

FIXING OUR SCHOOLS FROM THE BOTTOM UP

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, SEPTEMBER 23, 1999

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FIXING OUR SCHOOLS FROM THE BOTTOM UP

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1999

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:30 a.m. in room 210, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. John R. Kasich (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Kasich, Chambliss, Shays, Herger, Franks, Smith, Nussle, Hoekstra, Radanovich, Bass, Gutknecht, Hilleary, Sununu, Pitts, Knollenberg, Thornberry, Ryun, Collins, Wamp, Green, Fletcher, Miller, Ryan, Toomey, Spratt, Rivers, Bentsen, Davis, Clayton, Clement, Hooley, and Holt.

Chairman KASICH. The committee will come to order. I am very pleased about the agenda that we are going to have today. I am very excited about the fact that we have got somebody who is really on the front line of education reform and obviously that being Jeb Bush, who has in a very short period of time put together a very comprehensive program to try to address the challenges that he has found in the State of Florida and has been very successful at it.

And I am really pleased that he is here, along with Dick Riley who is the Secretary of Education. I didn't realize that Dick Riley had really been in the administration all the way since 1992. And I know he feels passionately about the subject.

And then we are going to have George Voinovich who is a former Governor of Ohio, and he has some unique perspectives because of a situation in Cleveland where it—basically a voucher program had been created and a court challenge and there—it is an ongoing story. Along with a member of the Pennsylvania legislature who has started a charter school and along with the President of the National PTA, who will also give us a more divergent view.

Then I am very excited to have John Walton, who is the co-chairman of the Children's Scholarship Fund along with Ted Forstmann, and that is a very exciting program where individuals decided if government wasn't going to do what they wanted them to do, they would do it on their own in the great American tradition.

Education obviously is at the forefront of all the challenges that America faces. I think that while it is a national issue, that doesn't necessarily mean that it makes it a Federal issue, but yet today we are going to have the opportunity to hear from people in terms of why they think the Federal Government's role ought to be larger

or smaller and at the same time those folks who think that we need dramatic change in education, competition in education.

I think what makes me the—I know what makes me the most excited about what Jeb has done in Florida is that he has been able to combine an aggressive program to try to rescue the public education system and has given the public education system the resources and the time that is necessary to be able to right itself. And in the course of events if some schools cannot right themselves, he gives children and parents an opportunity to give their children some real choice, not just reserved for the very poor or the very rich but for those who are often forgotten in America, the middle-income folks. And I think this is a very unique program and one that I am encouraged to see actually be able to be enacted into law.

I am very pleased about it. I happen to be a very aggressive supporter of vouchers but yet I know on this issue of education if we are not able to talk common sense and some balance with people who are opposed to the issue of vouchers, we will never reach a consensus that will be able to move us forward.

I hope that this hearing in some ways will be able to respond to what this Budget Committee recommended over the years, which is at least to trim and consolidate so many of the programs for education but yet at the same time continue the dialogue toward doing what we all want to do, which is to advance the cause of our children's future.

I am going to recognize Mr. Spratt, but I think maybe he serves as one of the great examples of a man who has been able to, I guess you could say in many respects, been one of the perfect parents, with a daughter who graduated from medical school—I think two daughters, is that right John from medical school? Unbelievable success, any parents's dream. And I know he feels strongly about this issue.

I think over the course of today we will be able to all learn and maybe make some progress and become a little better leaders in our communities, which is really the answer.

The subject of today's hearing is Education From the Bottom Up. Frankly I think that is the way we fix education in America, from the bottom up. And I am anxious to hear from Governor Bush.

John you are recognized.

Mr. SPRATT. I am anxious to hear from Governor Bush, too, and I thank you for the introduction. And I do feel passionately about this. I think everyone in the room does. But rather than use my time, I want to turn to someone who is a real educator, a member of the Education Committee, but before he came to Congress was a teacher, professor, assistant director of Princeton's physics lab. And while in that position he was not just teaching at Princeton at the highest level of American education, he was formulating a program in New Jersey where scientists are now engaged in improving math and science education in the classrooms throughout New Jersey, a very successful program there, and also has recently been appointed to the National Commission on Math and Science.

Rush Holt, I yield my time so that you can get the ball rolling for our side.

Mr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Spratt. The Chairman is absolutely right. You are a longtime champion of education. And I certainly appreciate all you do. And I appreciate your giving me a moment now. Ninety percent of America's elementary and secondary school students attend public schools. We should concentrate our education resources on the public schools. It is necessary for our democracy. And while most schools are good, many face really overwhelming obstacles in educating future citizenry and our work force.

We in Washington have an obligation to help States and localities overcome these hurdles and meet the needs of our students. We need to help ensure that they have competent teachers, smaller class sizes that allow adequate teacher attention, schools that are safe, not overcrowded, access to technology and modern school facilities.

Despite the House leadership's rhetorical support of education, their actions have spoken otherwise. This year's budget resolution cut funding for education training and social services by \$200 million, compared to a freeze at last year's level. Now, 1 week from the end of the fiscal year, the Majority is finally allowing a markup of the bill to fund education. And there is scrambling to pass spending bills for other agencies that take funds away from education allocation. And you know we, we on this side of the Budget Committee, have consistently advocated more efficient use of education resources and more funding where it is needed. We don't seek to take money out of public schools. We want to support them. We want to reduce class size, modernize facilities by providing tax-free school modernization bonds. We want to improve the quality of teaching. We want States to set performance standards and we want to expand public school choice.

Last year Congress provided \$1.2 billion so that States could start hiring 100,000 new teachers to reduce class sizes. The evidence is abundant, smaller class sizes produce better students. But we need to get on to the next steps on this. And we have run into roadblocks on that. Many older schools are in terrible shape. The GAO estimate that we need more than \$100 billion to repair existing schools. Democrats have endorsed legislation to provide Federal tax relief for \$25 billion in bonds to modernize schools. And we have had to resort to a discharge petition to try to get even a debate on school construction and modernization. Many communities could use this assistance.

In my home State of New Jersey, public school enrollment is increasing nearly 10 percent in the next half dozen years. Montgomery Township in my district, once a rural farming community, has seen its enrollment soar from 1,500 students in 1990 to 3,500 students when the doors opened 2 weeks ago. In the next 5 years, enrollment will expand by another 1,400 pupils. The kindergarten class is twice the size of the senior class. The average Montgomery taxpayer now pays \$4,600 in property taxes for schools, far outstripping the \$3,000 in property taxes for all other municipal and county services.

And what is worse, projects on the drawing board to meet these known needs for schools will add another almost \$1,200 in taxes for the town's taxpayers. This doesn't include the cost for new

teachers, textbooks, school buses, security measures that are becoming a part of every new school building.

Localities clearly need help. Too many students are falling behind in our current system. Forty-one percent of American's fourth graders cannot read at the basic level, and three-quarters of students do not take algebra by the end of the eighth grade. Approximately half of our science and math teachers are teaching in fields where they don't have a major or minor in their college training. We want to address this problem by helping States and localities set standards for school performance, assisting them to meet those standards and supporting comprehensive school improvement efforts to improve student learning. We want to ensure that all classrooms have competent teachers by recruiting new teachers, training and testing teachers, and increasing access to technology and helping teachers incorporate technology into the teaching plan.

There are right now 346,000 information technology jobs open in our Nation, many of them in central New Jersey. Last year Congress passed legislation to allow more immigrants into our country to help fill these jobs. The employers are clamoring. Those are opportunities that our students could take advantage of if they had the proper grounding in technical subjects, beginning with modern schools that are wired for 21st century learning. As a teacher, I know Washington doesn't have all the answers. But the education of our youth is a national responsibility, similar to our national defense, and it is time that Congress shoulders its share to help schools provide our children the rich future they deserve.

What could be more important Mr. Chairman?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RUSH D. HOLT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

As a teacher for 30 years, I welcome this opportunity to examine how Washington can help improve American education.

Ninety percent of America's elementary and secondary school students attend public schools. We should concentrate our education resources on public schools; it is necessary for our democracy. While most of these schools are good, many face overwhelming obstacles in educating our future citizenry and workforce. We in Washington have an obligation to help states and localities overcome these hurdles and meet the needs of our students. We need to help ensure they have:

- competent teachers
- small classrooms that allow for adequate teacher attention
- schools that are safe and not overcrowded, and
- access to technology that students will need in their future jobs.

Despite the House leadership's rhetorical support for education, their actions have actually hurt education. For example:

- This year's Budget Resolution cut funding for education, training, and social services by \$200 million compared to a freeze at last year's level.
- One week until the end of the fiscal year, the Majority is FINALLY allowing mark up of the bill to fund education. Worse yet, they are scrambling to pass spending bills for other agencies by taking funds away from the Labor-Health-Education subcommittee allocation. They have taken so much from the education funding bill that, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the remaining scarce funds would require cutting education and other programs by 30 percent.

We on this side of the Budget Committee consistently advocate more efficient use of education resources and more funding where needed. We do not take money out of public schools but want to support them by:

- reducing class size,
- modernizing schools by providing tax-free school modernization bonds,
- improving the quality of teaching,
- helping states set performance standards, and

- expanding public school choice.

CLASS SIZE

Last year, Congress provided \$1.2 billion so states could start hiring 100,000 new teachers to reduce class size. The evidence is abundant: smaller class sizes produce better students. We need to get on with the hiring of these new teachers.

SCHOOL MODERNIZATION

Many older schools are in terrible shape. GAO estimates that we need \$112 billion to repair existing schools. Democrats have endorsed legislation to provide federal tax relief for \$25 billion in bonds to modernize schools. We who support this have had to resort to a discharge petition just to get a debate on school construction and modernization legislation.

Many communities could use this assistance. In my home state of New Jersey, public school enrollment is expected to increase 7 percent between 1995 and 2007.

Montgomery Township in my district was once a rural farming community, but its enrollment has soared from 1,500 students in 1990 to 3,500 students when doors opened two weeks ago. In the next five years, enrollment will expand by another 1,400 pupils. The kindergarten class is twice the size of the senior class. The average Montgomery taxpayer will pay \$4,602 in property taxes for schools, far outstripping the \$3,000 in taxes for all other municipal and county services combined.

What's worse, projects on the drawing board are expected to add another \$1,158 charge annually to the school tax for the town's taxpayers—and this figure does not include the costs for new teachers, textbooks, school buses, or the new security measures that are becoming part of every new school building. Localities clearly need help.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Too many students are falling behind under our current system. Forty one percent of American 4th graders cannot read at the basic level and three-quarters of students do not take algebra by the end of 8th grade.

Democrats want to address this problem by helping states and localities set standards for school performance, assisting them to meet those standards, and supporting comprehensive school improvement efforts to improve student learning.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

Democrats want to ensure that all classrooms have competent teachers by recruiting new teachers, training and testing teachers, increasing access to technology, and helping teachers incorporate technology into the teaching plan.

There are more than 346,000 information technology jobs open right now in our nation—many of them right in central New Jersey. Yet last year Congress passed legislation to allow more immigrants into our country to fill these jobs because there are not enough Americans with the training to fill them. Those are opportunities that our students could take advantage of if they had the proper grounding in technical subjects, beginning with modern schools that are wired for 21st century learning.

CONCLUSION

As a teacher, I know Washington doesn't have all the answers. But the education of our youth is a national responsibility, similar to our national defense, and it is time that Congress shoulders its share to help schools provide our children with the rich future they deserve. What can be more important?

Chairman KASICH. OK, Governor, it is all yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. JEB BUSH, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Governor BUSH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am really honored to be here with you. It is a joy to be here to talk about something that is the highest priority in our State, which is to ensure that every child that goes to school in our State gets a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time. That is what I wake up thinking each day; I remain focused and continue to visualize it, so that in 4

years' time it could actually happen. And if it does happen, we would be the first State in the country where that would be the case.

Before I begin, I want to say one thing about another element of public policy where I am very thankful. And that is the support that Washington has provided States during disasters. And while we were fortunate not to have a direct hit of Hurricane Floyd, it is heartening to know that the organization, the cooperation that exists between Washington through FEMA, State governments, and local efforts is far better than it was just 5 or 6 years ago. I commend you for your role in those efforts and for adequately funding FEMA so that people are not scared out of their minds as the storms pass or directly hit us.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the people of North Carolina. We have been blessed to have support from people all across the country when we have been hit with storms. We are pledging to help Governor Hunt and the people of North Carolina as best we can and I thank you again for what you did to bolster the Federal effort in that regard.

Imagine if it was possible to ensure that every child that God has given the ability to learn, did so—didn't matter about family income or race—that a child could go to a school and for a year's time get the kind of quality education that would ensure that their learning gains would be equal to a year's effort. I imagine that, pretty regularly, but sadly, in our State it is not the case. Fifty-two percent of our high school graduates—52 percent of the kids that should graduate do so in the State of Florida. Sixty percent of the community college students—and we have a fine community college system in the State of Florida—take remedial courses, in essence high school courses to be able to continue their higher education.

Fifty percent of our fourth graders are not able to read at fourth grade reading level. And 60,000 of our ninth graders, one-third of them, have an average of a D or F. The next year, at age 16, many of them drop out or begin the process of moving away from an education.

What we decided to do is something a little more dramatic than the run-of-the-mill photo-op performed in the State of Florida. The legislature passed the A+Plan. I would like to describe a little bit about it: some of its principles, how we are implementing it, some of the myths that have been shattered along the way, and how people are reacting to a new system of accountability in the State of Florida.

The A+ Plan is built upon the foundation of three fundamental principles. The first principle is meaningful and undiluted accountability. There should be different consequences between the success that does occur in education all across the State and across the country and the failure that sadly occurs too often.

The second principle is zero tolerance for failure, and the honesty and courage to point out where it exists. We should not have an attitude that there are factors outside the school that drive the reason why kids don't learn and just write it off as if it is society's problem, because it is our problem when children don't learn. And whether they come from broken homes or they have a lower in-

come, it is incumbent upon us to organize ourselves around these children in a way to ensure that they do learn.

Finally, the third principle is that education must be child centered. It shouldn't be school centered. It should be child centered and certainly shouldn't be system centered, which it is in most places today. All interests, teachers, families, Governors, Congressmen and women, all the efforts should be focused and aligned to the interest of the child. And we should put all our priorities, all of the incentives, all of the consequences aligned to whether a child is learning. We have asked schools to do far more over the last decade, and now it is time to go back to the fundamentals, to move to a child-centered system.

Rather than explaining the problem away, we have done something different in Florida, which is to begin the process to eliminate social promotion and fund the programs necessary to support local schools so that they can have the resources to ensure the kids learn a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time.

We have implemented innovative systemic reforms to adhere to one guiding principle. First we assess each child, grades 3 through 10, with a meaningful test. The Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test has been adopted as one of our standards for assessing our students. Based on the best information we have, we are among the top five States in terms of our standards and how we assess our children. Perhaps this is something you might look at to have an accurate assessment of how other States' standards compare.

Because we can now use our test as a measuring device on whether children are learning, we can then clearly communicate the progress of our students by aligning school standards to student achievement. It is a pretty radical idea, but in fact it seems to have worked. Instead of grading schools 1 through 5 or in terms that may be vague, we actually used the old-fashioned report card A through F. I can tell you there is a big distinction when a school is rated 5 instead of F in terms of the emphasis that that school gets from the people that are responsible for our children's education.

It is important to make sure that the standards are high. We have a system that is easy to understand but it is rigorous enough for there to be real divergence in the outcomes of schools.

Third, we reward high-performing schools and schools that are improving. In fact, next week, we will have \$30 million available to the 300 public schools that have been A-rated, or have shown improvement to move upward. That \$100 per student goes directly to the principals where the school improvement committees, use the funds as they see fit. No rules, no attachment of any kind. If they want to hire teachers' aides or hire more teachers, to lower class sizes or bring in computer equipment or have after-school programs or start Saturday school programs, they have the flexibility to use that money as they see fit.

Fourth, we assist the lower performing schools, which is critical. We say to the D and F schools that they have to have school improvement plans that are approved by their school district. In fact, the F-rated schools have to come to the State Board of Education with a plan to do something different. The definition of insanity is

doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. We no longer tolerate that. We provide funding assistance and technical assistance to help them craft these plans.

Finally, and this is the part that has garnered quite a bit of attention, we say that when schools fail and fail again, the parents that have these kids in these schools ought to be given other options. They ought to be given three options, in essence:

One, another public school in that school district—and remember, our school districts are very large so that is a broad array of options for the parents.

Two, a private option, and we will talk a little bit about that.

And three, they will be able to send their kids to a newly reinvigorated, reincorporated school on the same premises. They will have more support given to them but they will have higher expectations, so that the schools get off this critically low-performing list.

We call these, this option for parents, Opportunity, Scholarships. You all up here call them, I think, vouchers. I don't like the V-word because the V-word is used in politics. The intent of our plan is to improve all education, to empower parents when schools are not achieving the desired result to provide an opportunity for them. So we call this option the Opportunity Scholarships.

There are 4 criteria for these scholarships:

One, the tuition amount is the full funding amount that that child would receive if that child was in a public school. And, the tuition that they accept cannot exceed the scholarship amount. Any private school that opts into the program has to accept the scholarship as the full amount of tuition.

Secondly, the private schools have to adhere to health and safety regulations—Washington, State, and locally determined. They have to take all comers. They can't pick and choose who they want. If there are more people wanting to go to the school, then they use a lottery system to pick the kids that go there. And they have to—the private schools have to administer the same tests that the students would take each year in public school, the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test.

In the first year of this plan, 78 schools have received an F grade. If they receive an F grade again, then those parents will be given the option of another school; 61,000 children attend F schools in our State today.

The first year of its implementation, students at two schools have been offered opportunity scholarships. In the two schools, 134 children were afforded opportunity scholarships; 76 of them chose to go to a public school in the Pensacola area and another 58, I believe, sent their children to five private schools that are participating in the plan.

It has been fun, in all honesty, to watch the myths that have been built up over time about what happens when you empower parents and give them the financial tools to be able to make decisions. One myth that you always hear is the "brain drain"—that only the good kids will leave these schools. There are all sorts of reasons why this myth exists, but we believe the "brain drain" myth has been shattered in the first year of our experiment.

Of the kids that have gone to the private school, their level of aptitude on the test that has been taken is no different than the

kids that stayed in the public school system. Their level of income is no different than the kids that remained in the public school system.

The second myth is that this will only benefit families of high income and more stable families. In our case the exact opposite is true, and it will remain that way because we are aligning this accountability system to the schools that are receiving F's. And sadly in our case, the students that are in the F schools, are 85 percent minority, about 85 percent qualified for reduced and free lunch. This is not a welfare program for the rich. This is an empowerment program for the disadvantaged.

I cannot envision as we unveil this over time that it will change in terms of its impact on improving the chance of economically disadvantaged families to be able to get a better quality education. And that is why perhaps Andrew Young is supportive of our plan. The Urban League of Greater Miami is supportive of our plan as is Bob Butterworth, the leading Democrat in the State of Florida. The Attorney General not only is defending our plan, because sadly we are in the courts as you might imagine, with two lawsuits, but he personally supports the plan. He was opposed to it when it was in the political realm, when it was battered about in the campaign, but once he began to see the impact of resources being allocated toward the schools that need the help, he became a personal supporter as well. It makes a difference that this has broad bipartisan support.

And, finally, there is a myth that the schools, where parents are sending children to other schools, are being abandoned—the “abandonment” myth. I hear it all the time. Well, at Bibbs and Dixon, the two elementary schools where parents do have choices today, there is a renaissance going on. It is exciting. I wish and I hope maybe you will be able to visit Pensacola and see what is actually going on. At these schools today, the principals now have the power to hire quality educators and fire those that fail in the classroom. At these schools they have lower class sizes today. At these schools they have gone to an extended school year, from 180 days to 210 days, paid for by the State. At these schools, there is a lower teacher/student ratio, more after-school programs and student tutorial programs. They are taking advantage of direct instruction, and these kids are going to learn. I guarantee you that both schools will see advancement and not be F-rated next year.

So the bottom line is the parents that choose another option, have a better choice. The parents that chose a public school option in the school district are satisfied. And the parents that chose to remain in the original school are going to have their children get a better education.

The reaction to our plan has been fun to watch as well. All across the State, particularly in the major urban areas, there has been a dramatic refocus on the schools where kids have not been learning. Instead of writing it off, now there is a consequence of failure. And because of that, school district administrators and teachers and principals and parents don't want their kids to be in schools that fail, and they are changing their attitudes and focusing their priorities and putting the resources in these schools.

My best example of this is Earl Lennard who is the Superintendent of the Hillsborough County School System—Congressman Davis knows him well. Mr. Lennard was not a supporter of our plan—I don't know, maybe he was. He wasn't vocal in his support; mark him down as neutral for the moment—and he didn't have an F-school in the Hillsborough County School District, which was quite remarkable, given the fact that it is probably in the top 20 in size in the United States. But he announced that all of his top administrators and he would take a 5 percent pay cut if any school in the Hillsborough County School District would receive an F. Imagine that. There is no place in America that I am aware of where that is the case. In fact, one Hillsborough County teacher was quoted in the paper, saying: I have seen principals eat worms, I have seen vice principals kiss pigs to get students to read a certain number of pages, but I have never seen a superintendent put his salary on the line.

You know what? There was a businessman that went to Oak Grove Middle School in Hillsborough County 20 years ago. This school was rated D on the last report. Based on what the superintendent had done and based on his belief that we needed to have more accountability in public education, he has now adopted this school, his business has, and they have 15 employees that are working once a week in the school. They are mentoring eighth graders to prepare for the math element of the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test. And he has committed, and so have all the other volunteers of this business, that they will take a 5 percent pay cut if their school moves to F.

My hope and my dream is that we will tear down the barriers that say this is the public school system, therefore “hands off;” “it is the responsibility of parents and teachers alone to carry this out.” We must tear down the barriers and make education the highest priority of our community, of our State. People should show their support for our students by getting involved not just in 5 percent pay cuts or the possibility of it, but getting involved in mentoring children. And we have already begun to see that.

A month ago, I unveiled a mentoring initiative that called upon Floridians to get onto the playing field as it relates to education of our kids and helping them out. We expect and we hope to have 200,000 mentors matched with kids, most of whom first will be aligned in these F and D and C schools, to be able to provide an hour a week, every week, to ensure the children get a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time.

We have asked and have allowed State government employees to take 4 hours off a month to mentor. We have encouraged larger businesses across the State to do the same. Thankfully they don't have to wait for our pretty complex, burdensome rule process. They have already begun. They are not waiting for the rules to change, they are not doing it to get 4 hours off from work, they are doing it because they know this is a high priority in their own lives.

What can Washington do to help us out? I am a believer in charter schools. In fact, I set up a charter school with the Urban League of Greater Miami several years ago. It was an exciting process to be involved in the creation of this independent public school. Mr. Lennard who is the superintendent of Hillsborough,

again not a strong supporter of some elements of our plan, does believe in a more decentralized approach. In fact, while he was complaining about our plan before its passage, I was wandering around the school with him, I challenged him when he asked, "Why can you hold us to high standards and then impose upon us all sorts of rules that aren't aligned toward the desired results, toward the standards you want to achieve?" I said, "I am for you on that. Give me the list of things that Washington and Tallahassee impose on you that make it harder for you to ensure that children learn. Better than that, why don't you become the first charter school district in the State of Florida?" We shook hands, went to the legislature, got a bill passed and today they are working on a dramatic plan to eliminate many of the rules and mandates that are imposed from Tallahassee on the school district. And in return we are going to hold them to high standards. We are going to say there is a consequence when you achieve good things, good things will happen to you. And when you do not achieve your desired result, there is a different consequence.

My vision is to have charter school districts. In fact, we ought to have charter school States. There is broad bipartisan support for charter schools. In fact President Clinton's advocacy of charter schools freed up money that allowed us to create our first charter school. I am very grateful for that—there were no strings attached to that money. We had a contractual obligation with the school district to make that work.

That would be my advice to you, look at means such as the "Straight A's Act" or other means to hold us to whatever standards you consider to be the appropriate ones for our great country. Fund the programs in a flexible way for us to carry out our mission. I believe if you come to Florida, you will be proud of the fact that this State is saying no more social promotion, yes to high standards, we are going to teach kids algebra in eighth grade. We are going to ensure by third grade they are going to be reading at grade level.

There is a veritable renaissance going on in public education today. This is the kind of response that I hope you would want and would promote by freeing up the resources from Washington. We have a relatively large size Department of Education in Tallahassee. It has gotten a lot smaller since my friend and now Lieutenant Governor, Commissioner Brogan, was there 4 years ago. He cut the department in half, but it is still pretty good size; 7 percent of our budget statewide comes from Washington but 40 percent of the Department of Education's work is to fill out the forms and comply with the requirements from Washington, DC; 40 percent of the staff of this Department of Education is trying to comply with your wishes. They are not focused on ensuring that a child gets a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time.

