the chance to compete with the rest of the world, and it is never going to happen in old buildings no matter how many teachers you have crowded into one classroom.

Mr. PALLONE. It is interesting what the gentleman said about the quality of the schools when we were younger, because I went, my school district, and where I still live in Long Branch, New Jersey, is an urban district and they have managed in my opinion over the years to keep up, if you will, by renovating the school and having good laboratories and facilities so that the science and math programs that you mentioned I believe are really still top-notch. But it has been at tremendous cost to the taxpayers. Their property taxes in the town are very high compared to a lot of the other school districts in my district, primarily because they have decided that they are going to invest that money. But it has been a cost to them because of property taxes. I know that when I decided to go to college and I ended up going to a private college after I had gone to public school from kindergarten to 12th grade, that one of the reasons that the college was interested in me is because they knew that the school system, that the public school that I went to had good science and math programs, and that was a major factor for my being able to get into that school. In fact, I never felt that I was that good in science and math compared to some other areas, but I realized when I got to school even though it was a private college or university that I had really been prepared well in those areas even though they were not the areas that I really liked that much.

It is very difficult for the school systems to keep up. I do not know if it is true in every State but I know that in my State the municipalities usually vote on whether or not they are going to have a bond referendum to build a new school or to do these kind of additions and it is very difficult to get support from the local taxpayers for those bond issues because of the expense and the impact on the local property taxpayer.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I just want to add a comment because I think that the gentleman is absolutely right, that it is the American dream and education has been the great equalizer. We have said this on this floor a number of times. It has been the opportunity that we have all had no matter where we come from or what gender we are or what socioeconomic group we are from, we have had the opportunity of public edu-

cation. That has allowed us to succeed. If you think about it, this age of new technology, if the schoolhouse or the school building is not going to be the place where youngsters can have access to the new technology, which is truly the key to the future in the same way that we have had access to textbooks, every child has a textbook, we are rapidly coming to a situation where every child is going to have to have a computer. We are looking at an infrastructure, an education infrastructure that does not allow for that at this moment. So that you are going to take education backward, because this new technology, if not available to everyone and every school district, we are then going to have the haves and have-nots, and that opportunity that public education being the great equalizer then no longer holds true.

My community, I come from an urban area, in the northeast, it has an old infrastructure, whether it is roads, whether it is buildings, or anything else. We did a survey, we had 71 schools respond to it. The average age of the elementary school buildings is 50 years old; more than half of the schools regularly hold classes in areas designed not to be classrooms as we talked about; more than 50 percent of the schools have no computer lab or room. The majority of the schools have no computers designated for teacher use. Many schools do not have computers in every classroom. So a youngster does not get that opportunity in the classroom. Now, it is true that many families today have the economic wherewithal to have a computer, but many do not. So when that child goes home, they do not have the same advantage as someone who can go home and because of an economic status that that family has this kind of a technology. If we are not careful, we are going to set education back. We are going to set a generation of our youngsters back.

For me, I will be very honest with you, I thought the Internet was something that Michael Jordan had worked out, it was a basketball thing here. My kids have rapidly taught me that that is different. But I am at the curve coming down. My kids, your kids, the youngsters today, this is their ticket to success. If our education infrastructure does not meet the demands of the time to allow our kids to compete, they are going to continue to fall further and further behind. That is why this is so critical, to maintain that standard, to realize that American dream that our youngsters need to have.

Mr. PALLONE. And I think also that what we are trying to do as Democrats is make the point that the Federal Government has to make more of a commitment to public education. It is great that we have the Republicans agreeing now to this initiative of 100,000 teachers, but if they do not continue and agree to the school modernization initiative, it is only half a loaf and if we want to see this Congress

and future Congresses go on record as being supportive of public education and a Federal role or commitment to public education, we need to keep pushing for the school modernization program.

Ms. DELAURO. I just want to make one more point. I think it is critical to understand that today in the newspapers and in the commentary is that they feel they had won a victory by not moving on the issue of school modernization. I think that speaks volumes. Because you are right, we have got to have a Federal role, not do everything but have an involvement as we have said here. But they take it as proud that they did not do anything in this area.

Mr. PALLONE. We have got to have a whole change of attitude in terms of what Congress is going to do in terms of its commitment to public education. They obviously still do not have it when they are taking pride in the fact that they did not get the school modernization program in here.

