

Happy Memorial Day.

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

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

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

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

DEMOCRATS NOT REVEALING THEIR HAND ON SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was stunned today when I picked up a copy of *The Hill* magazine and saw an article written by Hans Nichols, and the headline was "Rubin Urges Democrats Not to Reveal Their Hand, Clinton Aide Tells Party to Hold Firm on Social Security."

They go on to describe, "The steward of President Clinton's economic policy told the House Democratic Caucus yesterday that it needs to continue to hold firm in opposition to the President's plan and advised Democrats not to introduce their own plan, according to aides and lawmakers in the meeting."

It goes on to say, "The aide said that Rubin told his party that his party's colleagues would be hard-pressed to win a battle of specifics."

Hard-pressed to win a battle of specifics, this from the former Treasury Secretary, a man largely credited with building the international reputation of Goldman Sachs, which is all about specifics, tells the party, the Democrats, not to offer specifics.

And they say, "Democratic lawmakers said that the encouragement from a Clinton administration figure would steel the Caucus in its resolve to defeat the President's plan." Steel the caucus to defeat a plan. Of course, they do not have one of their own.

Since they are using President Clinton as an example, his experts say, "Do not offer a plan," let me read to you Morton Kondracke's editorial, "Democrats Need Their Own Social Security Plan."

"It is time for Democrats to declare what kind of Social Security reform they favor. Even former President Clinton thinks so. Yet the Democrats persist in attacking President Bush's ideas, often misleadingly.

President Clinton told ABC's "Good Morning, America" in an exchange curiously not broadcast, curiously not broadcast, "I think Democrats should

say what they are for on Social Security in the next couple weeks. Democrats should have a plan and they should talk to the President and congressional Republicans about it."

"According to ABC's political blog, The Note, Clinton said he didn't think Democrats deserved criticism for not producing a plan yet, but they still had time to produce one. He added, 'I think they need to come up with a plan of their own.'

"One Member," the gentleman from Florida, ROBERT WEXLER, whom I respect and admire, "came up with a plan and he was largely booed by his colleagues." Largely booed. "According to numerous aides, minority leader PELOSI's strategy is to wait until we see the whites of their eyes before offering a Democratic alternative. Democratic leadership aides were critical of Wexler's timing, saying it clashed with PELOSI's strategy of waiting until they see the whites of their eyes before offering a Democratic alternative."

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Wait until they see the whites of their eyes. Like this is a battle, like this is a combat mission. It is, after all, about saving Social Security for future generations, not about fighting an enemy force. Seeing the whites of their eyes has largely been equated to battle, to taking down the enemy. They are using those same kinds of conversations about American citizens trying to build a safety net in Social Security.

Lo and behold: "Teamsters President Praises Bush's Social Security Work. Teamsters President James P. Hoffa, breaking his estrangement from the White House, praised President Bush on Tuesday for attempting to fix Social Security and said Democrats were wrong to oppose any discussion until Mr. Bush drops his personal retirement account plan." That is Jimmy Hoffa representing 1.4 million members of a union. And he said he was willing to work with the administration and the Republican majority in Congress to come up with a bipartisan solution.

I quote Mr. Hoffa: "Social Security is a major problem in this country. We have to make sure that it is preserved for those that come after us," Mr. Hoffa said in an interview with Gannett News Service. "I think President Bush should be given credit for the fact that he has initiated a debate regarding what we should do."

Now let me read some quotes from Democrats who, when President Clinton had a plan, oh, they were enthusiastic. This refers to President Clinton: "This fiscal crisis in Social Security affects every generation."

Let us read HARRY REID, the minority leader of the Senate: "Most of us have no problem with taking a small amount of the Social Security proceeds and putting it into the private sector."

When asked by Tony Snow on Fox News, "Are you opposed to letting people make the investment decisions? In

other words, having some component where they say, I will save the money rather than letting Uncle Sam doing it for me?" Senator REID in 1999: "I think it is important that we look, and I am totally in favor to do this. And, in fact, there are a couple of programs now that we are taking a look at to see if it works for Social Security."