I would hope that could change. I would hope that you could trust us, once we meet certain criteria of rigorous assessments and high standards and focus on assuring that kids that have been left behind in the current system begin to see advancements in their education; that you could trust us to be able to do what is right for our children. It is the highest priority in our State and I am pretty certain that it is the highest in New Jersey, the highest in

Kansas and all across this country. If you trust us we will perform. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Governor Bush follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JEB BUSH, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. This is my first time addressing a Committee of the United States Congress as Florida's governor, and I am grateful for the invitation and the opportunity to discuss Florida's educational reform efforts with you.

You have no doubt heard much about Florida's recent educational reforms, and depending on the source of your information, some of what you've heard may even be true.

In the short time that I have before you, I would like to briefly describe some of the important elements of the education reform plan that we adopted in Florida this year, then discuss some of the dramatic efforts being taken by the dedicated educators throughout our state to improve student achievement. I'd like to conclude by discussing the ways we believe the federal government can best help us in our efforts to provide a high-quality education to every child in Florida.

THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD

When I took office as Florida's Governor in January, the news on the educational front was both good and bad.

The good news was that Florida was moving in the direction of high standards, rigorous assessment and true accountability.

Florida had adopted a rigorous set of standards known as the Sunshine State Standards. These standards tell us what students should know and be able to do from kindergarten through high school. Florida had also established a school evaluation system that was tied to these standards, and we had established a test, the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test, the "FCAT," that was specifically designed to test these standards.

However, there was also some bad news. Shortly after I took office, it was announced that Florida's high school graduation rate was an astonishing 52 percent. Fifty percent of Florida's fourth graders were not able to read at the fourth grade level. And, a survey showed that over one-third of Florida's ninth graders, or about 60,000 ninth graders, had a D or F average. And despite this fact, Florida, like many states, was still clinging to the notion of "social promotion"—a feel-good idea that was setting up tens of thousands of Florida children for ultimate and tragic failure.

In that context, Lieutenant Governor Frank Brogan and I proposed and fought for legislative approval of the Bush/Brogan A+ Plan for Education.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE A+ PLAN

The A+ Plan is built upon the foundation of three fundamental principals. The first principle is meaningful and undiluted accountability—there must be different consequences between success and failure.

The second principle is zero tolerance for failure, and the honesty and the courage to point out where it exists. Too often, there can be political or institutional reluctance to identify "failure." Although this can be extremely difficult and painful, it becomes much easier when one realizes that a loss of courage to identify failure results in sacrificing children and their futures merely to protect the "system."

This leads to our third principle. We zealously believe that our educational system must be child-centered, not system-centered or even school-centered. The educational universe should revolve around the individual educational needs of each and every child, not the other way around.

We have weaved these three fundamental principles throughout the A+ Plan.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE A+ PLAN

Assess annual student learning against high standards. First, in order to more accurately assess student learning and to better determine how well Florida's students were achieving the learning benchmarks set forth in the Sunshine State Standards, we're expanding the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test so that all third through tenth graders will take it, not just fourth, fifth, eighth, and tenth graders. To demonstrate the rigor of the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test, I have included sample questions from the tenth grade FCAT with my written testimony.

Earlier this year, Education Week magazine rated each state's educational standards and assessment methods in its "Quality Counts '99" report. I'm proud to say that Florida was given a grade of "A minus" and was ranked among the top five states in this category. With Florida's adoption of the A+ Plan this year, I am confident that Florida's ranking will climb even closer to number one in next year's review. For the record, I've included a copy of the Quality Counts '99 state rankings.

Clearly communicate school performance to everyone. Second, in order to clearly identify to parents, teachers and community leaders which schools are performing and which are not, we changed the terminology for grading Florida's schools from a "1" through "5" grading scale to an "A" through "F" grading scale. We are also sending the school report cards home to parents and posting them on the Internet.

I am especially proud of the fact that our grading system sets one standard for all students, regardless of their race, regardless of their family income levels, and regardless of their ethnicity—every single student and every single school will be held to uniformly high standards.

Reward high performing and improving schools. Third, schools that move up a grade and schools that receive an A grade are directly receiving a bonus of \$100 per student to spend as each school sees fit. In fact, next week we will be distributing \$30 million to Florida's high performing and improving schools with no strings attached as a reward for their exceptional performance.

Assist low performing schools. Fourth, to quickly turn around low-performing schools, schools that receive grades of D or F are required to develop a school improvement plan specifically tailored to address the particular needs of each school. These schools will also receive technical and financial assistance from their local school districts and the state.

Provide alternatives to children in chronically failing schools. Fifth and finally, if a school receives an F grade in any two years of a four year period, children in those chronically failing schools will be given alternative educational choices through an Opportunity Scholarship. The Scholarships will allow these students to obtain a quality education at a better-performing public school or the private school of their choice.

OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS

Here's how our Opportunity Scholarship program works. Private schools that accept students using Opportunity Scholarships must accept the value of the Scholarships as full tuition, must meet applicable health and safety standards, and must accept students using Opportunity Scholarships on a random basis. Students using Opportunity Scholarships to attend a private school will still be required to take the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test and the Florida Writes! test so we can continue to evaluate their academic progress.

When the state Department of Education issued grades for Florida's public schools in June, 78 public schools in Florida received an F grade, and over 600 schools received a grade of D. In terms of students, this meant that 508,000 students were attending D schools, and 61,000 were attending F Schools.

Because they had been previously identified as critically low-performing schools, students at two Pensacola elementary schools that received F's this year became eligible to receive Opportunity Scholarships.

In total, 134 children left these two public schools to attend other schools. Seventy-six left to attend a better-performing public school, and 58 left to attend five participating private schools that included four parochial schools and one Montessori school.

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS ABOUT OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS

In the weeks that these children have been using Opportunity Scholarships, many myths about the Scholarships have been destroyed.

The "skimming" myth. One of the often-repeated myths we heard during the legislative debate was that providing students in chronically failing schools with alternative educational choices would result in "brain-drain" or "skimming" of the best students from the failing schools, resulting in a disproportionate number of quote-unquote "hard-to-educate" kids being left behind. Data released last week from these two elementary schools in Pensacola squarely contradicts that myth. When school officials looked at the academic history of the children who used Opportunity Scholarships, roughly even numbers of high-performing and low-performing students chose to attend other schools using Opportunity Scholarships.

The "elitist conspiracy" myth. Another myth that has been destroyed is what I call the "elitist conspiracy" myth. Those that repeated this myth said that Opportunity Scholarships would mainly benefit and be used by children from suburban, white,

higher-income families. Shortly after school report cards went out this summer, we looked at the racial and economic breakdown of F schools, and this myth was quickly destroyed. Of the 61,000 students in F schools, 85 percent are minorities—63 percent, or 38,430 are African American children, and 20 percent, or 12,200 are Hispanic children. Furthermore, of all students attending Florida's F schools, 81 percent of them participate in the free and reduced school lunch program.

Not only do these statistics debunk the "elitist conspiracy" myth, they powerfully underscore the urgent moral imperative we face in ensuring that each of these children receives the opportunity to gain the life-long benefits of a high quality education. In light of these statistics, it's not hard to understand why Florida's Opportunity Scholarship Program has received the endorsement and support of African American state legislators in Florida, the Urban League of Greater Miami, and most recently, civil rights leader and former United Nations ambassador Andrew Young.

The "abandonment" myth. The other myth that was destroyed was the myth that Opportunity Scholarships would lead to the "abandonment" of the children "left behind" in the failing schools.

I wish that every Member of this Committee could have attended the Florida State Board of Education meeting in June when local school officials presented school improvement plans for these two chronically failing schools. The list of reforms being initiated at these schools by local officials was truly impressive in substance and in scope:

- More after-school and Saturday tutorials,
- A reduction in the teacher-student ratio,
- A lengthened school year from 180 to 210 days, and
- Blocks of time that are specifically dedicated to traditional core subjects—reading, writing and mathematics.

So principals would have the authority they need to improve the educational environment, local school officials gave the two principals the ability to hire or transfer any person working in the school.

And, in order to reduce the high turnover rate of students in these schools, the school district has now agreed to provide transportation to any student who moves but wishes to continue attending either elementary school.

The state of Florida has also committed more resources to quickly turn these schools around. The Department of Education is providing more money, including grants totaling \$87,000, for basic skills programs to help improve learning in the areas where it is needed most: reading, writing and mathematics.

Witnessing the remarkable changes planned for these two schools had a powerful effect on Florida's Attorney General Bob Butterworth, one of the state's highest-ranking elected Democrats. Although General Butterworth had previously opposed Opportunity Scholarships, shortly after he witnessed the dramatic efforts being made to improve the quality of education at the two Pensacola schools, he announced his support of Opportunity Scholarships, because he believed they were responsible for sparking the improvements at these schools.

So while it is very early in the implementation of the A+ Plan, many of the worst fears about Opportunity Scholarships have failed to materialize, and in fact, we have turned skeptics into supporters along the way.

EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT SPARKED BY THE A+ PLAN

And beyond Pensacola, it has been inspiring to witness the changes taking place all across our state by Florida's dedicated educators in response to the accountability measures of the A+ Plan.

- For example, in Martin County on Florida's southeastern coast, school officials are providing teachers at two low-performing schools with ten extra days of additional training to help them teach students basic skills. Also, teachers at low-performing schools will receive a \$1,000 bonus for raising the performance of their students.

- In Jacksonville, low-performing schools will now have summer and after-school programs to focus on improving reading, writing, and math skills.

- School officials in Ocala are hiring additional teachers to reduce class sizes and the school superintendent has called for more teacher training and development of parent-community activities.

- School officials in Broward County, the nation's fifth largest school district, are spending millions of dollars to reduce first-grade class sizes to 18–20 students per class in 104 low-performing schools. An associate superintendent told the local newspaper, "Contrary to public opinion, the schools have really been energized by this [grading system]. They are determined to improve their scores."

- In the Tampa area, Hillsborough County school superintendent Earl Lennard made statewide news recently when he vowed to take a 5 percent pay cut, or a personal loss of \$8,250, if any school in Hillsborough County receives an F grade. To meet this high expectation, Lennard promised his schools the support they need, including reduced class sizes for select “D” schools and money for after-school or Saturday tutoring at all schools. This pledge prompted one Hillsborough schoolteacher to remark, “I’ve seen principals eat worms. I’ve seen vice principals kiss pigs to get students to read a certain number of pages, but I have never seen a superintendent put his salary on the line.” At least not until the A+ Plan.

- In Miami-Dade County, the fourth largest school district in the nation, school officials are increasing intensive math and reading instruction at schools receiving low grades, and are hiring 210 additional teachers to work at the 26 schools that received F grades. Elementary school students in Miami-Dade County will see their class sizes shrink, in some cases by half!

Keep in mind, that in each of these cases, local school officials—not state officials and not federal officials—are implementing the various reforms that they believe will work best in their schools. As a state, we have simply set up an accountability system that is child-centered and standards-based. We have injected our educational system with the catalytic mechanisms needed to give every educator at every school real incentives to see that every child gains the power of knowledge.

FUTURE GOALS OF THE A+ PLAN

So I am excited and hopeful about the educational renaissance that is beginning to take place throughout Florida, and in future years, as we continue to implement the entirety of the A+ Plan, we expect to see even greater benefits.

Eliminate “social promotion” and increase funding for remediation efforts. One goal in particular that we hope to achieve is the complete elimination of social promotion. Based on a preliminary survey, Florida’s school districts are in the process of revising their Pupil Progression Plans as a result of the A+ Plan. The term “administrative placement” is being removed from these plans, and performance criteria are providing the basis for promotion.

We’ve provided \$527 million in flexible funds for local school districts to use to help provide remediation so that students can get the help they need to be promoted to the next grade with proficiency at their grade level. School districts are using these flexible funds to implement a variety of approaches: some are hiring additional teachers and reducing class sizes, others are funding after-school programs and tutoring, some are purchasing additional materials and supplies, others are providing intensive reading instruction, and others are capping class sizes in algebra. Each school district is doing what it believes is best.

A year’s worth of knowledge in a year’s time. The other significant change we expect to see in the future is having the capability to determine whether children are learning a year’s worth of knowledge in a year’s time.

Once we begin testing all third through tenth graders, we will be able to measure each student’s annual progress against the Sunshine State standards. With this information, our state’s grading system will ultimately be based on students meeting high standards as well as each student’s annual progress.

Leave no child behind. There’s another element of the A+ Plan’s new grading system that I am proud of: our commitment to ensure that no child is left behind. The A+ Plan’s new grading system, which we will be implementing during the next two years, will take into account the performance of the lowest performing 25 percent of students in Florida. Schools will not be able to attain high grades by simply focusing their efforts on the top three-quarters of students in the state. Our future grading system will ensure that Florida’s educators focus attention on the bottom quartile of the state’s students.

Continue tearing down barriers to learning. Ultimately, we hope to tear down the barriers and the obstacles to student achievement, and make Florida’s educational system truly aligned and obsessively focused solely on student learning. Once the barriers come down, educators, parents and community leaders alike will be inspired to prove that every child can learn. When Hillsborough County School superintendent put his salary on the line and voluntarily risked a five percent pay cut to guarantee that no school in his district would receive an F grade, Tampa businessman Dave Marshall made a similar pledge. Because Mr. Marshall’s alma mater, Oak Grove Middle School, had received a D, he pledged to give up five percent of his own salary and donate it to the fundraising branch of the school district if Oak Grove went down to an F. Mr. Marshall then recruited ten coworkers from his company to tutor eighth grade students at the school for one hour each week. And this

is only one example of what can be achieved if we continue to increase accountability and remove barriers to student learning.

Mentoring Initiative. To encourage more adult and community involvement in the lives of Florida's children, last month I was joined by the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, to kick off my Mentoring Initiative. Since taking office last January, I have spent one hour per week at Augusta Raa Middle School in Tallahassee mentoring a student, and we're hoping to recruit 200,000 mentors across Florida to get engaged in the lives of our state's children. This initiative will bring together non-profit groups, state agencies, businesses, communities of faith, schools, and others from around the state in a partnership designed to help students excel, both in and out of school. We are also changing the state personnel policy to allow state employees to devote one hour a week, or four hours a month to mentor Florida's young people.

THE FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

So we have much work to do as we continue to implement this comprehensive reform plan that will bring Florida's educational system into the 21st century. While we have begun to do all we can to make Florida's educational system performance-based and child-centered, seven percent of our budget is regulation-based and system-centered, and that's the federal portion of our education budget.

I am here to fully support the principles behind the Academic Achievement for All Act, or "Straight A's Act."

States like Florida that are moving toward a truly accountable, performance-based and child-centered system should be given regulatory and funding flexibility to achieve their academic goals. It's time to move away from the Washington-knows-best model, and allow states that are willing to meet stringent performance goals to have more flexibility.

The current federal approach is still based on a model that was designed in the 20th century, and states like Florida are blazing forward with 21st century educational approaches. Through charter schools, charter districts, and performance contracts, we're finding ways to hold schools accountable with much less process.

Right now, federal programs have lots of process, and little or no accountability.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. Though the federal contribution to education in Florida is small, only about seven percent of total spending, it takes more than 40 percent of the state's education staff to oversee and administer federal dollars. In fact, in Florida, six times as many people are required to administer a federal education dollar as are required by a state dollar. And how much learning has the federal government achieved through these expenditures? No one knows.

Imagine what our states could do if we could spend more of our time and energy working to improve student achievement, rather than tediously complying with a dizzying array of federal rules. At the very least, the federal government should stop creating barriers for states that are taking new educational approaches.

Because the A+ Plan's accountability measures are so potent, I believe that once fully implemented, the A+ Plan may do more good to help low-income children in low-performing schools in five years than the Title I program has done in our state in 35 years. Without legislation like the Straight A's Act, Florida will not be able to use federal funds to fully support our reform efforts. But with the Straight A's Act, Florida's school districts could use federal funds to support their accountability-driven efforts in the manner they believe best to address their local solutions, whether those solutions are more technology, smaller class sizes, a longer school year, or individual tutoring.

The federal government should welcome states that are willing to trade flexibility for strict performance standards. As a state, we are welcoming school districts that are willing to meet strict performance standards in exchange for flexibility from state rules.

As a matter of fact, a few months ago, before Florida's legislative session, I was visiting an elementary school in Tampa, and the district superintendent and I were talking about the many regulations that the state imposes on its local school districts.

Having previously founded a charter school with the Urban League of Greater Miami in 1995, I knew that the state's charter school law allowed certain schools to operate free of district regulations if the charter school agreed to meet certain student performance criteria. As the superintendent and I talked, I asked whether he would be interested in becoming the state's first "charter district"—a school district that would agree to achieve certain performance goals in exchange for regulatory flexibility from the state.

Despite the fact that no law on the books permitted the creation of a “charter district,” we eagerly discussed the idea, and within two months, passed legislation that allows for charter school districts. Within the next month, we expect to receive applications from six school districts in our state wishing to become the first charter districts.

In a similar vein, I have come here to offer you more accountability from Florida, in exchange for more flexibility. We can increase the impact that federal dollars will have on student learning in our state, if we are provided with more freedom and less one-size-fits-all regulations from the federal government. I sincerely hope that Congress will pass the Straight A’s Act so Florida can become the first education “charter state.”

I thank you for the privilege of speaking before the Committee today.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

State	Grades	Assessment (30 percent of grade)	
		How does the state measure student performance? (Fall 1998)	Which subjects are tested using assessments aligned to state’s standards? (Fall 1998)
New York	95 A	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
New Mexico	94 A	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Maryland	93 A	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Virginia	92 A –	NRT, CRT, Wr	Eng, math, sci, ss
Florida	92 A –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
West Virginia	92 A –	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Massachusetts	91 A –	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Oregon	91 A –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Kansas	90 A –	CRT, Wr, Perf	none
Georgia	89 B+	NRT, CRT, Wr	Eng, math, sci, ss
Kentucky	89 B+	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf, Port	Eng, math, sci, ss
North Carolina	89 B+	CRT, Wr	Eng, math, sci, ss
Texas	88 B+	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Alabama	88 B+	NRT, CRT, Wr	Eng, math, sci
Nevada	86 B	NRT, CRT, Wr	Eng, math
Arizona	86 B	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Ohio	86 B	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Pennsylvania	86 B	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
South Carolina	85 B	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
New Hampshire	85 B	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Delaware	85 B	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Wisconsin	84 B	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Illinois	83 B	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Indiana	81 B –	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Michigan	81 B –	CRT, Wr, Perf	sci, ss
California	80 B –	NRT	none
Louisiana	80 B –	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
New Jersey	80 B –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci
Maine	79 C+	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Connecticut	78 C+	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci
Washington	77 C+	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Mississippi	77 C+	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
South Dakota	75 C	NRT, Wr	none
Wyoming	73 C	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Colorado	72 C –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng
Nebraska	72 C –	none	none
Missouri	72 C –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math, sci, ss
Utah	72 C –	NRT	none
Arkansas	71 C –	NRT, CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Oklahoma	70 C –	NRT, CRT, Wr	Eng, math, sci, ss
Minnesota	70 C –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Rhode Island	70 C –	CRT, Wr, Perf	Eng, math
Vermont	69 D+	CRT, Wr, Perf, Port	Eng, math, sci
Tennessee	68 D+	NRT, CRT, Wr	Eng, math, sci, ss
Alaska	67 D+	NRT	none
Hawaii	60 D –	NRT, CRT	none
Idaho	57 F	NRT, Wr, Perf	none
North Dakota	52 F	NRT	none

ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY—Continued

State	Grades	Assessment (30 percent of grade)	
		How does the state measure student performance? (Fall 1998)	Which subjects are tested using assessments aligned to state's standards? (Fall 1998)
Montana	50 F	NRT	none
Iowa	39 F	none	none
U.S.	—	—	—

Key: Port=Portfolio assessment; Perf=Performance assessment; CRT=Criterion-referenced test; NRT=Norm-referenced test; Wr=Writing assessment.

Note. States are ranked by number grade to the nearest decimal; ties are ranked by alphabetical order.

Chairman KASICH. Thank you, Governor. Let me just go back to a couple of the myths, what I hear from people who are legitimately concerned about the fact that if you give people an opportunity at some point to opt out, it will destroy the public school.

I think the first issue that I hear the most of is that if you give people a chance to get out, then what happens is a few leave or some leave, but the parents who are not as interested in their kids' education, that they don't—they are not involved. So the bad kids get left in the failing school and the good kids get out, and they take the resources and the whole thing collapses. I have never understood that because that is like if a building is on fire, you might as well leave everybody in than to get some people out. But nonetheless, you found something a little different than that, what you found in Florida in terms of whether we have made the public schools better as a result of some people leaving.

Governor BUSH. Well, to be fair about it, Mr. Chairman, this is the first year of a pretty bold experiment, and so all the data is not in. But in fact, the initial students that were given—that is, where parents were given the choices, they are no different than the kids that continue to go to that school in terms of income and aptitude and the tests that they took the year before. So at least in our case, there is no evidence of the brain drain myth that exists.

Chairman KASICH. Second question, it involves things like special education, where I hear people say well, the public schools have to take everybody and the private schools can choose, and therefore, you know, you expect too much out of the public schools and that is why they don't perform as well as the private school. How do you deal with that particular issue?

Governor BUSH. Parents get to choose in our case. And the schools that opt into our plan have to take all comers. Now, if schools—if an elementary school, private school, is accepting kids with Opportunity Scholarships and they are not capable of dealing with someone with severe physical or mental disabilities of some kind, the parents aren't going to send that child to that school. But on the flip side, nor are we measuring the school's performance based on those children either.

The way we do our grading system is we take the kids that are capable of learning fully; it is not to say we don't have a very aggressive program to help the kids that are very exceptional kids; in fact we do. But kids that are new to our country, that don't speak English, they have a 2-year transition period before they begin to be counted in the FCAT tests. Kids with severe disabilities

are not counted. In fact, as a pilot program, it hadn't got a lot of attention. In south Tampa and Bradenton, parents are given Opportunity Scholarships for kids with severe disabilities as well. And it is a little bit harder to assess how—if their chance for enhanced quality of life is being improved by that. It is harder to measure these types of things with kids. But parents have taken the other option. They have taken the private option.

Chairman KASICH. Are we having, though, an inordinate amount of cost in the public school as it relates to special education that the private schools don't experience? In other words, some public school officials will say, look, if we didn't have to handle all this, we would have more money, we could do a better job. Are you telling me this is a problem that we have really not resolved?

Governor BUSH. Well what I am saying is that we have a complex funding formula. I try to avoid acronyms. Being new to the public realm, I am still holding out. But I don't even remember this one. It is the Florida Education—Jim, help me out—Florida Education Funding Formula, FEFP. I don't know what the P stands for, but it is an equitable funding mechanism that weighs in factors such as kids with exceptionalities. So the money runs with the child into the public school system and, in the case of Opportunity Scholarships, runs with the child when the parents decide to make that choice. So a kid that may have attention deficit disorder, severe, or may be constrained to a wheelchair and have specific health care needs, they have higher weight in their funding formula already. And that is how we deal with it in Florida.

I am sure it is quite similar across the country.

Chairman KASICH. I am probably not as politically correct as you. I like this—I know that we got to put the right names on things, but frankly I know that gets to be a big issue in the way we conduct things in America today. But frankly, we are giving parents choice in terms of where their children, where they think their children get the best education.

Let me ask you this, Governor Bush. Another part of the concern is the good kids leave, the public schools collapse. Now I think you have found—am I correct in saying this—that as a result of the threat of schools losing market share, the public schools and the whole administration has become very, very aggressive in terms of getting off the list and actually bringing about this great improvement; that those of us who believe in choices, the choice is a necessary part of it. Is that what you are finding in the public schools occurring?

Governor BUSH. What we are finding is there is an effort. This is the first year of our plan. But the change of priorities has been well recorded and significant for this school year.

And secondly, I didn't mention this and it is important, I advocated education reform during the campaign, so there was total transparency. No one was surprised when I unveiled it. Had I done this and said, OK, we are going to cut public education funding, it wouldn't have passed.

And it is important to recognize that public education has the highest priority, Republicans and Democrats alike, in the State legislature. We funded public education by a 7 percent increase in

general revenue dollars and in the all-funds budget, which includes everything, there was a \$1.5 billion increase. It is the highest ever.

Not only that, the State of Florida puts more money into capital outlay dollars to build more schools than any State in the country, another billion dollars of money invested. We are a fast-growing State, but we made a commitment to public education. And because of that, people were willing to change the system. Had we cut back, I think the arguments, the myths, would have been too strong to have had such provocative changes.

Chairman KASICH. Do you need Federal dollars to do school construction? Are you in favor of that?

Governor BUSH. I will take all the money you guys can give us—I knew you didn't want to hear that.

Chairman KASICH. Well, no. No. No. We want to hear this. Maybe you say it is necessary. I am willing to hear what you got to say on it.

Governor BUSH. You all have to——

Chairman KASICH. Be careful, Jeb.

Governor BUSH. You all have to create the priorities from the national perspective.

Chairman KASICH. Can you do it without Federal dollars?