Ms. SANCHEZ. There was a certain point that the gentleman from Arkansas brought up, and I sort of want to expand a little on that. Whenever I listen to the Republican side of the Congress talk about this, it almost seems as if they want to pit private versus public. There is a reason why the majority of us are looking after the interests of public schools, because over 90 percent, I think it is 92, 94 percent of all children in America go to a public school. Does that mean, for example, that I do not like private schools? That is not the case at all. I am probably the most perfect example here of a public-private partnership when it comes to education. First of all, I am the only Congressperson who went to Head Start. That is a Federal program, I think one that works very, very well. I went to a public school system in Anaheim. I went to a private 4-year university, Chapman University, right in my area. I went there with a Pell grant, with student loans. Those are two Federal programs; with a Cal Aid grant, that is a State program; with a scholarship from Retail Clerks Local 324 because I was an ice cream scooper in my first job and I was a union member and they wanted to help me with my education. I also received a private scholarship from a man named Bob Prawley, a trustee at Chapman University who made sure every year I had enough money so I could finish 4 years at Chapman and get my degree in economics. And then I went on to get my M.B.A. out here at American University in Washington, D.C. And who paid for that? Student loans and the Rotary Club of Anaheim, California. You want to talk about public-private? I know what that is about. So it is not like I am sitting here saying I do not like private schools. In fact, the fact of the matter is I work very hard with many of the private schools in my district. Let me tell my colleagues a case in point.

Modern Day Catholic High School in my district, behind it is a local neighborhood, very good neighborhood. I had a few calls from people there. Actually I had a group who came in and talked to me in my congressional office. They said, you know the kids park their cars in the neighborhood. Well, you know, maybe that is a problem, people do not want to see cars, you know, of the students. But that was not the problem they came with. They said, we think there are drug houses in our neighborhood, and unfortunately we think that some of the people they saw too might be some of the students, and so can you help us with this situation of getting the parking out of our neighborhood so that we do not have these drug houses? So what did I do? I went and I searched for more information. I went to Modern Day, and when I sat down with the principal and the vice principal I told them the concerns of this particular neighborhood, and they said to us, well, you know, we do not think it is really our kids who are making the drug houses be there, and I said, okay, well I can understand that. They said, but you know there is a solution to the problem of the parking. They said as soon as Bristol Street is widened, which is the frontage road right there to the school, we will be able to build a parking structure so that all our students can park in this parking structure. And I said to them, well, what can I do to help accelerate that? They said, one, get the funds to build Bristol Street and widen it, and secondly, we have a capital fund going for the parking structure because it is a private school. I said, well, I cannot solicit funds for you, but I can sure mention it to my Catholic friends since I am a Catholic and say, you know, school down the way might, you know, need some help with a parking structure they have got going.

So what happened? In this transportation bill that you were talking about earlier we got a very important project funded in the city of Santa Ana, the widening of Bristol Street. We pushed it. It broke ground for the project 3 weeks ago, and Modern Day is halfway to the amount of money that it needs. It has got a capital fund going to build the parking structure. And so here we have solved a problem of, one, the neighborhood, unhappy; two, a parking structure that the school needed; and three, a very important arterial that goes through the area that needed to be widened for traffic purposes, and we have solved a problem, and it is a win for the neighborhood, it is a win for the school, it is a win for the city, it is a win for the people who use the road.

So I am not sitting there saying I cannot do anything for private schools. What I am talking about is working together in a good manner, but first and foremost, we need to be worrying about the public schools and the fact that the majority of our students, over 90 percent go there, and that is why we are talking about public school funding here tonight.

Mr. PALLONE. I agree with the gentlewoman from California, and I think it is, you know, very obvious that all of us, you know, we try to help private schools when we can as well. But the point is that overwhelmingly in almost every district, I think, the students are in public schools, and frankly we know how difficult it is for the local school boards to raise the funding or, as you mentioned were the bond issue, to get the bonds that float the bonds to put additions or do renovations. And so we cannot just neglect them and say there is no Federal role. There is clearly a Federal role.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman, and following up on what my good friends have said, I was really struck by the gentleman's comments from Arkansas because all of us can have our own stories about what public education has done for us frankly, and I certainly am a product of public school education for 12 years and then going to a private college. So there is so much, there is so much that one can gain by explaining to the American people, who already understand that the public school education or our support for public school education is not an either-or, it is not where we discard or attempt to replace the private school education. In fact, when you go into your local communities, you do not even hear this tension, there is so much collaboration between public and private schools, exchange of students and ideas, teachers teaching in the different schools, classrooms sharing with private school settings. In fact, I know those kinds of things occur all the time: private school students tutoring or working with public school students.

So this big issue that there is an either-or I think is made up here inside the Beltway, but what is understood by our local communities is the value of tax relief, and I have not heard one principal or one superintendent say, you know, if you pass the school modernization bill, it will be intrusive, it will be big government from Washington taking control, and we do not want it. And that is what I think is so very important, that we sort of educate the American public so that they can be comfortable with their own beliefs which is why not a school modernization program? Why should we not have a program that gives us tax relief?

And I think it is important taking up the points that were made by both my colleague from Connecticut and California. I mean we can document with great, great substance the idea that our schools are falling behind on technology, not because they desire, but because it is so expensive, one, to initially purchase the equipment, but the infrastructure that they need, and then the technology changes so quickly our schools will tell you that we need another set of computers, maybe it is 10 in the school, maybe 18 months after

they purchase the first. So they know what it is like to suffer at the hands of a moving technology, they want to have their children be conversant with the technology, they want their teachers to be conversant. Can we do no less than give them some relief, if you will, by participating and supporting and passing a school modernization bill so that there is some relief to all of the many things that they have to do?