Now, I agree in my heart that there is opportunity for negotiations, but simply saying "no" by the Democrats is unacceptable to every senior and every future generation to follow.

EDUCATION FUNDING

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

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 23, I read a disturbing story in *The Oregonian* newspaper. It was not about the war in Iraq, the rise of unemployment in Oregon, or even the growing problem with methamphetamine abuse. Instead, this story focused on a school fundraiser.

What was so disturbing about this fundraiser is that the students and their parents at Redland Elementary School in Oregon City were hosting a jog-a-thon to raise money to hire a physical education teacher. It was not for band uniforms, not for supplies, or even for a field trip; it was to hire a teacher. The parents and students have hosted this fundraiser every year since 1994 when the school district no longer had enough money to pay for a PE teacher.

Sadly, this is not the first tale of such fundraisers in Oregon. In 2003, the *Eugene Register-Guard* reported on similar efforts of parents who were hosting fundraisers to pay for a math teacher. Math classes were jeopardized because the then current math teacher was retiring and there was not enough money to hire a new math teacher. The parents and teachers decided to give their blood to fund the position. That is right, blood. After realizing that bake sales would not raise enough money, parents and teachers decided to sell their blood plasma to raise money to fund a teacher.

When it comes to education funding, it is increasingly parents and teachers who are scrambling to cover budget shortfalls; and, unfortunately, Oregon has been one of the States hit hardest by budget shortfalls. Across our State, schools are closing, increasing class sizes, or eliminating or cutting music, art, athletics, marching band, and other important so-called "extra-curricular" activities.

Oregon's school districts have carved a total of almost 500 days or 12 million instructional hours off the 2003 school year, and at least 1,100 teacher positions have been lost so far. Oregon has abolished State tests for writing, math, and science in middle schools; and some schools have received no new textbooks since 1988.

Spanish is emerging as the sole option for Oregon students who want to study a foreign language, as budget cuts translate to reduced programs in languages such as German, French, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese.

In Douglas County, 80 new teaching positions were eliminated, class sizes are expected to increase from 20 or so students to the low 30s, and sports and other extracurricular activities are going to take a hit.

Yamhill High School in my congressional district saw average class size jump by 10 to 20 students. That is 10 to 20 more students in the average classroom.

A math teacher in Hillsboro has two classes that top out at 54 students in each class, and other classes throughout our State routinely have 40 or more students per class.

In Portland, high school students and their parents were running telethons and auctions and collecting recyclables to pay money for teacher salaries and basic supplies.

The Medford School District eliminated 23 staff members, including seven child development specialists, two school nurses, two psychologists, and several maintenance and secretarial positions; and the district will start charging each student, each student, \$100 to pay a fee per sport in high school and \$50 in middle school.

In Lake Oswego, families are paying as much as \$900 a year for their children to play high school sports.

In order to retain as many teachers as possible and to keep class sizes down, the Dallas school district was unable to purchase new textbooks. Many students were studying from textbooks older than themselves until an anonymous donor gave \$185,000 and provided 2,700 students with new science and math books. Other school districts have asked parents to help curb the supply shortage by pitching in a variety of items, including crayons and even toilet paper.

And after Junction City School District cut art, music, and gym classes, laid off three teachers, and eliminated all field trips, some local male farmers ages 40 to 70 decided to drop everything, Full Monty style, by modeling for a nude pin-up calendar to raise money for schools.

These stories would be funny if they were not so deeply disturbing. We have a responsibility so that our children can get their education, and we should not be relying on parents to do bake sales, students to do jog-a-thons, parents to do pin-up calendars, or, worst of all, blood sales to bridge budget gaps; but they are, and sadly, they are not the only ones making sacrifices. A couple of years ago, the teachers in the Portland public schools taught for 2 weeks without pay.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this Chamber to do a better job, and I urge my home State of Oregon to do a better job.

Parents, teachers, and community leaders continuously demonstrate their deep pride in

and commitment to public education. Most parents will make any sacrifice to ensure that their children receive a quality education. And I know that teachers want nothing more than to see their students learn. While this generosity and commitment are heartwarming and inspiring we should hang our heads in shame that our schools are so desperate that parents and teachers have to sell their blood, pose for pinups, or work without pay to provide our children with the education they deserve.