Governor BUSH. Yes. We are doing it. The Federal money for building right now is minimal. It may be nonexistent. We don't count on it. And we are spending over a billion dollars this year and we will continue to do so. We have made a commitment. Now, if you want to give us a little bit more, you don't want to put any strings attached to it, you are not going to say it all should go to lower class sizes or some input-driven thing rather than an output performance criteria, I will take all I can get.

Chairman KASICH. I am done with questions. We are going to go to John.

Governor, I know have you a talk coming up here very soon, but you have to understand you are now on Washington time, which means you will run a little bit late. I hate for you to just run out of here without the Democrats and more of my colleagues being able to question you. I say to my colleagues we will come back. When the Governor is done, the Secretary of Education will be here. I think we need to hear from him and complete this day, and would ask you all to vote and quickly come back so we can get started.

We are going to start all the way down and hopefully everyone here will have an opportunity to ask a question of some of the witnesses today. Governor, we will be back as soon as we can. If you want to use the phone in the back, feel free.

[Recess.]

Chairman KASICH. The hearing will come back to order if everyone could please take their seats. Let me recognize John. You have one.

Mr. SPRATT. I will yield to Jim Davis.

Chairman KASICH. Let me recognize the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Davis, for a few questions. The Governor has probably about 20 minutes left.

Can we straighten out Bill Gray? He is a friend of mine. Bill Gray is a friend of mine. Please straighten out Bill Gray. Bill, if

you are watching, by the way, it is interesting because Bill—it is amazing he would bring up Bill Gray, because you know Bill Gates just gave \$1 billion to the disadvantaged. And the fact is that Bill was there and talked about the exciting potential of that billion dollar gift. And Bill Gray is a terrific guy, former chairman of the committee.

Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to first ask unanimous consent to put my full statement in the record. I would also welcome my Governor. Governor, as you know, I respectfully but fundamentally disagree with you on your plan and I am going to refer to it as the voucher program, because that is my concern. You have mentioned many good things this morning, but the voucher feature concerns me and I want to talk about that.

Let me first say that I believe that parents and the rest of the public strongly support a public school system, and they demand those schools successfully educate all of our children. They expect us to work together to make that happen. In fact, based on my homework, none of the fourth and fifth graders in the two Pensacola schools you mentioned, whose failing test grades caused those schools to be voucherized, sought a voucher. Not one of them considered private school a suitable alternative for them. All of the fourth graders chose to stay in their public school, and they expect us to fix it.

And, Governor Bush, you and I are working together on the Medicaid funding for the school districts, and we had a very good meeting yesterday and we are making progress on that. I am very glad to hear your comments today about the school construction. I hope we can work together on that. But with all due respect, I have to say the voucher plan is really not designed to improve our most struggling schools, but it will force an experiment using our most vulnerable students as subjects.

Let me just give you one reason why I believe that and give you the chance to comment on it. It is clear to my school district and me that the report card you are using is based on a comparison of schools against one another. Under this system, there will always be schools at the bottom that will receive an F. I have to tell you, the folks that are doing their best every day in the schools I represent in Hillsborough County think this is fundamentally unfair. And they are very fearful of dollars leaving their schools, going to private schools. They don't think this is fun. They are very worried. It is something we are fighting for, and you are correct that Earl Lennard is leading the fight to try to do everything we can.

But let me ask you this question. Based on what my school district and I have divined from reading your report card system, it appears to me that no matter how much a struggling school improves from the prior year, no matter how much closer that struggling school comes to moving toward the higher grades than previous years, many of them will still be at the bottom, receiving an F grade, and they will be voucherized. That just seems terribly unfair. I would like to give you the chance to comment on that.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Davis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JIM DAVIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Governor Bush, welcome to Washington. As you know, I have a very deep interest in our public education system, and I appreciate your taking the time to come here today to tell us about the voucher program in our home state of Florida. However, I must respectfully, but fundamentally, disagree with you about the impact that vouchers will have on the public schools in our State.

As my record in the Florida House of Representatives and in Congress demonstrates, I believe we must reform the way that education is delivered in our schools. But that reform must not come at the expense of any of our students. It should come about by meeting their needs within our public schools—by empowering the teachers, the parents, and the students. I know that it can be done without diverting money from our public schools to vouchers because it has been done successfully in a “failing” school in Hillsborough County, which I represent.

First, I’d like to tell the other side of the story. I don’t believe that the Florida voucher program is about helping our students. Rather, it is about forcing an experiment to occur, using our most vulnerable students as subjects. Under this new system, you have ensured inevitable failure for many of our struggling schools. You said in your statement that no child will be left behind, but that is exactly the opposite of what is certain to occur in these schools.

For example, the grading system that has been implemented to grade the schools based on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) will force a failing grade and voucherization on many of our struggling schools. Since this legislation was ram-rodged through the Florida Legislature without talking with principals, teachers, or parents about ways to best measure student performance or progress, I have spent a considerable amount of time studying this program and talking to administrators, teachers and principals in my school district about the impact that the testing and grading system will have on our children.

The Hillsborough County School District and I believe that this test has been designed to ensure that there will always be failing schools. Under this system, the higher our schools perform, the higher the hurdle is raised. Encouraging academic achievement is admirable; however, this new grading system does not really encourage academic excellence for our most struggling schools. It encourages our schools to work hard to try and pass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test—but no matter how hard you work it doesn’t necessarily mean you’re going to pass because the FCAT is based on a curve that means someone always fails. What kind of a message are we sending our kids?—“No matter how hard you work, no matter how hard you try, no matter how much you improve, you may still fail and be voucherized.”

The FCAT compares schools against one another without regard to the nature of their individual students. Under the voucher grading system, our weakest schools will always receive the lowest grades, in many cases an “F,” guaranteeing voucherization regardless of how much a school has improved from the previous year or how close a school has come to achieving a higher grade from the previous year.

Another reason I think that the voucher plan does not help our struggling schools is because of the smoke and mirror funding approved by the Legislature to fund the “so-called” improvement of our public schools. In listening to you describe this SUPERFUND, Governor Bush, it seemed that this is \$527 million in brand new money to, in your words, “provide remediation so that students can get the help they need to be promoted to the next grade with proficiency at their grade level.” Governor, the implication is that these funds will be used to help struggling students with things like tutors, before- and after-school programs, lower class size; all of which we know can make a real difference with these students.

However, beyond the rhetoric, this SUPERFUND of \$527 million is not a new infusion of money into our failing schools, rather it was created by eliminating three other funds and dumping them into this big pot of money. The money from those smaller pots were used by our schools for summer school and drop-out prevention. However, you’ve now told the school districts that in addition to using these funds for summer school and drop-out prevention, they have to stretch these dollars to pay for all programs they need at their schools for teacher enhancement or to improve student performance. Basically, you’ve given them no new money to do many more things.

In short, the Legislature has not provided any additional support for our struggling schools to intensify their efforts and it has forced some school districts to aban-

don valuable existing programs, such as summer school, which my own school district may have to cut in order to provide help for our struggling schools.

Further compounding the lack of support for school districts, the State took away \$100 million in funding to hire new teachers and aides to reduce class sizes. As Majority Leader of the Florida House of Representatives, along with Speaker of the House Peter Rudy Wallace, I fought to establish a special fund for class size reduction for Kindergarten through Third Grades. You can't even imagine my disbelief to learn early this year that the Legislature, with your approval, had abolished this special fund. Under your new system, if a school wants to reduce their class sizes they have to resort to using funds from your SUPERFUND. Studies have shown that smaller class sizes in the early grades result in better performing students. It does not make any sense to me that the Legislature would abolish these funds to help students when the goal is to create a child-centered program.

Your veto of over \$16 million which the Legislature provided to school districts to extend the school year is further counterproductive to efforts by our most struggling schools to improve. These details and others lead me to the conclusion that the voucher plan is designed to force a very risky experiment of vouchers, using our most vulnerable students as subjects, rather than improve our most struggling schools.

Let me close by urging you not to abandon our public school system by voucherization and instead to focus on what we know helps struggling schools succeed. I'd like to share with you the success story of Cleveland Elementary in Tampa, Florida. Two years ago, Cleveland Elementary was placed on the Florida Department of Education's list of "critically low performing schools." As a result of this stigma, a very able principal, Cathy Valdes, motivated the school community—teachers, parents and students—to take action to improve their school. When your grading system was released this summer, Cleveland received a very solid "C" and is improving more and more daily. Here's how they did it.

- Using paid & volunteer tutors to work with sizable numbers of students throughout the day.
- Using before and after-school programs to extend the school day with instructional and enrichment activities.
- Using Federal funding for high-poverty schools to hire a full-time social worker, a full-time psychologist, as well as extra teachers to reduce class sizes.
- Using Project Achieve to give students daily instruction in social skills to help children control anger, avoid fights, conquer fears and learn to get along with others who look or act differently.
- Setting aside an uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction that bans interruptions such as field trips and special activities.
- Getting to know a child well enough to determine what is keeping that child from attending school—a problem at home, the teacher visits the home. If a child needs a pair of shoes, then he or she gets a pair of shoes. Carrollwood Elementary PTA adopted Cleveland and provided clothes for the children at Cleveland. Active and meaningful business partnerships.

I commend Cathy Valdes, along with the teachers, parents and students at Cleveland Elementary for their commitment to public education and for working to ensure that their school becomes one in which they can show great pride.

In closing, I believe that our public schools have great potential to help even the least motivated students. I do not believe that we should be taking money from our public school systems through voucher programs. Rather, we should be working harder with our teachers and parents to improve a system that has its difficulties at the moment but that shown its potential over the years through providing us with millions of outstanding graduates over the years.

Governor BUSH. Let me first describe how you get an F and point out that this grading system that was established was established prior to my arriving, by then-Gov. Lawton Chiles and the Florida Board of Education. The grading system, they called it 1 through 5 instead of A through F, but it was basically the same thing. To get an F in Florida for a school, you have to have 60 percent of your children at below basic level, not median level but below basic level in reading, math, and Florida Writes. Sixty percent of all the kids that take the tests, the students that take the tests have to be at below basic level.

Now, that system is being modified, as we demanded in the law. Two other elements—and the board rules are now in the process

of occurring, and superintendents and other people across the State next to us will have a chance to testify to give their input on how we go about this—but the law allows for two other elements to be included in the grading of the schools. One is annual increase in performance of the individual student. Until now, we haven't been able to do that because we haven't tested the students grades 3 through 10. We have tested grades 4, Florida Writes is grade 5, and then 8 and 10. So you couldn't measure individual student performance year to year. But moving to a child-centered system we now can do that. So that will be an added factor in the grading system.

The third element that the law requires that I was insistent upon, the inclusion of an added weight on how schools do in the bottom 25 percentile. So, Congressman, there are many fine high schools in—Gorey Elementary is a great elementary school in Tampa. If Gorey does its job with the broad number of students, because most of their kids are in the higher performance percentiles but they do not do well with the bottom 25 percentile, then they are not going to be afforded a higher grade. Their grade may actually go down.

These board rules are going to be put in place by December, and so the next test, which will be the second year of this Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test implementation, will factor that in. I believe that will probably change a lot of people's thinking about what they perceive to be the old rules that were established by the previous administration.

Mr. DAVIS. If I could further comment, the test that you refer to was designed for a different purpose than you were using. It was designed to measure progress individual students made from year to year. I think in the haste to get the voucher program started, for whatever reason, you have chosen to use it for a different purpose. You have chosen to use it to compare schools against one another. We all do know from our days in school, Governor, when you have a test like that, a certain number of schools have to receive a failing grade and a certain number have to receive an A. They are compared against each other. So my concern is with respect to these schools that got an F this year. No matter how much they improve from last year, no matter how much they have improved over the last 2 or 3 years, many of them are going to be trapped at the bottom again, and the F has to be given out and these schools will be voucherized. We are on the verge of facing a very significant loss of public dollars into private schools.

Governor BUSH. Many of the schools that are graded F will show improvement. In fact two in Escambia—I am not a gambling person except occasionally on the golf course—I would bet you 5 bucks that both of them will get off. They are getting more resources, they are getting more attention. They are getting more private sector support. They are getting more parental support. They are getting more superintendent of school support. I believe their kids can learn. I believe that they will. And if they don't, remember this is 60 percent of all the kids in a school being at below basic level in 23 different tests on writing, reading and math. If they don't, then shouldn't those parents be given other options?

There is a moral imperative to this as well, I believe, and that is that when you have a higher income you can choose a private school or you can choose to live in a better neighborhood where the school may work better. But if you don't have the income, it seems to me you are basically trapped in the school that the school district assigns you to. And you ought to be given another public school choice or a private option when there has been failure, as defined by State standards, and then failure again.

I can't imagine on something this important that we would turn the other way when that happens. And fortunately that is not what is happening. You know the school districts and the very dedicated public school teachers and everybody are rededicating their efforts, particularly in these schools that have historically lagged behind.

Chairman KASICH. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized. The Governor only has a few more minutes here. Maybe we will take just a couple on each side, and the Secretary is here. And because of those roll calls, it ate into our time. But Mr. Chambliss is recognized.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one quick question, but I want to make a comment before I ask the question. I have always been a strong supporter of the private school system, and I am particularly a strong supporter of the public school system. I am a product, and my wife is a product, of public schools. My children are. My wife has been a public school classroom teacher for the last 28 years. I have a daughter who is a kindergarten teacher in the public school system.

I just want to tell you, Governor, we politicians tend to talk about education every campaign season. We talk about what we are going to do to improve the quality of education. All of us are sincere in our statements and it is in our heart to do that. But I just want to tell you that I commend you for being aggressive and taking on a very sensitive issue that is near and dear to the heart of every single American, particularly every parent. You can't do what you are doing without it being controversial, because you are stepping on toes that have been in place ever since this country was founded. But you seem to be doing it in a well-thought-out manner. I can tell you that the whole Nation is going to be watching the progress of your system in Florida.

I also want to tell you, like you, I don't use the V-word because it has a negative connotation to it. And I don't know whether I support what people refer to as the voucher system or not, but I do support any system that will grant to a parent the right to choose a good quality school for their child. And that appears to be what you are doing in Florida.

Now, there is one question I have about your merit-based bonus system for teachers. My wife in certain years will have a class that is just intellectually better than the class she had before. And those kids are going to do better on test scores than the class she had the year before. And if she is compared to everybody else in the system for the year that she has a lower intellectually gifted group of students, then she is not going to do as well. And I have a little bit of concern about merit-based pay in that respect. I think a lot of teachers obviously feel that same way.

What are you doing and how are you throwing that issue into the mix with respect to the bonus plan that you have for teachers?

Governor BUSH. Well, at the State level, we have not addressed merit pay as part of this plan. What we have said is that if schools show improvement—and as I said, next week we will be unveiling a list of schools, I believe it is about 300 schools that are either A-rated or have shown improvement—about half are going to be A-rated and they are going to receive \$100 per student directly to the principal and teachers. I guess they could provide additional pay for their teachers, but my collective bargaining would probably preclude that. This is really to go to school improvement efforts, and \$100 per student to go to the schools that have shown progressive improvement one grade level up.

Now, in the case of Pensacola, as part of the remediation plan for the two schools that were graded F for 2 years running, there is part of the plan to include higher pay for the teachers that are in those schools. And I support that notion. But my vision for this is that those strategies ought to be developed locally and the State's responsibility is to fund adequately and to have meaningful assessments and accountability measures.

Chairman KASICH. No speeches, one question. Mr. Clement and Mr. Green. That is it. Thank you.

Mr. CLEMENT. Thank you, Governor Bush. Congratulations, first—

Chairman KASICH. No speeches. Just one question.

Mr. CLEMENT. We are pleased to have you here. I believe in the power of ideas and the power of concepts, and I know you have got a tough job. I would like to know, since it is your first year, how many Opportunity Scholarships are we talking about, number one? And number two, I know Florida's SAT scores have dropped 4 points this year. I know you are trying to serve 2 million students in public schools. How many of the students are you going to be able to reach, let's say, in this first term?

Governor BUSH. Well, there are 2.2 million students in Florida. The numbers of parents who will be given other choices because their kids are in chronically-failed schools will be determined by the number of chronically-failed schools. The beauty of our plan is it is totally aligned to student achievement. If there is a rising student achievement and schools are showing improvement, the objective is not to have any Opportunity Scholarships awarded, because this is focused on improving the quality of public schools.

And as I said before, one of the important elements is to make a commitment to increased funding for schools as well, which we have done. There was broad bipartisan support for that, and a 7 percent increase even for a State as fast-growing as ours is a significant increase in commitment to public education. So I hope we will have rising test scores.

As it relates to the SAT test, I believe that we have more people, more students, that take the test. We are about at the national average. Is that acceptable? Heck no. I would love to see it go up.

Chairman KASICH. Mr. Green for the last question, and the Governor for the last word. No, I might have the last word. Go ahead.

Mr. GREEN. A question. A group of freshmen here are trying to reach out, Governor, and identify the State workers that are spend-

ing 40 percent of their time filling out paperwork to comply with Federal regulations. If we contact your office, could you provide a list?

Chairman KASICH. Provide that for the record. That would be very helpful.

Governor BUSH. Absolutely.

[The information referred to follows:]

WASHINGTON OFFICE,
STATE OF FLORIDA,
Washington, DC, October 21, 1999.

TO BUDGET COMMITTEE STAFF: Attached is data generated by the Florida Department of Education reflecting the breakdown of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff positions and revenue source information for the K–12 education programs. This information is to be included for the record on Governor Bush's testimony of September 23, 1999. Please contact me if you require any further information. Thank you for your patience.

Sincerely,

FRANK BONNER,
Legislative Analyst.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: SUMMARY OF K–12 POSITIONS BY BUDGET ENTITY

[1998–1999]

Budget entity	Fund source		Total FTE
	General revenue	Federal/PC&G	
4811–Commissioner	\$44.00	\$44.00
4813–Planning, budgeting & management	179.50	\$119.30	298.80
4814–Human resource development	15.00	2.00	17.00
4825–Public schools	84.15	130.85	215.00
4835–Workforce development	54.12	47.88	102.00
Total DOE (excluding postsecondary)	376.77	300.03	676.80
Total revenue—K–12 programs/Federal flow thru	6,810,919,428.00	1,024,461,940.00	7,835,381,368.00

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: SUMMARY OF K–12 POSITIONS BY BUDGET ENTITY

[1999–2000]

Budget entity	Fund source		Total FTE
	General revenue	Federal/PC&G	
4811–Commissioner	\$40.00	\$1.00	\$41.00
4813–Planning, budgeting & management	85.50	104.80	190.30
4814–Human resource development	23.00	12.00	35.00
4817–Technology and administration	109.00	20.00	129.00
4825–Public schools	77.50	127.50	205.00
4835–Workforce development	36.74	65.26	102.00
Total DOE (excluding postsecondary)	371.74	330.56	702.30
Total revenue—K–12 programs/Federal flow thru	6,978,426,904.00	1,049,961,940.00	8,028,388,844.00

Chairman KASICH. I mean, the specific—if 40 percent of your people spend their time filling out paperwork, we would like to know what it is. I want to thank you, Governor, for coming. I think one important point for you and Mr. Riley, what we have found is that single parents with children, who are in poverty, is likely to find their children with a lack of education and their being in poverty. I think the rising poverty statistics for the undereducated in

America is one of our great crises as we go into the next century. I think we all have a commitment to take a look at that and try and fix that.

I want to thank you for your efforts and thank you for coming here today. And good luck to you.

Governor BUSH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And as it relates to that one final point, that is something that our State is beginning to get focused on in a very dramatic way is early childhood development, so we don't have an argument about whether kids started school not prepared to learn compared to others. If we make a command focus on that, this whole debate changes pretty dramatically. So we are making an effort to ensure that when young boys and girls in Florida go to school, that when they are in kindergarten they will be prepared to learn. Then the focus is a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time. And that is a worthy, ambitious goal. That is what we are going to do.

Chairman KASICH. Thank you, Governor.

Secretary Riley, is he making his way in?

Mr. Secretary, if we can, you want to go ahead and take a seat. I would like to thank the Secretary for coming to the meeting today. I know he has a busy schedule. I want to apologize for the tardiness, Mr. Secretary. We had a couple votes over there. I want to welcome you along with Mr. Smith, who is the Acting Deputy Secretary of Education. I want to thank you for your long and distinguished career of public service, both as a Governor, of course, of South Carolina, and your long-term service and commitment to education as the Secretary of Education. So it is a privilege for us to have you here today and we look forward to your statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD W. RILEY, SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Secretary RILEY. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your long years of service, and it is good to be here. I appreciate the opportunity. And if it is all right, I will submit my longer statement for the record.

I have just come back Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, from a 5-day trip to the West Coast, including Seattle that I flew out of late last night—Congressman McDermott's area. And I will tell you there are some very exciting things going on in Seattle. It is a place I would advise any of you that are interested, to take a look at. The community has come together there for public education and it is very exciting.

Let me begin by making some observations about public education and helping to put some things in perspective. Many of us, regardless of our political affiliation, believe that public education is the great bedrock institution of American democracy. I think we all believe that. Whatever your race, your language, your religion, your ethnic origin, we meet together in the public space of public education. Benjamin Barber observed, "Public education is important not because it serves the public, but because it creates the public."

And parochial and private schools make an important contribution to the democratic spirit of our country and many of them do a wonderful job. But public education is the public space where al-

most 90 percent of all of our children obtain their education. That is why I disagree with those who believe that public education is an institution from another time that has lost its way.

I have been to over 600 schools in the last 6 years as Secretary of Education, and I can tell you that good things are happening. And yet there are some people, almost defeatist in their attitude, who are caught up in the worn-out nostalgia that once there was a time long ago when all things in American education were better.

Nostalgia is not really relevant when it comes to getting our young people ready for the 21st century. Things are different now. Schools are different. Whether you are talking about technology, special education issues, increasing diversity of our student population, things are different. And I am tired of the pessimists who have so little faith in this Nation's young people and in this Nation's public school teachers. We have 53.2 million young people to educate in the here and the now.

I point out over the last 10 years public school population has gone up 16.5 percent. Private school population has also gone up 11.5 percent. Surely this is the right time to be rolling up our sleeves and unleashing the American "can do" spirit of optimism about getting an important job done. When I go to public schools, I see excitement. I see schools changing. I see them working hard. And yes, sometimes I see failure. And while I am a strong supporter of public education, I am no defender of low-performing or failing schools.

We all need to work together and bring immediate help to those children who are in schools that need to be turned around and turned around now. We need to start by making sure our children go to safe and healthy schools. I can tell you that the health and safety of the children is the very first and absolute concern of all parents. This is why so many parents are asking for our help when it comes to building new schools. There are prisons in this country that are built much better than most of the public schools that I visited.

I was in a school in Patterson, New Jersey, a school over 100 years old. A year or so ago, the library consisted of two pushcarts with books. Bathrooms, only one for boys, one for girls, 330 children. The playground was a small blacktop, cracked and uneven. It was too dangerous for the children to play on it. They weren't allowed to play on it. There was only one fire escape at the end of the second floor, leaving students in the other three rooms potentially endangered in the event of fire. One or two computers, as I recall, in the whole school. And I saw 5 or 6 children, minority children, poor children, standing in the hall in line when I was coming through, and I said, "What are these children in line for?" and the principal told me they were in line to get their asthma treatment. This dingy, dank, wet school. These children then are expected to learn to high standards.

And that is our charge and that is their charge. These children were worrying about breathing. They weren't worrying about high standards. And I think if this Congress wants to really make a major contribution that can make an immediate difference for parents, then we should pass the President's School Modernization Bond legislation this year. I think that should be a real strong bi-

partisan interest to people out there in the States that want that very badly.

And this isn't about Federal or local control, it is about stopping the practice of serving lunch in an overcrowded school to children at 9:30 in the morning, as is done in Miami, Florida. The cafeteria is so small, the school has grown up in population, kids have to eat in shifts.

It is about fixing roofs. It is about making sure there is water in the science lab, when children are expected to learn math and science to high standards. It is about safety and changing the way that we build schools in this country. Instead of building schools the size of shopping malls, let's build schools that are smaller, that give young people a sense of safety and of connection, a sense that they are getting some individual attention. We should be building schools as centers of communities that stay open late so that the entire community can use them, schools that have the technology for the 21st century.

And I believe if we build our schools smarter, we can help to create some smart growth policies that will make many more communities much more livable as well.

And despite these many obstacles, public education is making progress. Our Nation's reading scores are up for the first time in our history at every grade level tested, 4th, 8th and 12th. The same is true of math. In all three grades tested, achievement scores are up. This is especially true for children in the low range of scores.

There are other signs of progress. ACT and SAT scores are now virtually at their highest level in 2 decades. We have a record number of high school seniors taking the tough advanced placement tests. Not enough. We need to work on that. Sixty-five percent, though, of all high school seniors are now going directly on to college. I think we need to represent that the overwhelming majority of our students in our Nation's great institutions of higher education are public school graduates. Whether they went to Ohio State or the University of Michigan or Princeton or UNC or Davidson, Mr. Spratt, or wherever, the public education system is literally filling up these campuses with bright and optimistic young people now.