In fact, in visiting my schools one of the things that I find most disturbing, and we have a very good program in Houston, is the unsafe school yards where children are in need of safe school yards and good equipment because of the fact that is a very strong part of their education. And I want to applaud my local community for having a program that helps them get good school yards and play areas.

But I do believe that we have a message, but we also have a challenge that we must help America, not only with the hundred thousand teachers, but we must help America rebuild our schools, and I hope that we will make it very clear that we are not finished with our work yet on that very important challenge.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I just want to say to the gentleman that I am proud to have been part of an effort in these last several days to stand tall and to stand strong for America's children.

The battle on this issue we won, and the Republicans had to cave on that issue. We will fight the battle for school modernization, but we will also in a Congress that failed to do what the American public has clamored for to do something about managed care reform, to do something about making sure that we save the Social Security system that has been one of the success stories of this country, of today providing two-thirds of America's seniors with over one-half of their income, and we have to make sure that that is a program that is strong and safe not only for those today who are in the program, for the next generation and for generations after that.

And we have to focus our attention on those issues, as well as tobacco legislation and campaign finance reform, and in the same way that we stood tall and strong on the issue of education, the American public needs to know that we are going to be there, the Democrats are going to be there on these issues in the next several weeks, in the next several months, in the next Congress which I believe we will hold the majority in that Congress, and to make in fact the reality of opportunities that the majority party let go in this session and that they failed to do something about.

That is where we have to go next.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman, and I appreciate the fact that you are pointing out very clearly that although this Congress is coming

to an end, that these problems that this Republican Congress have failed to address are not going away.

In my district every day people complain to me about problems with HMOs, and those problems are not going to go away unless we pass patient protection legislation like our democratic Patient Bill of Rights.

And the same thing is true for campaign finance reform. We are about to go into this campaign with all kinds of soft money being used back and forth and the Republicans spending something like 30 or \$40 million of soft money on various campaigns. We need to reform the system. They have ignored that. It is not going to get better, it is going to get worse unless this Congress does something about it.

And the same is true for minimum wage. The minimum wage is too low. We have economic prosperity, and things are pretty good out there, but a lot of people are not benefiting from it because the minimum wage is too low. We have to do something about it. We have to change it. We have to raise it.

And we once again talked about public education here tonight. I am glad that the Republicans agreed to this hundred thousand extra teachers initiative, but there has to be a greater commitment to public education here, and you know that the Republicans are just going to go back to their anti public education agenda.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1197. An act to amend title 35, United States Code, to protect patent owners against the unauthorized sale of plant parts taken from plants illegally reproduced, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1560. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1756. An act to amend chapter 53 of title 31, United States Code, to require the development and implementation by the Secretary of the Treasury of a national money laundering and related financial crimes strategy to combat money laundering and related financial crimes, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendments of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2807) "An Act to amend the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 to prohibit the sale, importation, and exportation of products labeled as containing substances derived from rhinoceros or tiger."

The message also announced that the Senate had passed bills of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1171. An act for the relief of Janina Altagracia Castillo-Rojas

S. 1202. An act providing relief for Sergio Lozano, Faucio Lozano, and Ana Lozano.

S. 1460. An act for the relief of Alexandre Malofienko, Olga Matsko, and their son, Vladimir Malofienko.

S. 1551. An act for the relief of Kerantha Poole-Christian.

S. 1916. An act for the relief of Marin Turcinovic, and his fiancée, Corina Dechalup.

S. 1926. An act for the relief of Regine Beatie Edwards.

S. 1961. An act for the relief of Suchada Kwong.

S. 2107. An act to enhance electronic commerce by promoting the reliability and integrity of commercial transactions through establishing authentication standards for electronic communication, and for other purposes.

S. 2476. An act for the relief of Wei Jingsheng.

S. 2637. An act for the relief of Belinda McGregor.

S. 2638. An act to provide support for certain institutes and schools.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 191) entitled "An Act to throttle criminal use of guns."

TRIBUTE TO REPRESENTATIVE FRANK RIGGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, the subject of my special order is basically to recognize one of our colleagues, dear friend of mine, Representative FRANK D. RIGGS from the First Congressional District of California. I first became acquainted with FRANK really over the telephone, and I believe we spoke once before the election in 1990 and once on election day in the evening after the results were known, or perhaps it was the next day. But the first time I met him was when we were both new Members of the House back here for our freshman orientation, which in those days, and I think this is one of the last times this happened, maybe the next to the last, we, in those days, the new Democrat and Republican Members received orientation together.

□ 2030

That included a trip to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and then also a trip down to Williamsburg, sponsored by, I believe, the Congressional Research Service and perhaps one or two other organizations.