I ran for Congress to improve the quality and accessibility of our education system. I believe strongly that an education is the best investment that we can make in our children and for our future.

We already have a glimpse of what our future can bring.

We can now travel the globe in a matter of hours. Business transactions can be performed with the click of a mouse. And our cars have more computing power than the Apollo spacecraft.

In this fast paced, digital age, it is important that we provide our children with a high quality education that will equip them for what the future holds.

Since I have been in Congress, I have made over 200 visits to over a hundred schools, and I have talked to teachers, students and parents from all over Oregon. In every school I have visited, the parents, students and teachers all agreed about what works: quality teachers, small class size, high standards and shared accountability, parental and community involvement, and adequate and equitable funding.

That is why I introduced the Class Size Reduction Initiative, which would hire 100,000 new teachers to reduce class size to 18 students in kindergarten through third grade. As a result of this initiative, we were able to provide over \$3 billion to school districts all across the country, hiring over 30,000 teachers—including over 300 in Oregon. One of those new teachers was placed in Reedville Elementary School in Aloha and reduced class size in first grade 54–27 54–18.

Yet, today the Administration and the Majority Leadership in Congress are turning their backs on education. President Bush in his budget has proposed a cut of \$530 million in education. He has eliminated funding for the Class Size Reduction Initiative. In fact, of the 150 programs that the president has targeted for massive reduction or elimination, 50 of them are education programs. He also short-changes the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) by \$12 billion. That guarantees children will be left behind.

The Federal Government is not the only one at fault. States across the nation are also balancing their budgets on the backs of our children, and our schools.

We can and must do better for our children, for ourselves and for our future. Common sense tells us that we need to prepare our students for the future so that the United States will continue to prosper. But this issue is more than about staying economically competitive. An education is necessary for everyone's quality of life. It is necessary for our society and for our democracy.

I urge my colleagues to join me in fighting for high quality public education. Our children should not be short-changed. They should not be forced to jog to raise money for a PE teacher, their teachers should not be asked to

work for free, and their parents should not pose nude or be drained of blood to keep the schoolhouse doors open.

IN MEMORY OF VICE MAYOR KATHLEEN NICOLA

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, it is my sad duty to inform this House and the people of this Nation of the passing of a dedicated public servant. The vice mayor of Fountain Hills, Arizona, Kathleen Nicola, passed away last week as the result of a boating accident.

A longtime Arizona resident, Kathleen Connelly Nicola moved to Lake Havasu City, Arizona, in June of 1967. After a move to Mesa in 1985, Kathleen and her family settled in Fountain Hills in 1989.

Kathleen's service to the town of Fountain Hills began in 1990 when she began working for the municipal court after a brief period of volunteering her services. During her tenure as administrator of the court over the following 9 years, Kathleen's extensive duties included budget preparation and day-to-day management of that court.

Kathleen's responsibilities likewise included the court's compliance with local, county, and State statutes, rules and administrative orders, in addition to statistical and financial reports; and with that involvement and background in government, Kathleen Nicola decided to run for the Fountain Hills Council in 2002, serving there with distinction, rising to the post of vice mayor prior to her tragic death last week.

Kathleen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Justice Studies from the College of Public Programs from Arizona State University. She graduated from the Arizona School of Real Estate and Business, making a career change in the summer of 2000 to become a licensed real estate salesperson. A local real estate professional, Kathleen was an active member of the Fountain Hills Chamber of Commerce and the Scottsdale Association of Realtors.

Kathleen Nicola, one of those in America who understood that public service can be expressed through many avenues of citizen involvement, finally choosing to run for public office, serving as the vice mayor of the town she loved.

Residents of the fifth congressional district, the town of Fountain Hills join as one to express their sympathies and condolences to the Nicola family. And, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that all Americans would remember the Nicola family in their prayers during these difficult days.

The legacy of Kathleen Connelly Nicola, a woman called to service, service in her town, service in public office, service in her profession. She will be