Can our public schools do better? They must do better. If we are going to reach the high standards for all of our young people that we must reach, we have some very real problems. Too many of our children are not mastering the basics early. We have a growing shortage of qualified teachers. We have a stubborn achievement gap that too many of our minority children are not overcoming. That is why we have spent over a decade now creating a new foundation for the 21st century that is a very sharp departure from the past: the singular idea that we should set high expectations for all of our children.

We changed the law, as many of you recall, in 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We eliminated the watered-down curriculum for Title I children, for poor children. They have the same high school standards as all children. I think that was a very wise move and that is the way it is now and should be. And I think that is one reason why so

many people really are just now starting to think about our poorest schools. We have never really done this before, despite all the talk about equity and equality.

Well, I am glad that so many people are now concerned. It is a positive development and it has been a long time coming. But let's not throw out the baby with the bath water now that we have so many new friends that are concerned about the future of public education. Let's also remember where we are starting from in our thinking. For many years there has been an unspoken assumption in this country when it came to educating our children. It is kind of about one-third of our students. I know when I was coming along in school, one-third would be expected to be prepared for college. One-third could kind of drift through school and finish high school, and get a rather decent job back then working in a textile mill or on a farm. The bottom one-third would drop out, struggle along, maybe get some kind of meaningless diploma.

The fact is that has changed now. All 100 percent of those students must get a good education if they are to have a future at all. We are going to have to go in a new direction. Everywhere I go, I see the growth of what I think is a new emerging consensus. I call it an American consensus to improve American education: high standards for all students; mastering the basics in early years, especially reading; smaller class size; early intervention when a child is struggling; improving teacher quality; accountability for student performance; modernizing our schools, especially technology; and much much more parental involvement.

Now, this consensus includes increased support for technology, of course, for after-school programs, anything we can do to keep our children safe, making sure that our children learn basic American values.

The American people are also telling us quite clearly that they are prepared to support this growing consensus, to improve education with new investments. Almost 80 percent of all Americans think that the important issue that should be at the top of the Federal agenda is how to improve and invest in education for our children. This support holds whether you are talking about more computers in the classroom, reducing class size, fixing up run-down schools, giving teachers the pay they deserve, all of these issues.

Now, I want to say a word about parental involvement which I talk about a lot all over this country. I think it is a chief focus of this hearing. Parents set expectations and the best schools in this Nation consistently reach out to parents. The most important thing that a parent can do to improve education in America, as I have said all around, is to slow down their lives and help their children grow. If every parent in America had the time and took the time to read to their children, to work with their children only 30 minutes an evening, it would literally revolutionize American education. This, in my opinion, is a far more valuable approach to improving education than to talk about vouchers.

This consensus that I have been talking about also places a strong new emphasis on fixing failing schools. This is very positive. We can't afford to tolerate failing schools. There are many things that can be done. These are State and local decisions, but local leaders have many, many options. You can put new leadership into

a school. School districts can give a new principal the flexibility to change the staff and the entire direction of the school, and that is called reconstitution. I support such options. I think the more options like that, the better. I also support closing down a failing school, if necessary, and starting over from scratch.

Public charter schools are also an option that can be considered, all of these within the public school system. There are also many school districts like Seattle that are successfully expanding public school choice options. Increasing the number of school choice options for parents and students is one of the untold stories of American education.

We also have proven models of successful reform that struggling schools can adopt. Robert Slavin of Johns Hopkins University has a proven track record in his Success for All model. About 1,500 schools, including many Title I schools, are now using this approach in some 47 States. Gene Bottoms of the Southern Regional Education Board also has a very successful model in his High Schools That Work approach. About 970 schools are now part of this initiative and 5 to 10 new schools are being added every week.

New American schools have done a great job of helping school districts with real school reform. And two of your distinguished colleagues, John Porter and David Obey, I think, did a wonderful thing in developing bipartisan support in the creation of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. Over 1,600 schools across America are now using these proven models of reform to turn their schools around. All of these approaches suggest that we have the ability to fix low-performing schools now.

Now, let me turn to the issue of vouchers, since I know you are talking about that some today. And it seems that it has captured the attention of some people. To my way of thinking, the appeal of vouchers rests largely on the idea that you don't have to do any of the things I have talked about in my testimony, the hard things, ways to turn schools around. It is another approach. Vouchers are the latest in a long series of quick fixes that have beset public education, whether it is new math, open classrooms, or whatever. Voucher supporters want you to believe that there is some kind of parallel universe out there that is ready and able and willing to take on the job of educating 46 million public school students, that all you have to do to fix public schools is leave them behind.

Well, I must tell you that there is no such parallel universe out there. The only way to fix public schools is to fix public schools—and not abandon them. The only way to turn around a low-performing school is to turn around the entire school, and not use a voucher system to help a select few and abandon all the rest. And I don't believe that public tax dollars should be drained away from public education at a time of record enrollments. Researchers estimate it would cost about \$15 billion in public tax dollars to give vouchers to all the young people already in private and parochial schools in our country. With the same amount of money, we could fully fund IDEA and probably finance the President's school modernization program and the class size proposal. And those are much better options in my judgment.

I say all of this as a friend of private and parochial education. I have done everything that I could in the last 6 years to make

sure that private and parochial schools get all of the increased support that they can get, including the e-rate which is very significant. Private school students are included in the more flexible Title I and other Federal programs. We make programs as flexible as we can. Of course, you cannot overstep the constitutional boundaries.

Now, when a private or parochial school takes public dollars at the level that voucher supporters are proposing, they will inevitably become less private and less parochial. That to me is harmful to our strong belief in having strong private and parochial schools in this country.

Let me conclude by urging the Congress to please not get sidetracked by the allure of quick-fix gimmicks. Every veteran classroom teacher can tell you about the long list of failed theories and half-baked experiments that they have had to contend with when it comes to improving education. I think we need to focus on the essentials that everybody, everybody in substance, agrees are essential. And that is why this emerging bipartisan American consensus on how to improve education is so important. It gets to the heart of the matter. It is comprehensive in scope. The focus is on all of our children and not just a few of them.

This approach might not seem as exciting as the fad of the moment. But it is a solid approach and will prove to be very, very exciting in the long run, just to have all our children read well and learn more themselves in the next century.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much and I will be happy to respond to questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Riley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD W. RILEY, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am pleased to testify today in support of public education and on behalf of those who are working hard at every level—Federal, State, and local—to improve the quality of our public schools.

Public education is the bedrock of our American democracy. I say this not to denigrate in any way the vital contributions of other religious, cultural, private, or community organizations, nor do I question the role of the family in building a strong society. But no other institution does as much as the public schools to pull us together as a people. Whatever our race, language, religion, or ethnic origin, we meet together in the public schools. That is why Benjamin Barber has observed that, “public education is important not because it serves the public, but because it creates the public.”

The belief that high-quality public schools are the foundation of both our democracy and our economic prosperity, in particular the conviction that education is and should be the great equalizer ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans, is reflected in the constitutions of nearly all States. Collectively, these State constitutions demonstrate a national commitment to the idea that all children deserve equal access to a quality education and the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential as individuals and citizens.

That commitment has been backed up by nearly a decade of hard work by States and communities determined to improve the quality of their public schools. These efforts are based on a strong, bipartisan consensus on the core principles of successful education reform. Everywhere I go, governors, mayors, superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents are emphasizing the same things: high standards for all students, mastering the basics in the early years, smaller class sizes, encouraging parental involvement, improving teacher quality, expanding after-school and summer learning opportunities, accountability for student performance, and modernizing our schools.

Just as important, the American people are committed to backing this education reform consensus with greater resources for our public schools. They understand and believe in the importance of public education, and have shown a growing will-

ingness to make the investments needed to fix our schools. In fact, recent polls have found that Americans favor more Federal spending on education by a 3 to 1 margin. And at least three-quarters of those surveyed supported specific investments to pay teachers more, put more computers in classrooms, reduce class sizes, and fix up run-down schools.

This reform momentum has begun to pay off. The latest results from the ongoing National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported solid gains in math and reading achievement, including substantial improvement for low-achieving students and for those in the highest-poverty schools. For example, the 1998 NAEP reading assessment showed substantial gains for low-achieving students (those scoring in the bottom 10 percent and bottom 25 percent), suggesting that it was improvement among these students that raised the national average of all fourth graders. Similarly, high-poverty schools have registered the greatest gains in NAEP math scores since 1992.

Individual States have shown even more progress. North Carolina, for example, more than doubled the percentage of its 8th graders scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on the NAEP math test. Connecticut registered the largest numerical gain of 10 points and the highest overall 4th grade score of 232 on the 1998 NAEP reading test.

Despite this improvement, we know that there are too many schools that are failing to provide a quality education to our children. While I am a strong supporter of public education, I am not a defender of failing schools. However, I believe that when our public schools are not working as well as they should, we have a patriotic responsibility to fix them, not abandon them.

Fortunately, we know how to fix persistently low-performing schools. The same comprehensive approach that States and school districts are using to improve the performance of all schools is equally effective at turning around failing schools. Raising standards, better teachers, smaller class sizes, increased accountability, and greater parental involvement can turn around the worst of schools. And a key part of improving failing schools is making sure that every student gets the extra help he or she needs to get back on track academically.

I won't mislead you about the challenge we face: it takes hard work and a sustained commitment to turn around failing schools. The temptation is to look for a short-cut, a faster way to claim victory in the struggle to make every public school a good school. That is what makes voucher proposals so appealing: they promise improvement in the quality of education without the hard work of fixing our schools. The reality is that such proposals cannot hope to keep that promise, even for the small number of students who would be able to take advantage of vouchers. What vouchers would do is undermine public education by diverting critical resources from our public schools and distracting attention from the task of strengthening educational opportunity and excellence for all students.

In my view, it just doesn't make sense to risk derailing the strong momentum for effective education reform that is building in States and communities across the Nation. It especially doesn't make sense to replace an education reform agenda built on sound, research-based principles with a fad, about which the only thing we can be certain is that it undermines the very institution that helped build a Nation out of diverse peoples.

The real answer to the problem of failing public schools is not to abandon them, but to pursue a proven reform agenda, provide the resources necessary to fix those schools, and help provide a good education to all students.

WHAT REALLY WORKS

Education researchers will tell you that there is no silver bullet for improving our schools. Successful districts and schools rely on comprehensive improvement strategies that reflect and respond to the specific needs of their students. This is why the Clinton Administration has developed a comprehensive set of program and funding proposals that provide the resources and flexibility needed to effectively support State and local improvement efforts. These proposals focus on high standards, mastering the basics, smaller class sizes, improving teacher quality, accountability, and school construction and modernization.

HIGH STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS

The 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act marked a watershed in the history of American education. Along with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the 1994 reauthorization helped end the tyranny of low expectations for children by placing high standards for academic achievement at the heart of education reform. That bipartisan effort to raise expectations for all children

spurred States and school districts to set high standards and establish goals for improving student achievement.

Nearly all States now have standards and goals in place, and the initial returns are promising. In addition to the NAEP gains noted above, the National Education Goals Panel reported that between 1990 and 1996, 27 States significantly increased the percentage of 8th graders scoring at either the proficient or the advanced level on the NAEP math test.

Federal programs have helped bolster State and local reform efforts linked to high standards. For example, in a report on Goals 2000 prepared by the General Accounting Office, State officials described Goals 2000 as "a significant factor in promoting their education reform efforts" and a "catalyst" for change. The recently completed National Assessment of Title I reported that Title I had promoted State and local development of standards and assessments, and that Title I accountability requirements had encouraged the use of performance data to guide curricula and professional development. In addition, about half of poor school districts reported that Title I is driving reform efforts to a large extent.

MASTERING THE BASICS

The move to high standards necessarily starts with mastering the basics of reading and mathematics. The achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers remains alarmingly large in these essential subjects. This is especially true for the key basic of learning to read, which is the prerequisite for learning all other subjects. The latest reading assessment from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) confirmed what many other studies have shown over the past several years: poor children are twice as likely as other children to read below the basic level.

Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) is the key Federal vehicle for closing the rich-poor gap in reading and math achievement. The recent National Assessment of Title I concluded that trends in the performance of the Nation's highest-poverty schools, as well as the progress of the lowest-achieving students, shows positive gains in reading and math since the 1994 reauthorization of Title I. The Administration has requested \$8 billion for Title I Grants to LEAs in fiscal year 2000 and would provide additional funds to the highest-poverty schools by allocating a significant proportion of the request through the Targeted Grants formula.

Another essential investment in mastering the basics is our \$286 million fiscal year 2000 request for the Reading Excellence program. This bipartisan initiative, which was enacted last year, supports extended learning time for children to strengthen their reading skills, teacher training in reading instruction, and family literacy activities. Reading Excellence is part of the President's America Reads Challenge, which calls for all children to read well and independently by the end of the third grade.

REDUCING CLASS SIZE

Helping all children master the basics and reach high standards demands a great deal of personal, one-on-one attention from teachers, particularly for those disadvantaged, minority, and limited English proficient children who have further to go to reach State standards. Students are more likely to receive this attention in small classes of less than 20 children than in the overcrowded, 35-student classrooms so often found in today's schools and particularly in failing schools.

The Class Size Reduction program, currently funded at \$1.2 billion, would provide \$12.4 billion over 7 years to help schools hire 100,000 new teachers and reduce class size in the early grades to a nationwide average of 18. This initiative responds to a growing body of research showing that students attending small classes in the early grades make more rapid educational progress than students in larger classes, and that these achievement gains persist well after students move on to the later grades. In particular, Project STAR—a longitudinal study of smaller classes in the early grades in Tennessee—found that students in smaller classes (13-17 students) substantially outperformed students in larger classes (22-26 students) on both standardized and curriculum-based tests. In addition, the positive achievement effect of smaller classes on minority students was double that for majority students, a smaller proportion of students was retained in grade compared with students in larger classes, and there was greater early identification of special educational needs in the smaller classes. A follow-up study found that the higher achievement levels reached by students in the smaller classes persisted at least through eighth grade. The President is requesting \$1.4 billion for Class Size Reduction in fiscal year 2000.

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

A key emphasis of the Class Size Reduction program is on hiring highly qualified teachers who are prepared to teach in smaller classes. Similarly, we cannot expect our students to reach high standards until every classroom is led by a qualified and well-trained teacher capable of teaching to high standards. Research shows that qualified teachers are the most important in-school factor in improving student achievement, yet high-poverty urban schools are most likely to suffer from unqualified teachers. In high-poverty schools, more than 20 percent of all teachers are teaching out-of-field, or in a subject in which they lack either a major or minor degree. That's about twice the rate of teachers teaching out-of-field in low-poverty schools.

We made a good start on improving teacher quality last year when Congress passed new teacher recruitment and training programs as part of Title II of the reauthorized Higher Education Act (HEA). The President's fiscal year 2000 request includes a \$40 million increase for the HEA Teacher Quality Enhancement grants program, which would help States improve the quality of their teaching force, strengthen teacher education, and reduce shortages of qualified teachers in high-poverty districts.

Our ESEA reauthorization would build on the improvements in the HEA to help ensure that all teachers are prepared to teach to high standards. A new Teaching to High Standards initiative would support new teachers during their first 3 years in the classroom and help ensure that all teachers are proficient in both academic knowledge and teaching skills. In addition, our reauthorization proposal would support high-quality teaching in high-poverty schools by requiring that all new teachers paid for with Title I funds be fully certified in the subject they teach.

INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A key element of standards-based reform is a strong emphasis on accountability. Challenging State academic standards provide the bar by which to measure the performance of students, teachers, schools, and school districts. The purpose here is not and should not be punitive, but to identify weaknesses and help guide improvements. Many States have taken this to heart by establishing rigorous accountability systems that hold districts and schools accountable for student performance and providing support for those schools that aren't getting the job done. However, State progress in the area of accountability has been uneven, and we believe it is time to provide stronger encouragement at the Federal level. As I said in my reauthorization testimony earlier this year, there is both a moral and fiscal dimension to being more accountable. We cannot afford to lose the talents of any child, and we must ensure that the substantial resources entrusted to us by taxpayers are used effectively.

Our ESEA reauthorization proposal includes an Education Accountability Act, a package of measures to hold districts, schools, teachers, and students to high standards and help ensure that all students receive a high-quality education. This bill would encourage States to develop an accountability system for all schools, including Title I schools, that includes procedures and standards for identifying low-performing schools. It also would provide States and districts with additional Title I resources to help turn around low-performing schools and mandate strong corrective action if there is no improvement within 3 years. Our fiscal year 2000 request for Title I includes \$200 million to accelerate the pace of State and local school improvement efforts.

The Education Accountability Act also would require annual State, district, and school report cards that are distributed to all parents and the public. These report cards would help give parents the information they need to make good choices about the public schools their children attend.

The reauthorization bill also would require States to put in place within 4 years policies ending the practices of social promotion and traditional grade retention, and to provide intensive and comprehensive educational interventions to students who are at risk of not meeting standards for promotion in a timely fashion. The President's fiscal year 2000 budget includes \$600 million for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which can help students meet promotion standards through extended learning time before and after school and during the summers.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND MODERNIZATION

Finally, States and school districts face a huge task in modernizing existing schools to provide students with a world-class education for the 21st century. The average public school is 42 years old, and the General Accounting Office estimates

that one-third of all public schools need extensive repair or replacement. And the baby boom echo—which this fall brought an estimated 447,000 new students to our schools for a record total of 53 million elementary and secondary school students—means that States and districts must squeeze ever more students into these old structures. We cannot expect students to meet demanding new standards of achievement in dilapidated, dangerous, and overcrowded facilities. And both new and renovated schools should be designed for the kind of education we know works best: smaller schools that create a sense of community and small classrooms in which teachers can provide lots of individual attention.

To help States and districts shoulder the financial burden of building and modernizing schools at the same time they are implementing standards-based reforms, the President's School Modernization Bond proposal would subsidize almost \$25 billion in construction bonds over 2 years to modernize up to 6,000 schools.

This proposal does not in any way inject the Federal Government into local decisions about which schools are built or renovated. What it does is provide Federal help to address a massive national problem. There is a quote from Plato that I believe holds great relevance for our system of public education. Plato said, "That which is honored in a country * * * is that which will be cultivated there." As we near the millennium, I hope we will honor our children and cultivate their education by helping to build and modernize their schools.

EXPANDING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

High standards, the basics, smaller classes, better teachers, and accountability are not just slogans—they are sound educational reform strategies that are working to fix failing schools and improve the quality of public education all over America. That's why I disagree with the implicit assumption of voucher proponents that the only choice faced by parents and children—particularly poor children—is between bad public schools and good private schools. This ignores the efforts of millions of hard-working public school principals and teachers who provide a quality education to millions of students—and not just in the affluent suburbs.

However, that doesn't mean we can ignore for one moment the failure of some public schools to do right by their students. I have consistently called for quick action to turn around failing schools and for making available options for the students in those schools. You can reconstitute a school by putting in new leadership and giving that leadership the authority to change the staff and implement wholesale reforms in school structure and curriculum. If all else fails, you can close down a persistently low-performing school and start from scratch. And to help students escape failing schools, we are proposing in our ESEA reauthorization bill to give school districts the option of allowing students in a failing Title I school to transfer to another public school.

Districts also may consider expanding public school choice options to provide alternatives to failing schools. I strongly support public school choice because it does not drain resources from our public school system and because it maintains accountability safeguards over the use of public funds. I just returned from Seattle, Washington, where I heard a great deal about efforts to expand public school choice. The growing amount of choice in our public school systems is one of the untold stories in American education.

The percentage of public school students attending a school chosen by their parents rose from 11 percent in 1993 to about 15 percent in 1996. That means about 7 million children attended public schools of choice 3 years ago. I suspect that number has increased considerably since that time, in part because the Clinton Administration has strongly supported expansion of public school choice. Since 1995, for example, the Public Charter Schools Program has supported the development of an estimated 900 new charter schools. A total of 1,700 charter schools are operating this year, or a little more than halfway toward President Clinton's goal of 3,000 charter schools by 2002. Our fiscal year 2000 request of \$130 million would support up to 1,400 charter schools serving some 400,000 students.

Magnet schools—organized around themes such as math and science or the performing arts—are another very effective public school choice option. Approximately 1.5 million students are currently enrolled in over 5,200 magnet schools. Magnet schools can help promote diversity by attracting students from a variety of backgrounds, and the Department's Magnet Schools Assistance Program is specifically designed to aid desegregation efforts by eliminating, reducing, or preventing minority group isolation. Studies have shown that Federally funded magnet schools have helped provide minority students a high-quality public school education that otherwise would not have been available.

Our ESEA reauthorization proposal includes an initiative designed to encourage the development of high-quality public school choice options that are available to all students, including students in failing schools. The Opportunities To Improve Our Nation's Schools program, or OPTIONS, would provide 3-year competitive grants to support public school choice projects that stimulate educational innovation and improvement and contribute to standards-based reform efforts. Funds would be targeted to high-poverty school districts and projects could include, for example, public schools at work sites or on college campuses, as well as postsecondary enrollment options for secondary students.

Finally, we need to encourage school districts and schools to think about expanding choice within schools. Offering more rigorous course options, promoting Advanced Placement courses, and creating schools within schools are all good ways to provide greater and more stimulating choices within existing schools. We are requesting a significant increase in the Advanced Placement Incentives program for fiscal year 2000, from \$4 million to \$20 million, to launch a 3-year initiative to bring challenging courses to all high schools.

FIXING FAILING SCHOOLS

We also know, however, that it is possible to turn around failing schools very quickly. For example, just a few years ago Harriet Tubman Elementary School in New York City, where 99 percent of students come from low-income families, was one of the lowest-performing schools in the city. After being assigned to the Chancellor's District—a special school district created for the lowest-performing schools—school leaders, parents, and teachers devised a plan for comprehensive change, including an intensive reading program. In just 2 years, the percentage of students performing at or above grade level on the citywide reading assessment rose from 30 percent to 46 percent. As a result, Tubman Elementary was removed from the State's list of low-performing schools.

Similarly, at Hawthorne Elementary School in Texas, where 96 percent of students qualify for free lunch and 28 percent of students have limited English language skills, only 24 percent of students in the school passed all portions of the 1994 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). Four years later, thanks to a rigorous new curriculum for students in the early grades, almost 63 percent of students passed the TAAS, with the largest gains over the period being made by African American students.

These schools share much in common with other high-performing, high-poverty schools. In a survey of 1,200 top scoring schools with at least a 50 percent poverty rate, the Education Trust found that 80 percent reported using standards to design instruction, assess student work and evaluate teachers. Similar percentages reported the use of systematic early intervention strategies as well as the use of extended learning time for students, particularly in reading and math. And nearly all schools dedicated significant resources to professional development for teachers.

A Texas study identified similar approaches as responsible for the success of over 50 high-poverty, high-achieving schools. The study's authors observed that "there are good practices that would enable any high-poverty school to create an environment in which almost all students achieve high levels of academic success."

In addition, there are a variety of proven reform models that struggling schools can adopt—often with the help of Federal funds—"right out of the box." For example, many Title I schools have adopted Robert Slavin's Success for All program, while Gene Bottoms of the Southern Regional Educational Board has developed a High Schools That Work initiative. Representatives John Porter and David Obey have helped over 1,600 schools adapt these and similar proven reform models to their own specific needs through the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program.

Other Federal programs, such as the Class Size Reduction initiative, can support efforts to turn around failing schools and give students the extra help they need. In Columbus, Ohio, the school district is targeting its Class Size Reduction funds to 13 high-poverty, low-performing schools. The funds will be used to hire 58 new, fully certified teachers in grades 1-3 in these schools and reduce class sizes from an average of 25 to an average of 15. The smaller classes are part of a broader strategy that includes implementation of proven early reading programs like Success for All, intensive teacher training in early reading, 90 minutes of reading instruction per day, and clear standards and assessments with benchmarks linked to the curriculum.

VOUCHERS ARE APPEALING, BUT FATAALLY FLAWED

These examples show that successful educational improvement demands comprehensive approaches, a sustained commitment from everyone involved, and plenty of hard work. The appeal of vouchers, I believe, rests largely on the idea that you don't have to do these things. That there is some kind of parallel universe of superior private schools that is ready, able, and willing to take on the job of educating 46 million public school students. That all you have to do to fix the public schools is to leave them behind and subsidize private education instead. Well, I'm here to tell you that there is no such parallel universe. The only way to fix the public schools is to fix the public schools, not abandon them.

And that's not just me talking—the American people agree and have agreed for almost 40 years. In 1950, a *Life Magazine* poll asked Americans whether they favored Federal funding of schools run by churches or just the public schools. Only 30 percent favored giving Federal money to religious schools. In 1999, at a time when improving education is the top national priority and Americans favor increased Federal spending on education by a 3 to 1 margin, a new *Life Magazine* poll showed the same 30 percent support for giving Federal dollars to schools run by churches.

There is a lot of emotion in the debate over private school vouchers, over this plan in one city and that plan in another, but I would like to steer clear of the emotion and focus on the facts. And the facts say that vouchers cannot improve public education in a meaningful way.

