

Established in 1986 by the National Ethnic Coalition Organization, Ellis Island Award Recipients embody exceptional humanitarian efforts and contributions to fellow Americans. Previous awardees have included six United States Presidents, Governors, community advocates, and members of both the Senate and House of Representatives. Along with Mr. Doolan, other 1999 Ellis Island Award recipients include: First Lady Hillary Clinton, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, and Senator John Glenn.

Mr. Doolan was joined at the awards ceremony by his lovely wife of 36 years, Grace Ann Doolan and his three daughters, Theresa Doolan, Jennifer Doolan Patty and Jeanne Doolan Cunningham. A former resident of Duncanville, TX, the Doolans currently reside in the quiet suburb of Heath, located on the outskirts of Dallas.

Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn today, let us do so in honor and respect for this great American, Mr. Martin P. Doolan.

#### CELEBRATING THE UNIQUE HISTORY OF MASS CITY, MICHIGAN

#### HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 30, 1999*

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call your attention to the 100th birthday of Mass City, a small community in the western part of the Upper Peninsula in Michigan's 1st Congressional District. Although it is a small dot on the map, like many Midwest communities Mass City has its own rich and unique history. On this centennial occasion, I'd like to share a few highlights of that history with my House colleagues.

As a local writer noted, it was the great continental glaciers 10,000 years ago that gave final shape to the topography of northern Michigan, but it was geologic activity hundreds of millions of years earlier that planted in the area rich deposits of copper. This ore would sustain a long copper culture among the earliest settlers in the region, and it would serve as one of the powerful attractions for later European settlers.

Timber was the second attraction, and land for agriculture was the third, especially for many Finnish immigrants who settled in the area in the early 1900s.

Mass City was born in 1899 in this burst of economic activity, but today's guardians of local lore are left with the mystery of the community's name. Is it an abbreviation for "Massachusetts City," since five members of the board of directors of the Mass Consolidated Mining Company were from that state?

Maybe it was named for the Mass Mine, discovered by Noel Johnson, an early African-American settler in the area. The prevailing sentiment, however, is that the name comes from the mass copper in the surrounding hills. As late as the 1990s, chunks of native copper weighing more than a ton were found in the community's Caledonia Mine.

The boom days of mining are gone now, Mr. Speaker, and only a few farms are still active. Lumbering is still important to the regional economy, but it takes a back seat to what I believe is the region's greatest asset—its remarkable quality of life. A belief in the value of

hard work and the importance of family are reinforced by the beauty of the natural surroundings. This is the North Woods, where crisp, star-filled winter nights or summer breezes rustling the pines are gentle reminders of the Presence of the Almighty.

Mass City will hold its reunion and centennial celebration July 2–4. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the real celebration of this region will continue as long as there are men and women living there who continue to add to its history and treasure its heritage and values.

#### INTRODUCING THE SCHOOL AND LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION AFFORDABILITY ACT

#### HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 30, 1999*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the School and Library Construction Affordability Act to make high-quality construction and repairs less costly for our nation's communities, schools and citizens.

This measure would exempt public schools and libraries from the inflationary and costly effects of the federal Davis-Bacon prevailing wage laws.

I am offering this legislation specifically to address three issues.

First, 22 States have chosen not to impose state Davis-Bacon laws or have specifically exempted schools from coverage, so it is wise for us to make the federal laws to be more harmonious with state laws in this area.

Second, it is well-known that the AFL-CIO wants to use the President's school construction bond initiative as a vehicle to expand federal Davis-Bacon laws over a much larger number of local public schools than must abide by it today. At this time, the federal Davis-Bacon Act applies to public school construction in cases where the public school receives federal funds as general revenue. Impact Aid, for example, is such a general revenue program. By contrast, "categorical" programs like Title I, designated for a specific purpose, are not general revenue to a school, and do not trigger Davis-Bacon coverage of school construction and repair. Rather than to add to the immense federal regulatory burden on our schools, we need to work to reduce that burden so that they can focus their scarce resources on educating their children.

And third, Davis-Bacon increases construction cost 5–38 percent. Each year, the General Accounting Office makes note that eliminating the federal Davis-Bacon Act would save federal taxpayers billions of dollars. The federal Davis-Bacon Act is also well-known to be prone to extensive waste and abuse. With this legislation we will help ensure that each citizen's school bond dollar buys a dollar's worth of building and repairs.

The School and Library Construction Affordability Act allows schools and libraries to get more school buildings, and more school repairs, for their scarce taxpayer dollar. It respects the right of states and localities to establish their own labor practices, without imposing unnecessary regulations from Washington, D.C. It is neither pro-union or anti-union, for under this measure everyone will be able to compete fairly and equitably for school

and library construction and repair work. It may not be construed to diminish the high quality of construction and repairs that the purchasers of these services—our communities and our local taxpayers—always and rightfully insist upon. This bill is simply in the best interests of America's children.

