

from dipping further than we have already seen it fall.

Indeed, "We cannot escape history. We hold the power, and bear the responsibility. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of Earth."

President Lincoln, truer words were never spoken.

DIPLOMA ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, for so many, education is the key to the American Dream. But for so many, a good education seems like it is beyond reach. That is why I am introducing the DIPLOMA Act, or Developing Innovative Partnerships and Learning Opportunities that Motivate Achievement.

This legislation will address obstacles to learning by giving out grants to schools, social service programs, and the local community to create comprehensive, community-based solutions that will ensure that our struggling students will succeed.

For awhile now, I have advocated for changing the tone of debate that surrounds school reform. Too often critics point fingers instead of offering solutions. That is why I am pushing for real change, dramatic change in our schools that harnesses the energy of parents, the community, and the school to turn around our failing schools that lift up all our students.

Now, there is no denying that this approach can be challenging and hard work, but research shows when communities, parents, and schools collaborate and work together, there is nothing we can't achieve. I know this because I have seen it firsthand in my district.

In East Los Angeles, Esteban E. Torres High School is a shining example of a community school. It's the first new school built in the neighborhood in 85 years, and its facilities and classrooms are simply magnificent. But to me, the most awe-inspiring part is the community-based approach at the heart of Esteban Torres. With the help of the Los Angeles Education Partnership and the Federal Full Service Community Schools Grant Program, Esteban Torres tapped into the resources of the surrounding community to overcome challenges facing their students regarding health care, limited English proficiency, and financial literacy.

Esteban Torres partnered with Bienvenidos for a full-service health service on campus that will help maintain the health and well-being of their students so they are ready and able to learn.

Pan American Bank partnered to help the high schoolers create a student-run financial center to teach the importance of a budget and proper money management, skills which will stick with these students for the rest of their lives.

Luis Rodriguez and Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural joined the effort to establish the first-ever bookstore in East Los Angeles, making it easier for students to expand their education outside their classroom.

And the effect of these programs is apparent on the smiles of the students' faces on their way to school, in the cafeteria and the classroom. This type of engagement and support is giving students in the community new opportunities and opening their world.

Across America, our students face problems like homelessness, lack of health care, and limited English proficiency. Research tells us that two-thirds of the achievement gap is due to factors outside of school, and even the best teachers have a hard time overcoming these obstacles.

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A recent study from Chicago found that when we don't address students' social and economic disadvantages outside schools, the hard work done inside the school can be futile. That's why the DIPLOMA Act is so necessary. Local groups can coordinate, integrate, and facilitate services aimed at strengthening student achievement, such as dropout prevention, family engagement, tutoring, extending learning services, health care, and social support. The bill contains strong accountability measures, including independent evaluations to measure results and identify best practices.

These partnerships will make a difference in the lives of students in my district. When students are provided the right kind of support and opportunities to help them learn, nothing can stop them. The DIPLOMA Act ensures that America's next Nobel Prize laureate can come from any background or community because they had the support they needed to succeed.

BREAKING WASHINGTON'S ADDICTION TO TAXPAYERS' MONEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, is President Obama really pushing to raise taxes while unemployment hovers around 9 percent just to get an increase in the debt limit?

Republicans beg to disagree. Increasing taxes on American job creators and families will mean fewer new jobs are created, which will result in more Americans remaining unemployed. Washington does not need tax hikes to raise the debt ceiling. Washington needs spending cuts. The Federal Government is addicted to taxpayer money. The solution is not giving it more of Americans' hard-earned money. No. The solution is to halt the runaway spending and permanently reform Washington's reckless spending habits.

We can fix this problem and pay our bills on time, Mr. Speaker. However,

refusing to cut spending and going with status quo tax hikes would be a recipe for disaster that will rob future generations of a chance to fulfill the American Dream.

DEBT CRISIS AGENDA FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. It's clear to the American public that Congress, especially the Senate, is very good at doing one thing—and that is nothing.

Now, perhaps we can capitalize on this strength to resolve the impasse over the deficit reduction. Well, how could that work? How could Congress do nothing but solve this problem? Well, within 17 months, by doing nothing, we could lower the deficit by \$3.8 trillion. In fact, the President could reinforce the message. Just in case Congress decided to do something, he could say, No, if they do that, I will pocket veto it. I will do nothing. So we've got a good chance here: Congress does nothing or the President pocket vetoes, he does nothing, we can save \$3.8 trillion. Problem solved.

How do we do that? We allow all the Bush tax cuts to expire. Now, you heard the gentlelady, Oh, my God, the job creators will pay more. Yeah, the billionaire hedge fund guys on Wall Street might pay a little bit more in taxes; they're creating so many jobs today. And the other millionaires. Warren Buffet says it's kind of ironic that he pays a much lower tax rate than his secretary.

Now, if we let the Bush tax cuts expire and adopted some modest reforms, those inequities would no longer be in place, and we could have over \$4 trillion of deficit reduction with a little bit of shared sacrifice. Yes, it would ask the millionaires and billionaires to pay as much as they did in the Clinton era. In an era when we had 3.8 percent unemployment, we actually paid down debt in this country. It was good for all Americans. And we asked those who were most capable to contribute the most. But we asked a little bit of everybody. That's what this doing nothing would do.

Now, after we've restored some confidence here by this big step of doing nothing, we could do another half of nothing and put people back to work. How could we do half of nothing and put people back to work? Well, President Obama has adopted this cockamamie Republican idea of a Social Security tax holiday putting people to work. I know a lot of families that can use an extra \$20 a week. That's true. But them spending \$20 a week on junk made in China or food on the table doesn't put any Americans back to work. And if you're unemployed today—one of the 18 million unemployed—you don't get the \$20 a week. We're borrowing \$110 billion to