Let me begin with the core assumption of voucher proponents: that private schools provide a superior education to public schools, and at lower cost. Numerous studies show that if you control for family educational background and income, students in public schools perform about as well as students in private schools. I won't deny that the very best private schools provide an excellent education, just as the very best public schools do, but on average private schools do not deliver the superior education promised by voucher supporters.

As for costs, research shows that nominal tuition charges at private schools substantially understate the real costs of private education. Most private schools rely heavily on special fees and fundraising activities to supplement tuition. In addition, most private schools do not provide the range of educational services found at public schools, such as special education, bilingual education, free transportation, and food and health services. The record keeping and reporting required to ensure accountability for public funds in a voucher system also would increase costs. Once these factors are taken into account, any cost benefits of private education largely disappear.

It also is important to remember that a significant portion of any public investment in vouchers would go to students and families already in the private schools. Nationwide, for example, it would take some \$15 billion to pay the costs of the 5 million students already enrolled in private school. This substantial expense would do nothing to help students in public schools, particularly the disadvantaged students who are the focus of Federal education programs.

Another set of concerns is purely logistical. With over 90 percent of our children attending public schools, there just are not enough spaces to accommodate more than a small percentage of public school students in existing private schools. In California, for example, less than 1 percent of the State's public school students could expect to find space in private schools. It also seems logical to assume that the spaces that are available are likely to be found in second-tier private schools and not the best ones.

And getting students to private schools can require costly transportation subsidies. The City of Cleveland, for example, spent \$1.4 million in 1 year to pay for taxis that carried voucher students to school. Transportation is an often overlooked but unavoidable and very expensive extra cost of voucher programs.

A final area of concern is that many of the attributes that explain the appeal and the academic success of private schools are incompatible with the purposes of publicly supported education. For example, many parents turn to private schools because they believe religion should be an important part of their children's education. And most private schools use selective admissions procedures to screen out difficult-to-serve students, such as some children with disabilities or behavioral problems.

Private schools have been quick to recognize that participation in voucher programs threatens much of what gives private education its character and vitality. For example, a 1998 survey of 22 urban areas found that 86 percent of religious schools would not participate in a voucher program if it permitted students to opt out of religious instruction.

Many private schools also value their independence from the oversight that necessarily accompanies the use of public funds. This led 64 private schools in Miami to abstain from participation in Florida's statewide voucher program. While we can all appreciate and respect the determination of these schools to remain independent, their position underscores the difficulty of ensuring accountability for public funds in voucher programs.

All of these factors—the performance, capacity, costs, character, and accountability of private schools—suggest that the supporters of vouchers have not really thought through the real implications of their proposals. If they had, I believe that they would have to agree that private school vouchers just don't make sense as a responsible strategy for effective reform of the public schools. Voucher proposals can only distract the American people from the hard work of real education reform, drain critically needed funds from our public schools, and undermine support for public education.

CONCLUSION

For nearly a decade, the Nation has worked to develop and implement a comprehensive set of sound, research-based education reform programs. These programs are working to help States and school districts across America improve the quality of public education and turn around low-performing schools. This bipartisan, mainstream approach is based on a strong belief in the importance of public education for American society and democracy, high expectations for all children, and a commitment to ensuring that no child is left behind and denied the opportunity for a quality education. Vouchers would undermine public education and could derail this reform consensus while providing education of an uncertain quality to a small minority of students. The only responsible choice is to continue support for proven practices that strengthen public education for all children.

I will be happy to take any questions you may have.

Chairman KASICH. Mr. Hoekstra is recognized.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Secretary. In your written statement you quote Plato, "That which is honored in a country is that which will be cultivated." you also go on to, in your comments today, talk about that this is not about local and Federal control, that this is about a bipartisan American consensus on education. I think there is a broad bipartisan American consensus in education as to what kind of education we want and what results we want with our children. There is a real national debate about what the best way is to achieve that. I have also had the opportunity to travel to 20 States and hear testimony from people in the public, private, and home school environments talking about what they want for education. And there is a real debate. And it is a real debate versus the proposal that you and the administration are putting forward, which is one of Federal control.

In your own written statement, you frequently use the term "we know how," "we know," how to "pursue a proven reform agenda," when you talk about the Federal programs, and you talk about flexibility. But when you actually read the statement, it talks about, "you know," "this program requiring"—it is not requiring Washington to do something, it is requiring people at the State and at the local level to follow a Washington mandate. It talks about strong encouragement to hold accountable local districts. To "encourage and mandate," "would require," "would require." The approach that the administration is putting forward is not one of flexibility that allows people at the local level to work toward this consensus, but it is one that says rather than reaching—a school reaching out to its parents and involving children's parents, which is what you articulated—the schools are forced to reach out to Washington to find out what the bureaucrats and the bureaucracy in Washington believe is the best solution for them.

I don't know if you have been to Chicago lately. We had an opportunity to have Secretary Bennett there who, in the 1980's, described that as the worst performing school district in the country. Former Secretary Bennett and Paul Vallas, who is the superintendent of schools over there, testified at our hearing.

The former Secretary no longer believes that this is the worst school district in the country. And the formula for success was not following Washington mandates, but what the State of Illinois did for the Chicago public schools. They demandated the schools and provided accountability. They said we will get rid of all the different State programs that are coming into the Chicago public schools, we will demandate the schools, and we will give you a couple of checks, but we want to hold you accountable.

Why won't your administration support the same kind of approach here, that in exchange for local and State flexibility to meet the specific needs of a Detroit or a Chicago—and there is not a proven track record that what worked in Chicago is what will work in Detroit—why won't you let those States and those school districts, who are trying to serve their kids, have more flexibility and then hold them accountable for the results?

Secretary RILEY. Well, Congressman, I think you make the point that the flexibility that is out there now in Title I and other programs evidently is working well in Chicago. We have—

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Excuse me. They only get 7 percent of their money from Washington, or 7 to 10 percent. What happened is, they got freedom from the State to spend 93 percent. The 7 percent from the Federal Government isn't what fueled their success.

Secretary RILEY. Well, Congressman, I will respect your premise which is that by Washington regulations we have hamstrung Chicago somehow to where they didn't have local freedom to make decisions.

And then your statement was that what they are doing, using within the context of our programs, gives them all kinds of freedom, gives them all kinds of flexibility. We have so much more flexibility in the Federal programs now than we did when we came here, that it is not even compared. We eliminated three-fourths of the regulations on Title I.

So I think—I understand what you are saying, Chicago is a very good example, and they are really turning that around. We are trying to have Federal programs be such that can be helpful to Chicago and not harmful to them. And I work very closely with Paul Vallas and very closely with the mayor and others there. And I will tell you, our programs are helping them immensely.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Then how come Paul Vallas says, why doesn't the Federal Government give me the same kind of freedom that my Governor will give me?

Secretary RILEY. Well—

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Why can't we be as flexible and as trustworthy of the Chicago school system as what their Governor is?

Secretary RILEY. Evidently we are not harming them with our regulations or they couldn't be having the same kind of success.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Is that the standard, we are not harming them?

Secretary RILEY. You indicated they were harming them, by having some kind of restriction on them and not giving them the free-

dom to do as they wish. We don't have but 7 percent of the money. That is right. In Columbus, Ohio, the chairman's own district; those folks there are taking class size money, and putting it—targeting it in the low—poorest schools and have really come around to a very sensible approach. They have some 15 pupils per teacher; they are making a difference.

We have that kind of flexibility in the programs. And please understand, I agree that they should have flexibility. You have to have some accountability, and those too you have to work out. You can't pour Federal dollars out there and have no accountability. You have to have some accountability. And we are very strong on that, as you know.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We are looking forward to it. We are going to give the administration a wonderful opportunity to give local schools and States a tremendous amount of flexibility and to trade it off for accountability.

The former Governor from Ohio will be here later today. He has testified that the 7 percent of the money that the State of Ohio gets generates 40 to 50 percent of the paperwork that the State bureaucracy had to put in place. I hope that as you go back through your statement and take a look at it, that you emphasize—as we move forward in reforming education, you emphasize the flexibility and start removing from our vocabulary here in Washington the terms “require,” “mandate,” to “hold.”

You are right, when you see what is going on at the local level, there is tremendous success. And the people in Columbus, other than their football, do sensible things. All right. They can be expected to do the right thing.

Chairman KASICH. That gentleman has just now lost his time.

Mr. Secretary, if I could, you can respond—the Secretary has limited time. I want to recognize Mr. Spratt, Ms. Rivers, Mr. Pitts and Mr. Wamp and maybe Ms. Hooley too. So we are going to have to be limited in our questions, please. And, Mr. Secretary, of course you can respond.

Secretary RILEY. The Straight A's Act, that I gather you are talking about, I am opposed to—and I would say, as you point out, only 7 percent of the dollars come from the Federal Government, 93 percent is State and local. So obviously the great decision-making is with the 93 percent.

The 7 percent, though, that we send out, from a national point of view, if you have no targeting, if you have no national purpose, that money just becomes lost in that process. So I am opposed to that. Under the 5-year proposal, all the State would have to do is have standards and assessments, a plan, goals, and any State purpose could be served. I mean, you could use the money for building something, if it was an education-related thing, you could use it for vouchers, you could use it for whatever, and you could totally lose the focus and the targeting of poor kids or disabled kids that we have in the current system.

I prefer our current system with a lot of flexibility and a lot of the accountability.

Chairman KASICH. Mr. Spratt is recognized.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. You have been bringing both experience and passion to this subject. You have

proved your commitment to it over the last 7 years and, before that, for 8 years as Governor of South Carolina. I can attest to that.

Let me quickly ask you one question because others have questions. I have watched you for 7 years in this job, in the context of a tight budget in the Cabinet and in the Congress, marshal money for education, as much money as you can, more money every year.

Today, the President is going to veto the tax bill. What would be the consequences for education, all of the educational programs, if this bill were to pass and become law?

Secretary RILEY. Well, the indications that we have from looking at the tax cut that has been sent to the President could be as much as a 50 percent cut in education dollars over a 10-year period. Now, that is dramatic. Again, you can argue those numbers, more or less, but I am telling you, it could be very dramatic in terms of education, and I am very pleased that the President is going to veto it, or has vetoed it, I think, already this morning.

Mr. SPRATT. Thank you very much.

Chairman KASICH. Mr. Pitts is recognized.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome Mr. Secretary. Again, in the context of the tight tax dollars and with the need for increased efficiency of our—the use of our tax dollars, I want to ask you about administrative overhead costs. If we are interested in driving the Federal tax dollars down to the local public school to be spent on activities that affect classroom learning, such as teacher salaries, teacher aides, equipment, books, computer supplies, whatever the local school district determines is their priority, as long as it is classroom related; and if that is the only requirement, if we give them more flexibility in the use of that money, more local control—and I would like to exempt things like special ed and voc ed and migrant ed—but if we could give them a block of money, what percentage of that tax dollar is needed for administrative overhead by the bureaucracy on the Federal level? And maybe you could estimate what would be needed on the local level and the State level.

Secretary RILEY. Well—and that is a very legitimate question, and I appreciate it.

I would say this in terms of Title I, which is our biggest K-through-12 program, our administrative cost here in Washington is approximately one-fourth of 1 percent or less. One-fourth of 1 percent or less. Title I law reads that the State cannot take for administrative costs any more than 1 percent, so for Title I, it gives to the school district 98-plus, almost 99 percent.

Now, overall for Federal K-through-12 programs, it is less than 1 percent. Approximately one-half of 1 percent for all of K-through-12, if you figure all of the programs for administrative purposes here.

Mr. PITTS. All of the other programs?

Secretary RILEY. Yes. If you count them, all our administrative costs are less than—are about one-half of 1 percent; Title I is even half of that. And so I think that getting funds to the school district really, Congressman, is what we ought to talk about. If you talk about going beyond the school district and to the classroom, you

are bypassing a very important part of American education, the elected school boards who really make the local decisions.

So I would urge Congress, when you are looking at these things, I think the point that the Federal dollars should be looked at is at the district level and not the school itself. Those are district decisions, in my judgment. But the administrative costs are very low.

I would say this, that I am very pleased that certain programs we have cut out, eliminated some 68 programs, which saves over \$600 million, since we have been there. We have cut student loans, of course, from 22 percent down to below 10 percent, which saves probably \$1 billion a year. And our total costs are around a half a billion. So, I mean, we think that we run a rather efficient business.

Mr. PITTS. Now, if you keep your administrative costs within 2 percent, 1 or 2 percent, do you think that is fair to require, if they are using Federal dollars and they have that local flexibility, that the State and the local level should not be using more than 2 percent each, as well?

Secretary RILEY. Well, the—

Mr. PITTS. I am talking about utilizing by the bureaucracies.

Secretary RILEY. The States vary significantly on that. Some of them have a very efficient operation, others less so. Of course, under Title I they can't use more than 1 percent for administration. And that is our—that is clearly the biggest as that is an \$8 billion program. So States, we think, ought to be just like the Federal Government, ought to be very careful, very conservative about their administrative costs.

There are certain necessary administrative costs; if you are going to have full accountability and make sure the funds are spent properly, you have to have some. But we try to keep that down to the very minimum, and the State, I would hope, would do the same.

Chairman KASICH. Ms. Rivers.

Ms. RIVERS. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, it is always a pleasure to see you and hear from you. You just mentioned a moment ago locally elected school boards. And as someone who spent the better part of a decade on a local school board, a lot of issues are very important to me. I think I bring a perspective that perhaps some folks don't have.

For example, the debate earlier today around the vouchers, the argument is that vouchers really don't hurt local public schools because it is on a per capita basis, and if you just pull out the money per child, it leaves the same sort of program for everyone else.

My experience is that the costs are not really allocated on a per child basis within a school; things like labs, gyms, a comprehensive library cost the same amount whether there are 200 children or 225 in the school. A bus that has to run from point A to point B is not reduced in cost because two children fewer are riding it. There are economies of scale, and in many cases, smaller sometimes equals more expensive.

What is your experience or how does the Department, what does their research suggest about this?

Secretary RILEY. Well, in serving on the school board, you were on the front line, and you observed that, I think, very accurately. The State constitutions, as you know, are the general law of the

State; practically all the constitutions say that the State will provide free public education for all children in the State.

Now, you can then pull 10 children out or 100 children or whatever and go to another location, and then leave that location closed down, or if they change their mind, they come back to that school. So the school system, really, under the State constitution has to plan for all the children in the State.

And as you point out, many of the services then are services that serve all children; you can take 2 percent off and you still have to have those services there.

So I think that is a very good point, that you can't—the State or the school district can't just drop their funds immediately if 1 percent or 2 percent of the children go to another location.

Ms. RIVERS. Heat and light cost the same irrespective of how many kids.

The second question I have is, you mentioned earlier that the voucher proposal that was discussed earlier was about the same amount as fully funding IDEA. That is about \$15 billion, I think, when I last looked into it.

One of the things that I know local school boards struggle with is that many of their special ed costs are not met within the Federal dollars that come to them. Originally, they expected around 40 percent; we have never done that at the congressional level. Shame on us in Congress.

But were we to reach that point, we would put considerable money back into local schools to be used at their discretion, because it would free up local dollars that they are committing to meet their special education needs. Yet when I proposed it here, virtually everyone on that side of the aisle voted against funding IDEA. What would that money do for public education, do you think?

Secretary RILEY. Well, it would be a significant help; I don't think there is any question about that.

First of all, I would be quick to say that all of us should be very proud of what we have done in this country for disabled children. We must never cease having that as a clear priority. But I would say this, I hear from an awful lot of people—from school board members and others—about the expense of educating disabled children, the fact that the Federal Government was authorized to provide as much as 40 percent—it wasn't a mandate; it was an authorization, and of course we only fund a very small 12 or 14 percent of the excess cost now. And funding has gone up significantly over the last 3 years, I think about 64 percent, with Congress being a leader in that and we have certainly supported it.

I support full funding of IDEA, but you have to support full funding of IDEA in line with other costs that are out there. You can't just say, we are going to do this and nothing else. Disabled children are tremendously helped by small classes, tremendously helped by qualified teachers and so forth. So I think the surplus that is out there now in your amendment—and I thank you for it; I think it is the right thing to do—if you have a surplus and you deal with Social Security and Medicare and the debt as much as you can, then to have those funds go for something like IDEA would help all Americans in a very clear, fair way.

So I appreciate your amendment.

Ms. RIVERS. My last question—if I still have time, the last question: You just mentioned class size reduction is a big issue. Frankly, the two proposals that the President has put forward, the class size reduction one, has gotten more attention, but as somebody who has dealt with schools at the local level, my experience is, many schools would like to go to smaller class size, but don't have the classrooms.

To go to smaller class size means more classrooms have to be available, and therefore the school construction initiative is more important in many cases or is a predecessor, it has to be the prerequisite to moving forward on class size.

What is the Department's experience in trying to evaluate, you know, the overcrowding of schools, the availability of classroom space?

Secretary RILEY. Well, as you point out, those two really feed off each other. Class size is extremely important. And our research shows that small classes with 15 to 18 students in the early grades, and teachers able to teach reading, that children do well in early school, middle school, high school. It is a longitudinal study, and it is very, very powerful.

However, as you point out, that exacerbates the construction problem. To me, you don't then say, let's don't do it. Because it is right and it is good for children, you have to do something about construction. And they are trying to do that, I think, in every State, in every school district, and we are trying to help. And it is doable within this current season, with the surplus and with the money we have to deal with only the financing; not to say what schools are built or whatever they are built around, those are local decisions, but simply to help with the interest on the bonds, for some \$25 billion of school bonds. It would be a wonderful way to go into the new millennium with children seeing what is important to us, renovating, improving, building schools.

Ms. RIVERS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CHAMBLISS [presiding]. The gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Wamp.

Mr. WAMP. Ms. Rivers talked about a development of IDEA, and I was recently in a small, rural east Tennessee county where they have taken the initiative to build new schools. That is not their problem; it happens to be a traditionally Democratic county, and I was meeting with the superintendent. He told me a story of the last school year where some students were involved in an incident; I think it was illegal drugs. Based on school board policy, some of the students were suspended and some were not. Those that were not were classified as learning disabled. The school board, the parents, the teachers, the superintendent, they were all irate and believe that here in Washington, we have actually created two different classes of students based on local school board rules and regulations.

I would just ask you to comment on whether or not you think we have gone too far. In a day where many national experts say there are too many children medicated for ADHD, we have too many

children in this country who are basically being medicated when they may not be properly diagnosed. This is a problem.

Since we have such a growing population of learning disabled, do we here in Washington, DC, want to draw a distinction between two different classes of children in this country? Where one would have to abide by the rules, and the other would not? This superintendent just plain said to me, "All I need from you is less regulation and less control out of Washington."

Secretary RILEY. Well, I enjoyed being with you in Chattanooga, by the way. The IDEA is very, as I said, important, but it is a complicated measure. Every disabled child is different. Every child, for that matter, is different. But they are different in a complicated way and they need to be dealt with. And I think IDEA goes a long way to doing that, and it should be funded better.

No, those are local decisions really, I think as you describe them, determining whether a child is learning disabled or not or should be receiving medication or not. We certainly don't determine that. But when you have a child who is disabled who then is being punished for some reason; the law does require that that child continue to get educational services. Frankly, I agree with that. I don't think you ought to punish a child by denying them educational services. And that is really a very controversial part of IDEA.

I agree that you should provide educational services. I think we should provide them for all children at all times.

But it does get complicated. You have complicated children, and I really can't get into the overuse of drugs for children with ADD or whatever. I do know a lot of children with ADD who, with the help of Ritalin, have been tremendously helped in their learning capacity and potential. And other drugs may be overused; I am really not able to comment on that. But I appreciate your comment.

Mr. WAMP. Would you recognize that is one area where Federal control actually restricts the local school board if they have to, by Federal law and in this case, they have to treat those children separately. That is a control that is creating a lot of angst for a lot of school boards out there.

Secretary RILEY. The Federal law would say, you have to give them Ritalin?

Mr. WAMP. They have to keep them in school. Even if they violate school board policy, they have to keep them in school.

Secretary RILEY. They don't have to keep them in school; they have to provide educational services. And I mean, there is nothing wrong with that. You don't deny somebody educational services and say that is the way to punish them, in my judgment.

I don't think that is the way things work. I understand it is complicated and perhaps expensive in some ways. But I think you can punish a child with a disability just like any other child. You can punish the child, but you have to provide educational services; and I think that is right.

Mr. WAMP. I would be happy to yield.

Chairman KASICH. We have to wrap it up here. The Secretary is already behind time. I want to thank the Secretary for coming. And, Ms. Hooley, the last question.

Ms. HOOLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for all of the good work you do. When we talk about education policy, there are some things that work very well. We know that high expectations or standards make a difference. In fact, I was just talking to a principal at McKay High School in Salem, Oregon. It was an underachieving high school, and because the administration set high standards and expectations, they have turned that high school around.

We know the quality of the teacher you have in the classroom makes a difference. We know a small class size makes a difference in terms of a child's learning. We know parents' involvement makes a difference. While we talk about teachers and teacher quality and trying to reduce classroom size, though, we are looking at a national shortage of teachers.

What can we do either on the Federal or local level to address the whole issue of the quality of our teachers?

Secretary RILEY. Well, every speech I make, I talk to young people about considering teaching. I think that is something all of us, as leaders, can do. All people know we need 2.2 million quality teachers who can teach to high standards, who can teach with technology, who can teach to diverse student bodies over the next 10 years.

Now, many of the programs this Congress has passed, the President has proposed, such as class size—the class size money goes to reduce class size in those early years. It can be used for recruitment; it can be used—15 percent of it can be used for professional development, for example, to help teachers learn how to better teach reading. So we try to keep those programs very flexible.

The Higher Education Act that was reauthorized last year, Title II that was then funded, also has funds for recruiting young people into teaching, helping them through their educational process, and teacher colleges also, through those inductive years when they are new teachers when so many good teachers drop out after 3 or 4 or 5 years.

So we have got to recruit more teachers. We have got to educate teachers better. And then we have got to retain them. And it is a very important thing for this country to work that out, because all of us need to be working on this—we are trying to use every way we can to help with that very issue you are talking about.

I had over 100 university presidents here last week and it was very interesting, talking about teacher colleges. Not teacher college chancellors, but chancellors of the whole university, to try to get the teacher education part of the university on a level with the arts and sciences. To try to connect up the teacher education with the K-through-12 classes on the local level.

So I think there are a lot of things we can do. We are working on that. I look forward to working with you to continue it.

Ms. HOOLEY. I have one very brief last question.

Chairman KASICH. We have got to suspend. I am sorry, Ms. Hooley.

Ms. HOOLEY. I will get another chance, hopefully, with the next set of panelists?

Chairman KASICH. Absolutely. I don't mean to cut you off, but people have very strict time constraints. Senator Voinovich is here.

We are going to have the group of people who are involved in the scholarship programs.

I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary. I want you to know my wife is going to have twins in February, and I have already sampled the Harry Potter book; I am reading it now. Any time you are looking for somebody to stand up and urge the parents to start taking that time to read to their kids—I don't know why we don't make a national campaign about this on both sides of the aisle.

If you are looking for somebody up here to be a point person to join with you to constantly say to parents, read to your kids for 30 minutes, it makes all the difference in the world. I am willing to work with you and put some energy into that. You let me know and I want to thank you for being here today.

Secretary. RILEY. Thank you. And I thank the committee. Thank you very much.

Chairman KASICH. We are now going go with the great pleasure of having George Voinovich. George Voinovich, I think, has been elected to just about every office there is to be elected to. Believe it or not, he was Assistant Attorney General, he was a State representative. He was the Cuyahoga County Commissioner, he was the County Auditor, he was the Lieutenant Governor, he was the Mayor of Cleveland, he was the Governor of Ohio, and now he is a Senator, and there are no other jobs we can think of that he can be elected to in Ohio.

But the thing that is so wonderful about George Voinovich is he is very down to earth. It does not get real complicated. There are basics in life. And I will tell you the thing I admire most about him, he is as firm as the day is long. He is not afraid to go across the aisle. When he believes in something, he stands pat. He is just a terrific public servant. And I am very very proud to call him a friend.

George, why don't you talk a little bit about Ohio education. We have two other people on the panel, but we know you have time constraints so we will let you go ahead, whatever you want to tell us.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to come here before this committee, and I must say that, I've just gone through an hour and a half with my colleagues trying to figure out how we are going to balance this budget. It is not going to be easy.

Today I would like to share some thoughts with you about a subject that I talked to this committee about back in January 1995 in Columbus, Ohio. At that time I said that we needed to look at the proper role of government at the Federal, State, and local level, and that we needed to define which government services were truly important to society. We had to determine what level of government should do it, and then determine how it was going to be paid for.

Mr. Chairman, when I was a member of the National Governor's Association and chairman of that organization, we fought vigorously to delineate those responsibilities. I would like to just remind

this committee that we have made some notable legislative progress. Recently a study was done by the National Conference of State Legislators, and they talked about the important things that have happened in terms of our relationships and key issues. They talked about the "five hallmarks of devolution."

And, Mr. Chairman, you remember them—the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments, welfare reform, Medicaid reform, and the elimination of the Boren amendment and the establishment of our children's health insurance program. They addressed the things that we were getting into; and what the Federal level of government involvement should be; what was our relationship and our partnership with States and local jurisdictions.