This legislation is supported by the Associated Builders and Contractors, and the National School Boards Association. I have attached below the texts of their letters of support. In introducing this measure, I am joined by a dozen original cosponsors from across the country.

I hope my colleagues will join me in support of our local schools and public libraries, in support of regulatory relief for our communities, and in support of our children by co-sponsoring the School and Library Construction Affordability Act, and moving to enact it.

ASSOCIATED BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS,  
Rosslyn, VA, June 15, 1999.

Hon. DUKE CUNNINGHAM,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN CUNNINGHAM: On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), and its more than 20,000 contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and related firms across the country, I would like to express our strong support for the "School and Library Construction Affordability Act." This is much needed legislation to exempt public schools and libraries from the inflationary and costly effects of the federal Davis-Bacon Act.

By eliminating Davis-Bacon requirements for school and library construction, Congress will help lift outdated burdens and federal restrictions and help improve local control and flexibility in leveraging education dollars. It will give local school districts the ability to spend resources where they will most effectively meet students' educational needs.

As you know, Davis-Bacon inflates the cost of construction anywhere from 5 to 38 percent, thus hurting those who fund, provide, and receive public education by forcing school districts to pay more to provide students with less. Davis-Bacon siphons tax dollars which could be better spent on real efforts to help education—such as additional school repairs, more facilities, books, computers, and other services that actually improve classroom learning and benefit school children.

Twenty-two states have recognized the waste associated with federal restrictions like Davis-Bacon and have chosen *not* to have similar state restrictions on schools. Ohio, for example, exempted school construction and repair from the state's "little Davis-Bacon Act" in 1997, and has since found preliminary savings have averaged 10 percent lower costs. Davis-Bacon serves as an "unfunded mandate" on those states, by forcing them to work under a Depression-era labor law that mandates inefficient practices and inflates construction costs.

Additionally, eliminating Davis-Bacon restrictions will help give local residents entry-level job and training opportunities on projects in their own neighborhood, by allowing contractors to hire "helpers," as they do for schools not hindered by Davis-Bacon. This will be an important step toward ensuring job opportunities for many low-skilled minorities, at-risk youth, and displaced workers to "earn while they learn" in their community.

ABC applauds your leadership in introducing the "School and Library Construction Affordability Act" to help improve use

of our nation's tax dollars and ensure real educational improvements.

Sincerely,

JENNIFER BOUCHER,

*Director, Government Affairs.*

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION,

*Alexandria, VA, June 14, 1999.*

Hon. DUKE CUNNINGHAM,

*House of Representatives,*

*Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposed legislation that would exempt schools and libraries from federal Davis-Bacon prevailing wage provisions. We strongly support the intent of your legislation to keep federal support for school and library construction free from the constraints of Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements. The National School Boards Association, representing 95,000 school board members through its federation of 53 states and territories, believes that in both direct federal funding for school and library construction and indirect support through federal tax credits must be unencumbered by the inflationary factors associated with the Davis-Bacon law.

Throughout the United States public school students find themselves coping with

intolerable conditions in school facilities. Many students attend schools with overcrowded classrooms, obsolete equipment, classrooms not wired for current computing technology, and other structural obstacles that impact student safety and learning.

According to a 1996 General Accounting Office report, 38 percent of urban schools, 30 percent of suburban schools, and 30 percent of rural schools have at least one building that needs extensive repair or total replacement. More than one-third of all public school students attend classes in school buildings that need serious repair or replacement. The estimated costs of these repairs and replacements are \$112 billion.

Several proposals have been introduced, such as America's Better Classrooms Act of 1999 (H.R. 1760) by Congresswoman Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, to help local municipalities obtain funding to build desperately needed new schools and renovate outdated and unsafe classrooms. This legislation will provide tax credits for the interest of \$25 billion in new public bonds for school construction and renovation. NSBA believes that this and similar legislation begins to address the magnitude of the school construction crisis. However, we are concerned

that the inclusion of Davis-Bacon would severely undermine the real impact of such initiatives.

For instance, if Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements were explicitly applied to this tax provision, it would impact 38 states that either have no state prevailing wage laws, or have prevailing wage requirements substantially less intrusive than federal requirements. That means, for the most impoverished rural and inner-city school districts, construction and renovation costs would increase as much as 15 percent over current costs minimizing the assistance provided by the underlying tax credit.

In this light, we strongly support the intent of your proposed legislation to explicitly state that federal Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements will not be applied to school construction tax credits or direct funding for construction of schools and libraries.

We appreciate your support for our America's children.

Sincerely,

ANNE L. BRYANT,

*Executive Director.*