In this year, one of the most significant things that has happened and something that this committee should be interested in is that we passed the anti-tobacco recoupment legislation. That is a significance piece of legislation for this committee to pay attention to, because in our State, the fact that we could use all of that tobacco settlement money means that our first year payment is the equivalent of all the growth of all of our other resources: income tax, sales tax and so on. A lot of that money is going to be used for education.

I talked to the Governor of Nevada the other day; they are taking half of their money and they are going to provide scholarships for every kid in Nevada to go on to higher education. They are going to pay for that. So that bill that we passed makes a lot more money available to our State and local governments.

The other thing that I think was significant that you should be interested in and concerned about is Ed-Flex, which basically took Federal education funds and said to the States, you can use this money for things that are not specified in the law as long as you tell us what you are going to do with it and as long as you come back and you account for what you are doing with that money.

So we have made some real progress. But I must tell you that I am a little bit disturbed, as a former Governor and former State legislator and local government official, with what has happened on the national level. I just heard Secretary Riley talking about the issue of teacher education and what we are doing at our teaching colleges. So much of what the President and the Secretary have talked about in the last 2 or 3 years about education, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, are things that are the proper subject for State and local government. They are the role of the State governments.

And if you look at the involvement of the Federal Government in education, they say it's 7 percent, but when you peel some things away, actually it is about 3 or 4 percent. Education is primarily the responsibility of State government.

You are interested in budgets. The President's proposal, 100,000 new teachers, \$1.2 billion in 1999, \$200 million more in this fiscal year coming up. School construction, \$11 billion; testing, which is the first step in a national curriculum; social promotion, a lot of things that they are talking about fundamentally are the responsibilities of State and local government. You as members of the Budget Committee should understand that during the last several

years as you passed legislation to support education initiatives, that the money to pay for those programs came out of Social Security. People constantly come to me and say, "We have got to have the money for the 100,000 teachers." I say, "Where do you think the money is coming from? We don't have any budget surplus." We may have one this next year. But now, it is coming out of Social Security. The Federal Government is \$5.7 trillion in debt. Fourteen cents out of every dollar is being used to pay for interest, \$600 million a day is used to pay for the interest.

And I think that what this committee should be doing in terms of the future is saying what is our role, and particularly, when you don't have the money to pay for it, you ought to be very reluctant about what programs that you get into.

Now, what could we do in terms of education? Mr. Chairman, you have heard this. There was a study done by the General Accounting Office that showed there are 560 different education programs in 31 Federal agencies and offices, 92 of them are in early childhood care and education, prenatal to 3. I want to ask you the question, how much effort has been made by this committee or the Education Committee to look at those programs and determine whether or not they are needed? Are they still relevant? Can you take the money and use it for something else? Are they proper programs for the Federal Government to be funding, or are they a State responsibility? If they are a State responsibility, then maybe you should say to the State, we are going to phase them out and you are going to have to take on that responsibility.

The other thing that I think that we need to look at is, are there any other initiatives on the Federal level where we could get a bigger bang for our buck. You are talking about children; parents reading to children. I have a bill in the Senate—a prenatal-to-3 bill—which does some very simple things. For example, we are asking for a one-time \$30 million grant to public broadcasting so they can expand their Web site so that your wife or my daughter-in-law or some daycare operator can access information about public television. They have a curriculum to go with "Mr. Rogers" or some of the other programs that they have, like "Sesame Street," and the parents or the teacher can read to the kids about it before the program goes on. They can watch the program, and after the program is over they have other materials that they can use to follow up.

There are some things that the Federal Government can do to stimulate things happening on the local level. For example, the Federal Government has helped fund the research on the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. So today, across the country there is competition. Ohio is No. 2 in the country next to North Carolina; across the country, teachers are pursuing certification by the National Board of Teaching Standards.

But let me tell you, I met with a group recently that got Congress to provide \$2½ million to pay for the tuition of the teachers in the States to take the test. I said, hold on a minute—that is not what we agreed to do. The money was to be used to do the research so that you get it all done, so you could certify these teachers. We don't want to get the Federal Government into paying the tuition of people that are applying for it. That is the State's responsibility.

The point I am making is that as a newcomer here, it just seems that things just keep on going on and on and on, and nobody ever wants to look at a program to see if it can be eliminated. Now I chair a subcommittee that is called Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring and the District of Columbia. I brought in Secretary Riley's people. I brought in Secretary Shalala's people to talk about their prenatal-to-3 programs. We have a thing called the Performance Plan and it is required under the Government Performance and Results Act. The GAO said that Health and Human Services and Education hadn't sat down to coordinate their efforts to deal with their prenatal-to-3 programs. So Secretary Riley—to give him credit—has taken that effort out of some lower level office and is bringing it into his office, where they are rewriting their plan so they can take the money that is being made available for those programs and making sure that it is being used as effectively as possible.

And over the next 2½ years, I am going through every one of those 92 programs that deal with prenatal to 3, and I am going to recommend we ought to get rid of some of them. We need to find out what programs we should be doing and what we should not be doing.

The other thing I would like to comment on is if we do have a program and if we agree that it is a good program, then we need to provide flexibility. Ed-Flex is good, as is the Straight A's program that Mr. Goodling and our people in the Senate are working on. Give the States flexibility.

Mr. Chairman, one of the greatest things that could happen in this Congress is if the Education Committee, or maybe your committee and Senator Domenici's, could get together with the Governors and say let's sit down at a table and spend 2 or 3 days looking at what we are doing and figure out how is the best way to get this done. Honestly, I think you could get 50 Governors together. How did we get Ed-Flex passed? We got it passed because the Governors agreed it was a good thing on a bipartisan basis. We got their support and the President signed the bill. We ought to be doing a lot more of that. In areas where we are partners with State and local government, it would be smart to bring them in and sit down and start talking about these things instead of Congress going off and saying we are going to do it. I understand the frustration. There is a problem a day, no, many problems a day. I want to do something about it. But the question is, is it our role to do something about it or is it their responsibility to do it, or is it shared? We ought to bring these people in and talk with them.

As I said, we have to think in terms of flexibility; we have to give the most flexibility as possible. I remember with Ed-Flex somebody criticized it and said, Well, they are going to take Title I money, and they are not going to take care of the kids. I said, Are you telling me that the States and the local people are not going to take care of kids with Title I?

I would like everyone to apply for Ed-Flex in terms of Title I because when they do, States can come back and say, "This is what we are going to do with Title I money." Then each year they have got to account for what they are doing with the money. In other

words, give them the flexibility and then require that they have to account for it.

The other thing is there are a lot of ideas out there. You know, one of the things you were talking about here is our scholarship program in Cleveland. It is a voucher program and I think it is a good program. It has been difficult to get on its feet, because there are people who oppose it and say it is the devil himself. There are others that are saying it is better than Heinz 57 varieties. But the fact is in terms of the Federal Government, I never mandated vouchers, I never mandated charter schools, but I would never preclude a community from using their money for the vouchers or for charter schools or for something like that.

What we should be doing is getting as much innovation and initiative in this country to really start to deal with the problems that are confronting our kids in the area of education.

Last but not least, I think that too many people do not understand that there is competition among the States in terms of a lot of programs, and particularly in education. I competed with Michigan, Michigan stole some ideas from me, I stole some ideas from North Carolina. I mentioned earlier on, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. There were only two States involved in that program, Ohio and North Carolina. Now 38 States are in it and they are all competing. By the way, Ohio pays for teachers to apply to take the test. Once they pass the test, we guarantee them another \$3,000 a year for 10 years to reward them because they have now become nationally board certified.

The point I am making is that we are all concerned about what is happening in education. You had Governor Jeb Bush in here. He is trying something new. A lot of people say what he's trying is a terrible thing. Who knows? Who knows? I don't know. But why is it that we are afraid to try new ideas? If you are in business and you have problems, you have to do research and development. Any business that sees something that is not working out or where they are not being competitive, or that doesn't try new ideas, goes out of business. This is a big business. Education is a big business.

So I would just like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, that there are a lot of things that we can do in the area of education in this country. And again we have got to decide who has the responsibility and who pays for it; and then what we need to do is understand that we are partners. And what we try to do is to see how we can be the best partners so that we can really make a difference and get a return on our investment for our children which will allow us to move forward and be competitive.

Education is this country's number one economic development tool. Period. But that doesn't mean that the Federal Government has got to take over and micromanage everything that is going on at the local level, particularly, Mr. Chairman, when there isn't any money.

[The prepared statement of Senator Voinovich follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, A UNITED STATES SENATOR
FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today before the Budget Committee to discuss the role of government in education.

More than 4½ years ago, when I was Governor of Ohio, I had the opportunity and privilege to testify before this Committee at a field hearing in Columbus, Ohio.

The purpose of my testimony on that January day, was “to share with you some thoughts about a subject that impacts each of us every day—the proper role of government at the federal, state and local levels.”

I said, “first, we must define which government services truly are vital to society—and which are not * * * (S)econd, once we have determined what government should do, we must then determine which level of government—federal, state, local or some combination—should provide and pay for those services.”

Mr. Chairman, when I was Governor, and member and Chairman of the National Governors’ Association, I fought vigorously to have those delineations spelled-out. Fortunately, we have made some notable legislative progress since I addressed the Committee in January, 1995.

Specifically, we have seen a decline in important Federal “command and control” initiatives. In State Legislatures magazine last year, the deputy executive director of the National Council of State Legislatures, Carl Tubbesing, outlined what he called the five “hallmarks of devolution”—legislation in the 1990’s that changed the face of the federal-state-local government partnership and reversed the decades long trend toward Federal centralization.

These bills are the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, the Safe Drinking Water Reform Act Amendments, Welfare Reform, Medicaid reforms such as the elimination of the Boren Amendment, and the establishment of the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

I would also add that the most significant victories since the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act happened this year when the Congress passed, and the President signed into law, Tobacco Anti-Recoupment legislation and the bi-partisan Education Flexibility Act.

The Education Flexibility Act, or “Ed-Flex,” provides that to the extent that the Federal Government is going to fund education programs, each of the 50 states will be able to target their Federal Title I education dollars to education priorities and initiatives identified by local school districts in each state. Ed-Flex will also cut down on Federal paperwork requirements for each state and school district.

The Tobacco Anti-Recoupment legislation ensures that the billions in tobacco funds that the states went to court to obtain are not seized by the Federal Government. In our state of Ohio, Mr. Chairman, that means \$9.8 billion over 25 years to spend on whatever state and local needs exist.

In spite of all of these achievements, we still have not managed to slip the knot of Federal intervention involving what I believe is the number one state and local responsibility in America—our educational system.

While I have the greatest respect for Secretary Riley, I must say that many of the programs that the President has proposed in education have been the responsibility, are the responsibility and should be the responsibility of our state and local governments.

For instance, the President is looking to provide \$11 billion worth of tax free bonds for school construction programs; he’s spent \$1.2 billion and has sought \$200 million more in order to hire an additional 100,000 new teachers; he has pledged to install national testing, which is a first step toward a national curriculum; and he wants to implement policies relating to social promotion, teacher competency, school takeovers, report cards and discipline issues.

If he was still Governor of Arkansas, I would have no problem with him wanting to implement these initiatives for his state and pay for them out of his own state’s funds. However, he is not the Governor of Arkansas, he is the President of the United States, and like so many of the President’s other initiatives, these costly education proposals are not the responsibility of the Federal Government.

What the President is trying to accomplish equates to the greatest level of Federal intervention in education to occur in some time. Let me just say, that I do not oppose putting teachers in the classroom, but I am concerned with the Federal Government telling state and local officials that they have to hire new teachers. Localities should have the freedom to invest their dollars in their greatest needs—whether it is teachers, computers or textbooks. In fact, Ohio is spending \$1.5 billion of its own money that I had committed to repair and rebuild our schools when I was Governor.

Not only are the President’s education proposals not the responsibility of the Federal Government, but, the problem is compounded because there is no money to pay for the President’s education proposals, except if the President uses Social Security funds to do so.

When our nation’s governors seek to implement new programs, they wouldn’t even think about using their states’ pension funds, however, the President is raiding the

Federal pension fund—Social Security—in order to pay for his “pet” projects. That’s because, as this Committee is aware, we have no on-budget surplus in order to pay for things like these 100,000 teachers or school construction or even the 100,000 COPS program which has cost us about \$7 billion. They’re being paid for out of Social Security.

In all honesty, our states are in much better financial shape than the Federal Government. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we have a staggering \$5.6 trillion national debt—a debt that has grown some 1,300 percent in the last 30 years. We’re paying \$600 million per day just on the interest and 14 cents of every tax dollar goes to pay the interest on the national debt.

Yet, the President advocates spending more Federal money that he does not have on the expansion of Federal education programs—and other programs for that matter—when to do so would require dipping into our nation’s pension fund.

Mr. Chairman, that is unacceptable. The Federal Government cannot use Social Security as a private bank for whatever purpose comes along. It’s time to stop the gimmicks.

If the President wishes to fund these programs, he should be honest with the American people and tell them how he’s going to pay for the programs he wants. If he won’t re-allocate Federal resources, or if he won’t raise the dollars to pay for them, then he should do without.

Regardless, I think that this Committee and the Congress should define what the role of the Federal Government should be with respect to education. We should look to eliminate programs that the Federal Government shouldn’t be involved in, consolidate the programs in which the Federal Government should be involved and make sure that the money is being spent properly.

Right now, according to the General Accounting Office, there are 560 different education programs—including approximately 90 early childhood care and education programs—that are run through 11 federal agencies and 20 offices. I believe that it is critically important that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Education (DoEd), which manage the vast majority of early childhood care and education spending, coordinate their efforts to ensure that their respective programs complement and not duplicate one another.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring and the District of Columbia, I’ve held two hearings this year to get HHS and DoEd to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and report their efforts to coordinate these hundreds of programs. The GPRA requires these annual performance plans to help Congress, the departments, and stakeholders measure program effectiveness.

According to the initial report by GAO, both departments addressed the issue of coordination in their respective plans, but failed to adequately report implementation of these coordination efforts.

However, as a result of our hearings, the Department of Education is currently re-writing their performance plan so there will be better coordination. I would like to thank Secretary Riley for acknowledging this need and giving it a higher profile in his department.

If the Federal Government is going to remain involved in education programs, then it is crucial that we work harder and smarter and utilize the right programs to get the best results for our children.

To do this, I believe we should take the funds that we save from consolidating and eliminating those portions of the hundreds of Federal education programs, and use them in an area that I have been passionate about, and in which the Federal Government has been nearly invisible, and that is the care of our children from the age prenatal to three.

I have introduced legislation, the Prenatal, Infant and Child Development Act of 1999, S. 1154, that leverages state and private dollars, but does not supplant them. My bill is a model that gives states flexibility with their block grant dollars and lets them focus on pre-natal to three in a way that makes sense for their local communities. It makes the programs better instead of just making them bigger.

For example, my bill provides scholarship money for childcare providers to get credentialed so they are better able to care for children in the prenatal to three age group. It’s not a lot of money, but it will increase the quality of child-care providers in our nation.

The bill also helps us reach the goal that Head Start set of credentialing 50 percent of Head Start teachers by 2003. While my bill contains a modest amount of seed money for states that want to start coordinated early childhood programs, it is only meant to help them leverage more money. It is not simply a gift that will keep coming every year. Last, and most importantly, my bill is offset. It will not increase spending.

Another priority is one I just mentioned, Head Start. As you know, Head Start provides developmental services for low-income children ages three to five and social services for their families. In my state of Ohio, we've maximized our use of Head Start, so that right now, every child who is eligible for Head Start in Ohio has a slot available to them for pre-school education.

I believe that Head Start affords the opportunity for the Federal Government and the state governments to partner together in order to help address the needs of a special segment of our society. If the main stumbling block for states to participate in the program is a concern over too much red-tape, then I believe that the Congress should address these concerns to the satisfaction of each state and the detriment of none.

As we address education programs that are designed to help our states, we must ensure that these programs maintain flexibility for our states. We have taken a giant step toward giving our states the tools they need to meet the challenges of tomorrow by passing the Education Flexibility Act, or "Ed-Flex." As I mentioned earlier, under Ed-Flex, each state is allowed to target their Federal education dollars to education priorities and initiatives identified by school districts in that particular state.

When Ed-Flex was first considered, it was a pilot program in first six, and ultimately twelve, states including Ohio. The "naysayers" were quick to assume that there would be a "race to the bottom" and that Title I funds would disappear. The truth is, under Ed-Flex, there will be accountability for how and how well Title I funds are spent.

Another approach that gives state and local officials flexibility is the "Straight A's Act," legislation which I have co-sponsored. This bill would consolidate more Federal education program dollars into a single block grant to the states and local school districts. In exchange for this flexibility, states and school districts must demonstrate academic achievement and improved test scores. With this block grant, states and localities would be free to invest in programs that produce results and ensure that funds reach the classroom where they can be most beneficial, while reducing bureaucracy and eliminating ineffective programs. In addition, the flexibility provided by this legislation will negate any perceived need to allocate more Federal dollars to implement this bill.

Mr. Chairman, we must maximize every Federal dollar that is spent on our children; to get the "biggest bang for the buck." With flexibility, our states are better able to manage their individual state education programs, while providing the necessary oversight and funds to each individual school district. This way, we are best equipped to implement the programs that will work best in each individual state and prepare our students to face life's challenges.

From a national education policy perspective, in terms of national priorities, I believe states should be the ultimate decision makers of what they should or should not do. In other words, there should be no mandates. Period. For instance, I don't believe we should mandate vouchers and charter schools, however, I also don't believe we should say states can't pursue such programs. If a state has an innovative education approach that will help our kids learn, it should be encouraged.

In Ohio, we pursued our own innovative education approach by implementing the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program. Believing that competition fosters improvement, I made the implementation of this pilot school scholarship plan one of my top priorities as Governor. As the first school choice experiment in this country, the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program has been in operation since 1995.

It is a painful fact that the Cleveland public school system has not delivered the kinds of results that will best prepare our children for the rigors and challenges of the high-performance workplace of the 21st century. The Cleveland School system spends roughly one-half billion dollars to graduate only 36 percent of its high school seniors. Few would argue that the children in Cleveland deserve better.

The Cleveland Scholarship Program offers state-funded scholarships for use at both secular and religious private schools, giving low-income students access to an otherwise unattainable private school education in Cleveland. In September 1996, during its first school year, the program provided scholarships to some 1,855 students for the public, private, or religious school of their choice. A later expansion of the program budget enabled parents of approximately 3,675 students to use vouchers to enroll in 59 participating area schools during the 1998-1999 school year.

This Scholarship Program represents one more "selection" in the smorgasbord of education reform that can help the Cleveland Schools deliver the results our children deserve. I want to stress that school choice should not be regarded as a panacea, but rather as one part of a broader reform movement. There is no silver bullet; lots of ideas may work, but I do not believe we should depend entirely on any one

item, nor should we preclude any one item. It's all about what we can do to improve the quality of education for our children.

Many of the Committee members may know that the Cleveland Scholarship program was recently struck down by the Ohio Supreme Court, not because it was unconstitutional, but because it was enacted on a "single-issue" spending bill, or, in Congressional parlance, it was ruled non-germane because it was a "rider."

Nevertheless, the Ohio Legislature passed the measure again this year as a single issue item based on its merits. Although the program's future status is unclear, I am hopeful that we will be able to continue the program and use the data that it produces to undertake a longitudinal study that will make sure that the program is delivering results. Over time, we should know more about the academic performance, attendance, conduct, and parental involvement of the students in the Cleveland Scholarship program.

It all gets back to the fact that at each level—federal, state and local—we all want value, which is getting the best product for the least amount of money, and we all want positive results. When dealing with education, Congress should be concerned with allowing the creation of an environment where new ideas can at least be tried. We need to stimulate initiative and innovation, and ensure maximum flexibility, like we've done with Ed-Flex, but we should always remember that with freedom, there is accountability.

In Ohio, we made our school districts accountable by ranking them according to four performance categories: effective, needing continuous improvement, under academic watch and in a state of academic emergency. These categories are based on 27 different criteria that are dependent on student test scores in math, reading, writing, science and citizenship.

We implemented a "4th grade guarantee" that stipulates that no child will move on from the fourth grade until he or she passes a reading proficiency exam.

We also implemented requirements that each high school student pass a proficiency exam before they graduate. Period. We were met with some opposition, but I felt it was the only way that we were going to ensure that our students had at least the basic skills that would help them become productive citizens.

It's all about accountability, and in Ohio, we're doing something about it because we want our kids to succeed.

Each year, we spend billions of dollars on Federal education programs—programs that are in some instances unnecessary, obsolete or duplicative. I believe it is our duty to determine if these programs are effective and what Federal role is involved with each program.

If there is no Federal role in a particular education program, then we should eliminate or consolidate that program. If it's determined to be a state or local issue, we need to look at how to segue that program into a state or local responsibility. If it's truly a combination of responsibilities on the part of the federal, state or local governments, we need to determine who provides and who pays and to what extent. And we should also look at innovations where we can prioritize money and get a better return on our investment, particularly where we have consolidated or eliminated a particular program.

As I stated earlier, there are 31 different Federal agencies and offices that run 90 early childhood care and education programs that help address the needs of our children from pre-natal to three. Providing for our nation's youngest children is my passion, and I will continue to use my Subcommittee chairmanship to determine how best to consolidate and coordinate those programs according to the criteria I just outlined.

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for holding this hearing today, and I believe that your Committee should continue to examine the proper role that the Federal Government plays in the effective use of tax dollars for education. In fact, I believe it would be of great interest to this Committee to start by giving scrutiny to the 470 remaining Federal education programs.

Throughout the history of our nation, education has been a state and local responsibility. Regardless—for the foreseeable future, the Federal Government will continue to play a role in the education of our children. Therefore, I believe it is incumbent upon both the Federal Government to remove the excessive regulations that tell our state and local governments what they can and cannot do with respect to education, and upon Congress, to streamline the multitude of Federal education programs so that our tax dollars are spent on true education needs. Above all, flexibility, accountability and innovation are the tools that will help our states and our localities give our children the opportunity they deserve to learn.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KASICH. I want to thank you, Senator Voinovich, for coming. I just wonder, have you ever put together your view of what the State government should do, what the Federal Government should do, how we can consolidate these programs? Have you ever written all this down anywhere?

Senator VOINOVICH. Well, Mr. Chairman, I am going to be writing it down. In other words, I can tell you I have got enough written about what I don't think we should be doing. I don't think we should be paying for 100,000 teachers. I don't think we should be setting national curriculum.

I know my friends in Head Start won't like to hear what I am saying, but you have had the Head Start program, which is a terrific program and as you know, Mr. Chairman, Ohio is the only State in the United States of America where every eligible child, whose parents want them to be in Head Start, is in Head Start, or public school preschool. We have done it. And we spent an enormous amount of money doing it. We eliminated general assistance for able-bodied people in our State and took the money and put it into Head Start, because I felt that we needed to make a difference for our kids early on in their lives. So we reordered our priorities.

But the fact is that we have been in the program a number of years. It was supposed to be a model program, Head Start, and a lot of States, frankly, are doing nothing in this area. If I were calling the shots, what I would say to the States is if you want the Federal money, then we are expecting you to get in the program. If you don't think enough of the program, then we are not going to give you the Federal money for this Head Start program.

I have talked to some Governors and said, why aren't you increasing your involvement with Head Start? They have come back to me and said, we don't want to fund it if we are going to have to put up with the Federal guidelines in the operation of this program. I said well, fine; we will just lift those. But there are a lot of areas that we are in, and we keep increasing funding, again, where the States should be stepping to the table.

Mr. Chairman, I know some of you are looking to take the TANF money. Now, I don't advise you to do that. We cut a deal on welfare reform. Congress said we will give the States this money for 6 years. The States said we will take the same amount of money, but give us the flexibility. And States have stacked up a little money. But the fact is, we are using some of that TANF money right now in Ohio to provide prenatal education for parents; newborn baby education to parents. We are using that money, for example, to provide home visits to families for every new birth. In fact, your wife will probably be asked if you want somebody to come out to your house to talk about how to be a new parent. OK. This may sound silly, but it is necessary for some new parents. It is very important that during that first 3 years that that child get as much stimulation as possible because that is when their brain starts to grow.

I guess what I am saying is that you will be getting a report back from me for my subcommittee on what is going on in these prenatal-to-3 years.

Chairman KASICH. Let me say that, you know, George Voinovich and I have the same kind of ancestry and you can see he is a guy who as a Governor could kind of do three things and get everybody

to move. He comes to Washington now and it doesn't happen as quickly. But just think, here is a guy who has just—what he has done on the early childhood development programs in Ohio and what he has done on Head Start, he is in a very strong position to have credibility and yet still talk about the things the government should do and shouldn't do and what State governments should do and shouldn't do, and really can't be criticized for not caring.

And I am just excited that he is here, because if he would just keep his voice being heard, 1 day, over time, people will listen more and more and more, and you have just got to keep hanging in there.

The gentlemen from Minnesota is recognized, Mr. Gutknecht.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree. Sometimes it is probably more difficult to be heard in the clatter of those other 99 Senators over there. But I want to thank you for coming here today. You do offer a unique perspective.

I want to mention something that you sort of implicated but you didn't exactly say. Our Governor, Jesse Ventura, was out here last spring, met with the delegation, and we talked about the whole idea of building new schools; in other words, this Federal funding. And the Secretary recently, or just a few moments ago, testified that that was still a very high priority for the administration.

He said—and I would like to get your reaction to this—Governor Ventura said that as far as he was concerned, if the Federal Government would just fund the obligations that they have made, for example, under IDEA, the special education funds, he said he would have more than enough money to build all the schools that we need in the State of Minnesota. Would you concur with that in terms of Ohio?

Senator VOINOVICH. I am glad you asked the question. No. 1, we talk about how we don't need mandates. And Congress mandated IDEA and agreed that the Federal Government was going to pay for 40 percent of it. I think it is about 11 percent right now. If you ask every Governor, he or she would say to Congress take all the money you are putting into other programs and give it to us to fund your IDEA mandate, and we will have enough money available to do a lot of these things that these Federal programs are supposed to be doing. I think you would get a unanimous response on that.

In terms of school construction, again, that is a local responsibility. In Ohio, one of the things that I recognized when I became Governor was that we had a real problem in terms of our physical facilities, particularly in our low-wealth districts. We have 29 areas in Ohio that are part of Appalachia. So we went to work. We are spending billions of dollars now in Ohio. And the way we do it with the school districts, if they are real low-wealth districts, we say you got to pay a little bit. In fact I went out and campaigned for some of the levies. And the leveraging in one district was for every dollar that they put up, we gave them 14. And it has been in existence long enough that I have been around for the ribbon-cuttings to open some of those schools.

So Ohio and other States are aggressively pursuing rebuilding a lot of these buildings and constructing new buildings in areas

where they are needed. Now, we are charging our taxpayers a lot of money to do that. It is not pennies from heaven. It is costing us. The question is, should we in Ohio send our money to Washington to fund school construction. I know it is a tax credit, but people have to understand that a tax credit means there is less money to the Federal Government and in effect the Federal Government is losing money because of it. Is it proper for us to send the money to the Feds and then have them turn around and redistribute the money? My feeling is that it is a State responsibility. If the Federal Government were flush, and had a whole lot of money, that might be a different story. But that is not the case.

States should be stepping up to the table and doing school construction. Many of them are doing it. And the ones that are doing it understand they are not going to be competitive unless they have decent school building. So I am saying I don't think that is a role for the Federal Government—school buildings should be the responsibility of State and local government.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Let me follow up, if I could. I would like to get your reaction. George Will was on the Hill yesterday and gave a speech. And in the speech, he said of all the studies on student performance, they tend to confirm that only four factors seem to affect school performance. First was the percentage of two-parent households; second was the amount of reading that is done at home; third was the amount of homework that is assigned; and fourth, the amount of television watched at home. Apparently the amount spent, classroom size, and even Federal tinkering, doesn't seem to have much of an impact.

I would like to get your reaction to that.

Senator VOINOVICH. Well, I think there was one individual who said the closer you are to Canada, the better the test scores. They did a study of SATs and found that the more northern the States, the better the kids were doing. I think that has probably got more to do with the fact that they are at home, you have got two parents, and you have less single-parent households and so on.

I thought those observations were very good, but at the same time, you have got to recognize that America is different. And the issue is how do you compensate for that fact. I went to high school in the Cleveland School District and I went to Cleveland public schools. In fact, we just had our 45th class reunion and I was saying to my classmates, that at the time we went to school, I think it was like 10 percent of the kids were from one-parent households. Today I think it is close to 70 percent. So you don't have that parental involvement that you need. More and more, kids are being born without their father there in their lives. So what do you do about that situation?

We recognize how important, say, a Head Start program is for at-risk kids. We understand that mothers need to have some help in making sure they know, when that child is born, what they should be doing so they don't miss that first 3 years of opportunity. We know that we need to encourage local communities to use their resources, for example, to coordinate programs that deal with prenatal to 3. These are leadership things, the roles that government can play. I mean, I don't think we should just say well, there isn't a role for us to play. The issue is what role should it be.

And in terms of television, I just mentioned to you an initiative with public television. The people in Cleveland say you ought to not let kids watch TV. My kids didn't watch TV. I was the last person on my street to have a television set and the last one to have a color television set. But I had 2 kids graduate summa cum laude and another one graduate cum laude. We spent some time with those kids. But the fact is in this program that I am talking about, parents and child care providers can get information about the television programs from the Internet and talk to their kids about them so they learn something from them. We are finding in Ohio a lot of low-income families don't use "official" child care. It is mom, grandma, somebody down the street, somebody who is taking care of three or four kids. What do they do during that period of time? If they know that they can watch public television and the kids have got something they can do constructive with their time, you are taking advantage of a wonderful opportunity to make a difference with those kids. That is the thing we should be looking at—what are the practical things.

I think the other thing we should mention is accountability. I had a superintendent who had been in his school system for 25 years say to me, George, the most important thing you did is that you put into place the ninth grade proficiency test. This was back in 1991/1992. It was a test that basically said we don't care whether you have been in school 12 years or not; if you can't pass a ninth grade proficiency test, you don't graduate.

I've got to tell you, that was like a big bomb hitting some urban districts. I had superintendents come in to see me and say there is no way, Governor, you are going to allow kids that have been in school 12 years not to graduate and get that diploma. I said, try me. I said, let's turn it around. And what we did is we started a public-private partnership, a tutoring program to really do what we could to make sure that that first group of kids could pass.

Now we have a fourth grade proficiency test, a sixth grade proficiency test, and a tough 12th grade college entrance test. We are reporting the results. We are giving the people of the State a report card. Nationwide, today, there is a lot of complacency. You know, parents say their children's school is a good school. I've got to tell you something: in Ohio, when they got the report back that their fourth graders weren't passing that test or weren't doing so well, they started asking the school, what is going on, why aren't we getting the results? I invested in it.

I just bumped into a guy who is the chairman of his board of education in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. Mr. Chairman, you know Chagrin Falls, it's a great community. And they were one of 6 districts in Ohio that met all 18 of what we call the quality points. They are very efficient. He is going to his district for a levy and he is going to get it passed. You want to know why? Because he can say to the people in his district, we are No. 1, and it's because you are investing in your school system that we are getting a return on our investment. It is those kinds of things, that accountability, that means a great deal.

Chairman KASICH. Mr. Spratt is recognized.

Mr. SPRATT. Senator, let me just thank you for your testimony. It was refreshing and I enjoyed hearing it. I hear you saying that

you think there is a Federal role in education: We should lay back on the mandates and micromanagement, but there is a role and even some reason to be categorical, and there are some programs like Head Start that we think our money ought to be spent on and is worthy, and we ought to hold the States to some standards.

Senator VOINOVICH. Absolutely.

Mr. SPRATT. So I take heart from what you say. Also you are pitching public education. So this is a kind of a hybrid presentation.

Senator VOINOVICH. I am pitching all kinds of education.

Mr. SPRATT. I mean, public television as part of public education. I misspoke. Let me ask you something. You started out by saying that you were engaged in trying to finally end the budget season and balance—get the budget within the caps. We got a situation now where we have used the Labor, HHS, Education appropriation bill as a bill-payer for all other 12 appropriation bills. I think we have tapped it out for about 11, \$12 billion, maybe a bit more in outlays.

By CBO's calculation, to get outlays to that level, you would have to cut budget authority by as much as \$28 billion out of an \$88 billion overall bill. How do we close the year and not savage education?

Senator VOINOVICH. Well, can I tell you the way we did in the State of Ohio? When I first came in when I became Governor—we were \$1½ billion in the hole. The previous group had spent a lot of money and just assumed that the next budget would grow by 25 percent to pay for it. And so what we did was go through and look at the programs and prioritize the programs that we felt were the most important.

Now, one of the things that I am concerned about is the real defense readiness problem we have in this country. We do need to spend more money for defense. But there is a feeling that you can increase spending for defense by \$17 billion and then not have funds for what is it—I think it is labor—is it Labor-Education? Our appropriations subcommittee, I can't remember what the name of it is.

Mr. SPRATT. HHS.

Senator VOINOVICH. Yes. We are underfunded there, and we are going to need to find some more money. First of all, you know, we are going to have a \$14½ billion surplus which is going to have to be used to deal with this problem. One of the problems is that because of the budget agreement, we are going to have to spend less money this year than last year; correct? Isn't that right?

Mr. SPRATT. Caps.

Senator VOINOVICH. Right. But we are going to have to spend less money. That is a tall order in itself. And then comes along Medicare which is hemorrhaging; then comes along our readiness problem where we are in deep trouble. We have this drought situation, and a bunch of other things that have come along. The issue is, how do you do all that and save Social Security? I think you have to go through and peel back on some of the things that you would like to do and say that we are just not able to afford doing these things. Now, that means you will take a whole lot of heat.

The other alternative is to raise more money. And there aren't too many people around that want to do that. So it is going to be a difficult thing. But it is like everything else; everybody ought to give a little in order to get this job done. And I want to say something. There are a lot of wonderful programs out there. And a lot of people will come down here and you will hear them say what we have got to do. The children's hospitals, for example, want money to be reimbursed for educating the doctors. Same with the cancer hospital. I mean, there are all kinds of things. But unless we get ourselves, from a public policy point of view, back on track in terms of fiscal responsibility, we are doing a great disservice to everyone. Somebody told me the other day we are spending 54 percent of the budget on mandates today. Somebody else said in 10 years we will be spending 66 percent. And if we don't do something about getting that debt down, so we can stop paying 14 cents out of every dollar for interest, and get back to being fiscally responsible, we are going to be in grave, grave trouble.

In our State, we made the cuts, and the Chairman knows when we finally got to 1992, I will never forget it, I cut higher education, secondary education, and eliminated a lot of programs. And I went to the legislature, and I said to them, I will do it. You know what they told me when I did that? They said, We will grow out of this George, don't worry about it. Well, I had to do it and I did it. I went to them and I said, you know, I can cut education again, I could do a lot of these other things, but I think we have gotten to the point where we just can't cut anymore. And so we raised a little money to balance that budget. And because we got ourselves on our feet there, we moved forward.

And today, when I left Ohio, we have about \$1 billion in our rainy day fund. When I was Governor, it had gone down to 14 cents. All I am saying to you is this is a budget committee. The greatest thing from a public policy point of view you can do is to get the fiscal house in order for the United States of America. I mean, I took over Cleveland, the first city to go into default. The first thing I did was get the books, but they were inauditable. I may say you may find some books here that are not auditable. Once you have got that and you are on firm ground—then you are in a much better position, I think, to deal with the things that are going to confront this country. And we have in my opinion, done a great disservice to our children and to our grandchildren. We have refused during our lifetime to pay for those things that we thought were important. We were unwilling to go without them, even if we weren't able to pay for them.

I think that is really the challenge today, in this country. We need to understand that there are many competing interests out there that we need to deal with, because every person has got a particular point of view, and a cause that they want to have responded to. But the highest calling would be to get our fiscal house in order, so we can enter the next century with our feet on the ground.

Chairman KASICH. I want to thank Senator Voinovich for coming. We are going to have to end his testimony. We have a short panel yet to come.

George, by the way, we are going to have Mr. John Walton with us today who, along with Ted Forstmann, has created these scholarship programs, millions of dollars worth of help to people in districts where kids are not doing very well; and we had good testimony from the Secretary of Education and from Jeb Bush.

I really want to thank you. I think your idea of convening the governors with Pete Domenici, we are going to pursue that. I look forward to working with you.

I thank your able assistant, Mr. Dawson, for coming with you. We will let you get back to the Senate.

Senator VOINOVICH. May I just add one thing? The people who will also be testifying at this hearing, the private-sector people, should really be applauded for what they are doing. The most important thing they can do, and what we are trying to do in Cleveland is, conduct longitudinal studies to see how their program really works. That is very, very important, because if a program does work and we get the results that prove it, then I think that is something that needs to be looked at for possible implementation elsewhere.

Of course we won't find out from Jeb Bush, will we, for a few years? But we ought to be willing to go that route, even though some people may think it is controversial.

Chairman KASICH. Thank you very much.

We are now going to hear from Dwight Evans, a State representative who was first elected from the State of Pennsylvania in 1980. He is popular, has been reelected every term since. He also was the creator of a charter school over in the Philadelphia area. I am looking forward to his testimony. I thank him for coming today.

We are also going to have Virginia "Ginny" Markell who is from—let me get it right—Clackamas, Oregon. That must be a nice area.

Darlene, are you familiar with Ms. Markell?

Ms. HOOLEY. I am very familiar with the fabulous work she does. Clackamas is part of my district.

Chairman KASICH. Is it on the ocean?

Ms. HOOLEY. Not quite.

Chairman KASICH. I want to thank her for coming also.

Why don't we start with Ms. Markell first, and if you could, kind of summarize your testimony. I know that as the head of the National PTA, you are probably a very articulate person. Why don't you just let us have it?

Then, Dwight, I am sure you are probably not that effective a public speaker. No, I bet you are very effective. We will let the two of you just kind of let us have it. We will take a few questions, then get to our final panel.

STATEMENT OF VIRGINIA MARKELL, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PTA

Ms. MARKELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. It is a pleasure to see my own representative here and not getting too impatient just because I am here—it is a nice thought, Darlene—and other members of the committee also.

Just a little background about the National PTA before I start. I am indeed the President; I was installed in June of this year. We

are the largest and oldest child advocacy organization in this country with 6.5 million members. So when I speak, I speak with a lot of parents' voices behind me, not usually as loud as what 6.5 million members will do for us. But I want you to understand that we are a grass-roots organization and we do indeed solicit information from our local unit members in local schools and communities throughout this country.

Much of today's discussion has been about vouchers, so I do want to give you some perspective about the National PTA's long-standing opposition to vouchers: long-standing opposition. Let me give you just a couple of highlights as to the reasoning behind that.

First of all, we don't believe that vouchers really give families choices. The only choice belongs to private and religious schools. They are able to select the children that may attend those schools. Vouchers also, as you have heard today, divert public funds into private schools, which we think have limited public accountability. They do not meet standard criteria that other public schools need to in that neighborhood or community.

We also know that in order for private school and religious schools to be held accountable, they may lose their autonomy in regards to their curriculum and certainly over their policy decisions.

We also believe that vouchers do not equalize educational opportunities. Vouchers will not help the most disadvantaged families. They will not assure access to quality education, especially for those with disabilities and special needs.

Voucher proponents have also not provided particularly strong evidence that they improve achievement. Research, in fact, conducted on voucher programs has been conflicting at best, and for more than 9 years of the voucher experiment, we do not have a clear or statistically valid success story.

We also think that vouchers will create unnecessary and costly administrative burdens to States and districts. At a time when we are looking at more educational flexibility, voucher programs will impose new levels of administrative management. And probably most significant is the fact that vouchers will really benefit only a small percentage of children. Public schools educating 90 percent of our country's future need to have those funds.

We have some other concerns about vouchers, too, particularly in regards to the fact that we think it is very divisive to communities. As we begin to siphon off some students, we lose the sense of community schools. There are a number of opinion polls that have been conducted over the last few years that demonstrate to us that the public has a very strong commitment to public education, so strong that some of the polls indicate that they are also willing to pay increased taxes to support that public education.

We also think that there are some problems in the existing programs that we have. For example, both Milwaukee and Cleveland programs have been cited for not adhering to the selection and admission requirements that have been outlined in the law.

We also think there are going to be some structural problems with the voucher program that you heard about from Governor Bush this morning as we begin to punish failing schools by taking funds and sending those funds to schools with a small number of students.

Briefly, our priorities are that rather than looking at vouchers, we should be looking at enhancing the Federal investment in education. We are particularly attached to programs that the Department of Education has established. What it now needs from the government is full funding.

For example, Title I only provides services to about one-third of those who are eligible. Those services would need to be funded at \$24 billion if we were to provide for every single entitled student. We already heard from Congresswoman Rivers this morning about IDEA and the funding that is needed to fully fund that.

We believe that the foundation for education reform and change within this country can be attached to parent involvement. And we have been very supportive of the reauthorization of ESEA as it has strong components that support parent involvement. All of the research for the last 30 years in regards to parent involvement has told us that the more parents are involved, the more successful students will be. You heard that even this morning with the Representative from Minnesota, who quoted the information that was presented from George Will yesterday.

Education is at a crisis in this country. We would certainly be, as an organization, the first to admit that. We are seeing some major changes that need to occur as we look at record high enrollments, an increase in the number of students with disabilities or special needs, the fact that technology has changed the landscape of education and our schools have not kept pace with that, the anticipated teacher shortage, the fact that we need to modernize our schools and update our facilities. Certainly we need to look at extensive before- and after-school learning opportunities for children.

The fact is, the problems will need to be addressed by the Federal Government. Without substantial infusion of funding, we will not be able to bring up failing schools to a standard that this country expects.

I would like to talk just very briefly, since you have asked us to condense our comments, about some examples of Federal initiatives that we think will be the answer to real school improvement. The first one has to do with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. This particular initiative provides grants to schools that have identified for themselves what is necessary in order to improve the education for the children that they serve. Parents and teachers and others in the local community design and agree on the implementation for research-based reform. That is the key element of the program—that it is community-driven by parents, teachers, local community members. Unfortunately, the program is not adequately funded.

We have talked a fair amount this morning about class size reduction in terms of the numbers of students that teachers are actually responsible for in the class. The research that we have looked at indicates that reduced class size, not vouchers, tends to hold the greatest promise for real improvement in student academic success. Schools and communities know that this is the case. However, they cannot fund additional teachers without some assistance.

Certainly school construction and modernization bonds will allow us to move our children into the opportunity to be exposed to the technology and the skills that they will need as we move into the

next century. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers will provide millions of children a place to go after school, not only to benefit academic development, but also social skills, as they participate in quality after-school programs. Unfortunately, there is a great shortage of this kind of funding and programs, and the schools cannot make that up without additional investments.

Parent involvement—I need to hit on that at least one more time before my time is up. I would like to encourage members of this committee to sign on with us in the PARENT Act. We are extremely proud that the government has identified the need to give parents the skills and the opportunity to be part of the educational system for their children.

The House has introduced in H.R. 2801, and the Senate in 1556, the PARENT Act which stands for Parental Accountability, Recruitment and Education National Training. This bill will provide States and schools with Federal leadership, information on research and model programs, and the technical assistance that they need to plan and implement effective parent involvement programs. We do know, again as I have already stated, based on the research that in order for true academic change to occur, education reform to occur and student achievement to rise, we need to have parent involvement.

To summarize, let me just say that Congress should not be diverting funds to private schools, but should address the immediate needs of schools such as investing in comprehensive school reform, reducing class size and modernizing schools. Federal resources provide the foundation schools need for improvement. They also help expand opportunities for students in schools and communities with limited resources.

And while I know you have heard this, I will say it again: Children are only 25 percent of our present, but they are 100 percent of our future, and the government must invest in their well-being as well as their educational development to secure the economy of this country.

I thank you for the opportunity to be able to discuss these issues with you. I look forward to the questions you might pose and certainly look forward to the National PTA working with this committee in the near future.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Markell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VIRGINIA MARKELL, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PTA

Good morning, Chairman Kasich and members of the committee. I am Ginny Markell, President of the National PTA, the oldest and largest child advocacy organization with 6.5 million members. I appreciate being part of today's discussion and I am pleased that you have placed particular emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in education reform.

Much of today's hearing has focused on vouchers so I will begin by giving the National PTA's perspective on that issue and then move to where the debate really should be focused: how to make every public school an effective school and the programs and funding needed to get there.

National PTA opposes vouchers because:

- Vouchers do not give families "choice." The only choice belongs to private and religious schools who are able to hand select the children they admit.
- Vouchers divert public funds to private schools, which have limited public accountability and do not have to meet the same criteria as public schools. To be held accountable, the private and religious schools may have to sacrifice their autonomy over curriculum and other policy decisions.

- Vouchers do not equalize educational opportunities. Vouchers will not help the most disadvantaged families, nor will they assure access to a quality education, especially for those with disabilities or special needs.

- Voucher proponents have not provided strong evidence that they improve academic achievement. Research conducted on voucher programs has been conflicting at best. After more than 9 years of voucher experiments, a clear and statistically valid success story has not yet emerged.

- Vouchers create unnecessary and costly administrative burdens on states and districts. At a time when policy-makers are calling for more education flexibility, voucher programs would impose new levels of administrative management and oversight.

- Vouchers only benefit a small percentage of children. Public schools educate 90 percent of our nation's students.

National PTA has other concerns about vouchers too. They divide communities and prevent substantive education reforms from moving forward. Voucher fights are ongoing in state legislatures, in the courts and at the local level. Numerous opinion polls continuously demonstrate that the public strongly supports public education. Accordingly, policies should focus on strengthening public schools, not promoting proposals that split the community and only help a select few students.

In addition, there are significant problems with the few voucher programs that already exist. For example, both the Milwaukee and Cleveland programs have been cited for not adhering to the selection and admission requirements outlined in the laws. Others have structural problems; for instance the program in Florida, which Governor Bush described earlier, punishes failing schools by stripping away their funds and sending a small number of students to other schools. What happens to those children left behind in the failing school? If Congress passes a national voucher proposal these problems would be greatly magnified.

Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Committee, another key factor in this debate is cost. Just to provide vouchers to the students who already attend private schools would cost \$15 billion. For a comparison, that is more than the entire Federal investment provided through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which benefits nearly 90 percent of school districts. Vouchers cannot be the answer to education reform for our nation's students. The answer is to increase the Federal investment in the education system we already have.

Current Department of Education programs, which are targeted to address specific needs, have been effective in improving student achievement and reforming schools. Unfortunately, funding levels are not adequate to allow these programs to serve all eligible students and schools.

For example, Title I only provides services to about one-third of those who are eligible. To provide services to all would cost a total of \$24 billion. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is another essential program that far from meeting its full need. IDEA would need at least \$12-14 billion to provide the 40 percent Federal Government share that was originally promised. Sadly, we could provide many other examples of the underfunding of Federal education programs.

In addition, schools are facing enormous new challenges in carrying out their mission:

- Record high enrollments
- Increased percentage of children with special needs
- Rapidly changing education technology demands
- An anticipated teacher shortage
- A price tag exceeding \$200 billion to repair and modernize our schools
- Extensive need for school-based before and after school care

The fact is, the problems schools face will not disappear without Federal assistance. Without a substantial infusion of funds-continued over a sustained period of time-our nation's capacity to provide high quality educational services to all children will be irreparably harmed.

Here are a few examples of Federal initiatives that would result in real school improvement and increase student achievement:

- *The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program.* This is an initiative which provides grants to schools that have identified what is necessary to improve education for the children they serve. Parents, teachers and others in the local community design and agree to implement research-based reforms that have been proven to work in other schools. Unfortunately, the program is not adequately funded.

- *Class Size Reduction.* Research has demonstrated that reduced class size is a critical factor in helping students achieve. In fact, Professor Alex Molnar from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, found that reduced class size, not vouchers, hold the greatest promise for improving student academic success. Schools and communities may know this is true, but do not have the financial resources to hire more

teachers. Because it is of Federal interest that all children have the opportunity to succeed, Congress should provide supplemental funds to schools that have identified this need.

- *School Construction and Modernization Bonds.* Children cannot learn in buildings that are unsafe or dilapidated. The estimated cost of repairing and modernizing school facilities is staggering—more than \$200 billion—and cannot be absorbed by local communities. Congress must address this problem if schools are to succeed. Pending tax credit proposals could turn a Federal investment of \$3 billion into \$25 billion in local bonds for school construction.

- *21st Century Community Learning Centers.* Millions of children have no place to go after school and would benefit academically and socially by participating in quality school-based before- and after-school programs. Unfortunately, there is a severe shortage of these programs, and schools again cannot afford to resolve this shortage without help. The Federal Government's commitment to 21st Century Community Learning Centers must be increased.

- *Parent Involvement.* Parent involvement is often cited as an essential element in school reform. National PTA is promoting the PARENT Act, which stands for Parental Accountability, Recruitment, and Education National Training. The bills have been introduced in the House and Senate as H.R. 2801 and S. 1556. The PARENT Act focuses on strengthening the connection between parents and schools by providing states and schools with Federal leadership, information on research and model programs, and technical assistance needed to plan and implement effective parent involvement programs.

The PARENT Act would strengthen parent involvement by ensuring that teachers are taught how to work well with parents, technology programs are expanded to connect teachers and schools with parents, and parents are involved in planning how Federal funds are used in local programs. The PARENT Act is not a one-size-fits-all Federal program, but rather a sensible outline that will lead to improved student achievement.

Polls indicate tremendous support for increased parental involvement and a willingness on taxpayers behalf to invest Federal dollars toward this effort. We encourage members of this committee to co-sponsor this important legislation.

To summarize, Congress should not divert public funds to private schools, but instead should address the immediate needs of schools, such as investing in more comprehensive school reforms, reducing class size, modernizing schools, expanding before- and after-school learning opportunities and increasing parental involvement. Federal resources provide the foundation schools need for improvement. They also help expand opportunities for students in schools and communities with limited resources. Children are only 25 percent of the present, but 100 percent of the future. America's tomorrow depends on quality public schools today.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our views today. I look forward to the National PTA and your staff working together in the coming year.

STATEMENT OF HON. DWIGHT EVANS, A STATE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. EVANS. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I would first like to express how my particular views are shaped. I am a product of the Philadelphia public school district, formerly a teacher, taught in the public school district; a member of the Pennsylvania House for the last 20 years, on the House Education Committee, chairman of the Appropriations Committee; supported the legislation to authorize charter schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, passed in 1997.

There are now 50 charter schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. There are 25 charter schools in the City of Philadelphia. I started a charter school called the West Oak Lane Charter School. The West Oak Lane Charter School has about 621 children, a longer school day, a longer school year; students wear uniforms, teachers wear uniforms, the principal wears uniforms; they teach Spanish; targeted toward computers. So fundamentally that gives you a little sense of my background.

However, I want to express that there is a real frustration on my part, that I do not believe—and I can only specifically speak about Philadelphia and obviously not about the entire Nation—I do not believe that the schools are child-centered. I believe that they are adult-centered and they are not meeting the needs of all of the children. We have to begin to ask ourselves some serious questions.

In my view, this is not about interest groups, this is not about one constituency, this is not about protecting favored programs that do not work. This is about teaching and learning. What should our children know and what should they be able to do? How do we support our teachers to assure that they enter the classroom ready to teach? And how do we support them so that they are ready to stay? What are the proper roles of school boards, the State government and the Federal Government? What choices are there—charter schools, magnet schools, inter-district schools and even switching to the nearest closest public school? What criteria do we place on using tax dollars?

I think that we need to start by recognizing that education will continue to be a State government and a local school board responsibility. While I recognize and applaud your effort and support here in Washington, I think the reality is that yours will always be a secondary role. The fact of the matter is that States will always set education policies and school boards will always be responsible for implementing that education policy. Depending on the source, the Federal support of basic education is estimated between 7 percent to 10 percent. Based on the latest information of Pennsylvania, Federal support is only 3 percent of the local funds available.

We also need to recognize the fact that the education delivery system is always changing. Until quite recently, the education of public school children was totally in the hands of State government and the nearly 15,000 public school districts in this country. This is no longer the case. To the mix have been added charter schools, and programs such as those in Milwaukee and Cleveland. We should anticipate further changes and design our funding systems to be flexible enough to meet unanticipated changes.

Let me continue by laying out what I believe ought to be the guiding principles for the appropriation of Federal funds. First of all, I would urge you to try to move away from categorical funding, to flexible funding. I realize that funding always comes with strings attached. I don't expect you to just hand over the money and not expect anything in return. We at the State and the local levels should be held accountable for improvements in teaching and learning. The bottom line should be the overall improvement, not just the preparation of reports.

It seems to me that you at the Federal level need to focus on trying to set important priorities in education and then constructing more flexible grants that combine the dollars from the categorical programs. By way of illustration, it seems to me that the Federal priorities could be focused on such areas as support for the poorest students, who are the students most at risk, or assisting in the recruitment, education, retention and professional development of highly qualified teachers or principals.

There should be few conditions attached to the receipt of these funds other than demonstrating improvement in teaching and

learning. States should not have to institute specific processes or procedures in return for funding. Federal requirements, such as school report cards or the reconstitution of failing school buildings, may have more appeal than substance. According to a survey of accountability measures used by various States that was done by Education Week, 30 States already have report cards. Will the state of education in this country really improve if the other 20 are required to do so?

While reconstitution and school closures are touted as get-tough measures, there is scant information on the usefulness of these tactics. The same Education Week survey also revealed that North Carolina, which is always cited for remarkable improvements in educational attainment, has neither closure nor reconstitution available to it.

First of all, I would like to urge to you to let the States continue to take the lead in the development of standards, assessments and systems of accountability that fit our own unique circumstances.

Let me repeat that: I would urge you to let the States continue to take the lead in the development of standards, assessments and systems of accountability that fit our own unique circumstances.

While I recognize the potential of such programs as the recently implemented Ed-Flex, I would hope that the concept is merely the beginning of a more flexible approach to the use of Federal funds than an end.

I would like to say this in closing, Mr. Chairman, to the members of your committee: I represent a legislative district that borders a suburb in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The City of Philadelphia between 1990 and 1999 has lost 150,000 people, who have left the City of Philadelphia. Obviously there are issues such as taxes and crime and things of that nature. But if my good friend, Congressman Hoeffel, was here today, who borders my legislative district, a great majority of the people who have left my district have left my district on the basis of the schools.

My view is that the schools are not child-centered. They are not meeting the needs of the children; they are meeting the needs of the adults. Obviously, we have to begin to look at other options, begin to look at what works. We need to have—and I compliment the chairman and the members of this committee for having this type of discussion, because the fact of the matter is, everything doesn't work for every single child.

That doesn't mean that there are not good schools. The question is, we are talking about having good systems. We can always point to an individual school. How can we point to an entire system, and is that system meeting the needs of every particular child?

So, in closing, I say to you that this is probably the most important issue to this country, that we need to begin to look at other ways in terms of the things that we are doing. I am not saying to you that charters magically, by themselves, will solve the entire problem. Obviously, I think that charters are a part of the solution.

So we need to keep our minds open. We need to have some debate. I don't think that this is a Democrat, Republican, black, white, liberal or moderate issue. I think that this is an issue to find a way to what is the best for our children.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KASICH. Thank you, Mr. Evans.

Ms. Markell, let me just ask you in one area, first of all, Jeb Bush testified this morning and most of the criticisms you had of a school choice program were answered by him. There is no slight selection, there are standards. Virtually every criticism you had he spoke to in his testimony. What you also saw in his testimony was the fact that local districts, as a result of getting low grades, made a significant effort to improve themselves and to boost themselves.

Urban schools today in America, more than half of fourth and eighth graders fail to achieve minimal standards on testing in reading, math, and science. Slightly more than half of urban high school students fail to graduate in 4 years. Twenty-five percent of American workers in manufacturing, mining and construction can't even fill out a job application. And then if you take a look at the international standards, which I really had wished to talk to the Secretary about, we rate 19th in math and science against—we are 19th in the world. Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, New Zealand, France, Norway, Iceland, they are all ahead of us, and that is just a few of them.

Does it ever bother you that the idea that if we just work harder with an absence of competition, because since—between 1970 and 1997, per-pupil spending in the U.S. rose 91 percent in inflation adjusted dollars. I believe you are so committed to this and I think the greatest argument against change or choice in education is being made by people who have a sincere concern that if, in fact, there is choice, the public schools will be hurt. But it doesn't seem to be getting any better.

I have held public office now for 21 years, and I think we have lost part of a generation of young people. When you look at the evidence of what happens in Milwaukee, when you look at Cleveland, when you look at the number of parents that stand in line—I was out in California, and parents were in line for 2 days to get their kids into a magnet school.

The next panel is going to represent some wealthy people who offer scholarships; people are dying to get these scholarships, to have some kind of choice.

Do you ever worry that maybe just doing the same thing and not opening the door toward some competition is really the wrong way to go, and ultimately we are going to look back and say, we lost more of another generation of young people? Shouldn't we let the States be able to set programs that if they want to have a school voucher program, they should have it? If they don't want to have it, they don't need to have it; but shouldn't we honor diversity in education and let the States be able to choose the kind of educational structure they want?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Evans follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DWIGHT EVANS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I want to first of all thank you for this opportunity to discuss with you my views on how to improve the educational attainment of this nation's children and how I believe that the Federal Government can best support this endeavor.

My views on education have been shaped by both my experience as a school-teacher in the Philadelphia School District and as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for nearly twenty years. I have served on the House Edu-

cation Committee and have been chairman of the Appropriations Committee for the last 10 years. I have played a leadership role in seeking a greater state role in funding basic education and in assuring that state funds were directed to those poorer school districts most in need of financial assistance. I supported the legislation that authorized the creation of charter schools in Pennsylvania and was the moving force behind the creation of the West Oak Lane Charter School in my own legislative district in the City of Philadelphia.

While I take a great deal of pride in my efforts in the area of education, I also feel a certain sense of frustration over the fact that we adults have failed so many children for so long by failing to provide them with the kind of education that they will need to succeed in the future.

To remedy this gross injustice, we must not only redouble our efforts; we must also redirect them. Our education system must be child-centered. Education is not about what is best for the adults in the system. It is not about interest groups, one-issue constituencies, or protecting favored programs that do not work. It is about teaching and learning. What should our children know and what should they be able to do? How do we support our teachers to assure that they enter the classroom ready to teach and how do we support them so that they want to stay there? What are the proper roles of our school boards, state governments, and the Federal Government?

What choices are there—charter schools, magnet schools, inter-districts schools, even switching to the next closest public school? What criteria do we place on using tax dollars?

I think that we need to start out by recognizing that education is and will continue to be primarily a state government and local school board responsibility. While I recognize and applaud your efforts and support here in Washington, I think the reality is that yours will always be a secondary role. It is we at the state level who must set education policy and it is those at the school board level who must implement this policy. We at the state and local levels are the ones who are held most accountable for the success or failure of our children's education. I think it is also important to note that it is at the state and local level we put up most of the money. Depending on the source, Federal support of basic education is estimated to be 7 percent to 10 percent. Based on the latest information for Pennsylvania, Federal support is only 3 percent of the total funds available.

We also need to recognize the fact that the educational delivery system is also changing. Until quite recently the education of public school children was totally in the hands of state governments and the nearly 15 thousand public school districts in this country. This is no longer the case. To the mix have been added charter schools and programs such as those in Milwaukee, Cleveland and now Florida. We should anticipate further changes and design our funding system to be flexible enough to meet unanticipated changes.

Let me continue by laying out what I believe ought to be guiding principles for the appropriation of Federal funds. Given both the complexities of the issue and the limited time to discuss them today, I can only describe them in the most general way.

First of all, I would urge you to try to move away from categorical funding to flexible funding. I realize that funds always come with strings attached and I don't expect you to just hand over the money and not expect something in return. We at the state and local level should be held accountable for improvements in teaching and learning. The bottom line should be overall improvement, not just the preparation of reports for the sake of preparing reports.

It seems to me that you at the Federal level need to focus on trying to set a few important priorities in education and then constructing more flexible grants that combine the dollars from a number of categorical grants. By way of illustration it seems to me that Federal priorities could be focused in such areas as support for the poorest students who are most at risk for academic failure, or assisting in the recruitment, education, retention, and professional development of highly qualified teachers.

There should be few conditions attached for the receipt of these funds, other than demonstrated improvement in teaching and learning. States should not have to institute specific processes or procedures in return for funding. Federal requirements such as school report cards or the reconstitution of failing school buildings may not meet the local needs. According to a survey of accountability measures used by various states that was done by Education Week, 30 states already have report cards. Will the state of education in this country really improve if the other twenty are required to do so? While reconstitution and school closures are touted as "get tough" measures, there is scant information on the usefulness of these tactics. The same Education Week survey also reveals that North Carolina, which is often cited for

its remarkable improvements in educational attainment, has neither closure nor reconstitution available to it.

Second of all, I would urge you to let the states continue to take the lead in the development of standards, assessments, and systems of accountability that fit our own unique circumstances. Federal funds can be used most effectively and efficiently when they complement state programs. We need to integrate and coordinate Federal funds as effortlessly as possible. While I recognize the potential of such programs as the recently implemented Ed-Flex, I would hope that the concept is merely the beginning of a more flexible approach to the use of Federal funds than an end in itself.

In closing, I would just ask you to trust us at the state and local levels to do the right thing for the education of our children, to assist us by providing some of the resources we need to do the right thing, and to hold us accountable to do the right thing.

Ms. MARKELL. If I may, Mr. Chairman, let me address several of the items.

I did hear Governor Bush this morning. Yes, it does sound like a very interesting and exciting program as he presented it. I think we do need to remember that it is a new program.

He also talked about a number of things that have not been documented yet. I was fearful, as I listened to him talk, about parents not being able to select a private school, because the special needs expertise is not there. That was a very strong implication.

We do like some of the things that he proposed. Our concern is indeed in moving public dollars into the private arena.

And we are not opposed to change. I think many of the new initiatives that we are seeing out of the Department of Education indicates that. We certainly do not maintain and advocate maintaining the status quo. That has never been what the National PTA is about. In fact, our very founding was based on the fact that there were concerns about public education 100 years ago. What we chose to do was not leave the public school system, however, but to stay within the system and demand change.

I think that is what this country is asking us to do, is to look at programs that we can replicate, that have positive successes; but at the same time, not dismantling the public education system. We have grave concerns about what could occur if we divert public funds into private schools.

Private schools do, at this point in time and in many situations, select students. They talk about a lottery; we have not seen that followed through. That may not be the case yet in Florida. We are not sure that that is going to be the case in the long run. We have concerns about that.

Chairman KASICH. If you became convinced that the public school system could not improve without the potential loss of market share, or if you became convinced that the public schools, frankly, were given greater emphasis to improve if there was some competition, would you reverse your position?

Ms. MARKELL. I can't be convinced to go there quite frankly. I think even as we look at—

Chairman KASICH. No matter what happens, you can't be convinced that this system doesn't work? There is no circumstance under which you think that giving parents choice at the local level to take their kids out of a school system where they are not learning and allow those kids to go to a school system where they are confident they will learn, under no set of circumstances would you say—

Ms. MARKELL. If you are talking public versus private, no, I would not. Public choice is an entirely different issue. Public school choice includes magnet schools and academies, as well as charters within the public school system.

Chairman KASICH. But under no circumstance could you even conceive of a situation where you would say that we ought to permit choice outside of the public school?

Ms. MARKELL. As a strong believer in public education, I cannot imagine that I personally would make that change nor would my organization.

Chairman KASICH. I think that speaks volumes right there.

I recognize the gentlelady from Oregon.

Ms. HOOLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank both of the panel members. You can both comment on this question.

We have heard a lot about vouchers today. For the record, I need to let you know that I am a product, well, I am a product of both public and private schools. I went to both. I also taught in both public and private schools. There are wonderful public schools; there are wonderful private schools. There are also some public schools that aren't very good and there are some private schools that aren't very good.

What I haven't heard at all today, with all the talk about vouchers, do we ever hold those private schools accountable when we send a child with a voucher to a private school? Do we ever hold that private school accountable for improved learning? How do we know in the Florida model, if you are from an F school and you get a voucher, that the school that you choose to go to isn't an F school? Are there any standards or any accountability for private schools, based on your research or your information?

Mr. EVANS. I cannot speak to you specifically regarding the issue of vouchers in Pennsylvania, because there is no voucher law on the books. But I guess what I would like to kind of add to this conversation is, at some point, I would hope we would get past this "us versus them" approach.

Obviously, when you begin to start talking about private schools or any other entity, the true test is going to be that parent; and ultimately if something is not working, you will make the assumption that that parent will not keep that child in that environment. My general sense is, I can speak about the charter school that we have.

We started a charter school last year. Our principal did not work out in the first 4 or 5 months. There were some parents who had taken their children out of the charter school. We got a new principal. The principal came in, and the principal did some of the basic things that were necessary. Now some of those same parents who had taken their children out are now trying to get their children back into the school.

So I guess what I am expressing is only my general feeling that there is a certain thing called an education tool box and that basically these kinds of decisions should be left up to the local school district, they should be left up to the States to fundamentally decide what works in terms of the child's interest.

I keep hearing this conversation talking about the system, the system. What is the system? The system is children. The system is not buildings and bricks. It is children first.

So if you—as you said yourself, you were a teacher, you have been in the system, you understand. Everybody here has options and choose who sits up on this panel. We all want to make a decision, what is in the best interests of our children. I don't think anybody should ever, in my view, question the fact that what somebody wants to look at in the interest of their children, first.

Secondly, should private schools and other entities have standards? Absolutely, everybody should have standards, everybody should be held accountable; we all should be. But if something is not working, at what point do we say if something is not working that we need to have some other options available? At what point?

I can tell you in the case of the City of Philadelphia, although there has been some change, there are some high schools that have a dropout rate of 30 to 40 to 50 percent. Do we continue to keep those high schools functioning as they are and basically don't do anything about it? Do we continue to let that happen?

I guess I am just saying to you that I think that we should have discussions on the table, we should look at options, we should try to look at something. We may need to do something different there that hasn't been working. We can't continue to do the same thing.

Ms. MARKELL. I think as you know in our own State, we have private schools that are not accountable to the public. We have private schools that have noncertified teachers, that don't need to take any form of testing for advancement. That is a concern. And I think that is probably one of the largest detriments as we talk about the difference between private and public education, that there is no level of accountability at the private level.

I think, too, as we look at—and we had the very same discussion at the break about moving a student from potentially an F school that is a public school to an F private school, because our conversation with the Florida PTA folks is that there is no judging assessment or criteria looked at for private schools as we have given parents choice. That within itself says to me that the free market only works when you provide consumers all of the information. And if they don't have the same level of information about private schools as we are able to provide them for public schools, they are not making sound choices. That is fearsome, I think, for most of us who are such strong advocates of the public education system.

Ms. HOOLEY. I think there are a lot of assumptions about the benefits of vouchers.

Again, I have been involved in both public and private schools in a lot of different ways. I think there is an assumption that private schools are always better than public schools when some are and some just aren't. So I am concerned that we also need to have some accountability. If we are going to use a system that is a mixture of public and private school, that we have accountability for everybody.

Representative Evans, I am a great believer in the idea that you try things; some things work, some things don't work. I have been involved in education long enough to know that fads do come and

go. Some of those work. When kids are failing in a school, you have to do something about it.

I can give you some wonderful examples where administrators have turned schools around. But if we are going to have accountability, which I think we need, then I think we need accountability for all.

Mr. EVANS. Congresswoman, I would just say this to you. I have never known, particularly, a public school to shut down because of academic failure—fiscal failure, but not academic failure. I have known that we, particularly in States, just continue to invest; even if it doesn't work, we continue to invest.

I understand because I started off by saying I am a product of the public school system. The reality of it is, we have to figure out something different as a system. I am not saying there are not good schools. This constant argument, that people think you are going to destroy the public school system I think personally is a mistake, because the public school system in this country is always going to educate the majority of the kids. I do not believe that there is the "capacity," quote, unquote, in the marketplace in itself to educate all the children.

In the case of Philadelphia, we have 215,000 children in the City of Philadelphia. There are not enough Catholic schools or private schools in the borders of the City of Philadelphia that could deal with that issue of capacity.

I believe that that is not the issue. I think the question really is, how do we change the dialogue between parents and teachers and principals so that parents really feel like they are equal partners and they are not just prisoners, and we don't just say, "Well, you have no choice, you can't do anything about it, this is what you are stuck with." When do we begin to say that we put them on an equal plane?

In the movie, "Jerry McGuire," when they talk about—the part, "show me the money" and "follow the money," "show me the money" and "follow the money" will change the dialogue of discussion if that parent is equal.

Personally, I believe in the concept that principals should have the power to hire and fire. I believe in the principle that the principal is the instructional leader. I believe in professional development for teachers. I think that teachers need to be well trained and need to be ready. But I think the power is not really decentralized in the hands of principals. I don't know about anyplace else, but I know in Philadelphia, principals cannot hire and fire.

It is like picking a team. Somebody gives you a team that is assigned to you; you have no choice, but they want you to be responsible if you are a principal. They want you to be in charge. You cannot be in charge of an environment where you have not picked that team to determine what is necessary.

Ms. HOOLEY. Representative Evans, I don't think we disagree whether parents should be involved. I think they should. I think it makes a difference in the learning of that child. Thank you for being here. Again, Ginny, thank you for the terrific work you do and for being here today.

Chairman KASICH. I want to thank you. I would like for both of you not to leave, to be able to stay with us. We are going to hear from some children. I want to get to them.

Representative Evans, I can remember—is this the first time you have ever testified?

Mr. EVANS. Correct.

Chairman KASICH. The first time I came down here, I was a state senator, I thought they were going to have marching bands and I would get an hour, I didn't get a chance to say much, most of the people weren't listening. But I want to thank you for coming. Your testimony is valuable.

Virginia, I would like to work with you in the future. There is, without question, some common ground. I happened to write a book and talked about a lady from the Baltimore schools by the name of Trudy Williams, who through pure tenacity was able to turn that whole school around, that whole discipline around. She fought all the bureaucracies.

It is possible for people to bring about miracles in our public schools. We all want to work together to have that happen. I want to thank the two of you. If you want to sit right out here in the front, that would be terrific.

Now I would like to recognize John Walton and Patrick Purtill and a host of young people who are going to talk, I think, a little bit about their school. I first of all want to say, in a strange sort of way, the actions of Mr. Walton and Mr. Forstmann really represent what America is all about. I think that they have started this program—I guess I ought to let him tell us why they started this program, but my observation is, they were frustrated, they didn't think government would move fast enough, and that there were too many futures being lost. And in the great American spirit—entrepreneurship, ideas, self-reliance—they sat down and said, let's put some money behind a true reform program.

Senator Voinovich was here a little bit earlier, Mr. Walton, and he wanted me to compliment you. The Members of the House and Senate, I know, are very grateful for the fact that while you could be, because of the busy schedule you have and the many activities you are engaged in, it would just be easier to kind of go about your life. You have decided not to.

I just mentioned a book that I wrote. It focused on people who really had no money, no fame, no real big success, just the person next door. Should I do another book, I certainly don't want to exclude the people who do have positions and do have resources and stand up and apply them, because all too many times it is easy to just take care of yourself and not worry about the world around us.

As just another human being, I want to compliment you for the efforts that you have made and the priorities that you have set. I stand in admiration of your effort. The floor is yours to give us whatever presentation you want.

Where are the children? We are going to have the children come on in. If you want to go ahead and start, Mr. Walton, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENTS OF JOHN T. WALTON, CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE
CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND; AND CHILDREN AND PAR-
ENTS IN THE WASHINGTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Mr. WALTON. Thanks a lot, Congressman Kasich. The Children's Scholarship Fund, like most things, grew out of an idea that has transformed considerably since its origination.

Starting in 1992, we have seen the growth of scholarship funds around the country. They have been fueled by a growing sense of—really, of frustration with the possibility of losing thousands and thousands and even millions of children through the educational cracks.

I would certainly agree with the participants in the last session that maintain that there is a strong public school culture, there are many excellent public schools. But the simple fact is that we are simply losing too many children to an inadequate education. Their opportunities are diminished, they are condemned to a life of poverty, often illiteracy, and in this country, in this age, we simply cannot afford that waste of human capital.

The scholarship fund was originally actually—the Children's Scholarship Fund was Teddy Forstmann's idea. It was a wonderful idea. It grew out of the Washington Scholarship Fund which, for a thousand applications, we had over 8,000 children apply. It demonstrated such an incredible demand that it was obvious that this was an issue that was really appropriate for wider distribution.

It was an idea that appeared to really have struck a nerve with the parents in Washington. As a matter of fact, we have—Rose Blassingame has brought her three grandchildren with her today from Washington—Franciscoe, Diamonesha and Lapria—and we really appreciate their coming here. But they are examples of the kinds of families and kids that are involved in these programs.

What they do is that they offer—we offer basically a very minimal scholarship, it is like—\$1,100 is the average scholarship. These parents dig into their own pockets and find the balance of the tuition necessary for these children to attend the school of their choice.

You would think that since the qualification for these programs is for low-income parents that the demand would be relatively modest. But starting with 1,000 scholarships in Washington, we had 8,000 applications. When the program went national, for 40,000 scholarships, we had over 1.25 million children represented by the applicant pool.

Now, that sounds like a lot of kids, but you might say, spread over the Nation, that is not really so many. The truth is that that was done mostly by word of mouth. There was some radio, there was some media promotion of it, but the vast majority of those applications came in through word of mouth. That is an indication of how parents in low-income communities are talking about education.

We often hear the position that many of these parents are too uninvolved, they are too tied up in the struggle for survival or social issues, whether it is drugs or any of the other afflictions that divert people's attention from their children. But the simple fact is that when parents from virtually any background perceive that they can have a positive influence on their child, that they have

true power to change, true power to improve, there are very, very few that will not take advantage of that option.

It is that empowerment, it is that extension of equal opportunity to low-income parents that has catalyzed the support that we have seen across this country from donors, from advisory board members.

I have got to tell you that these folks are from all sides of the political spectrum. As a matter of fact, when Teddy was talking to me about putting together an advisory board, he said, I think we are going to be the only Republicans on this board. I said, Teddy, I hate to tell you this, I am not a Republican. The point being that this is not a political issue; this is an issue about children, it is an issue about empowering parents, and it is an issue about, quite frankly, giving parents the most important vote that they could have.

Those of us here in this room today, I doubt that there are more than a handful, if that many, that do not have true choice of where our children go to school. We can do one of two things. We can either pay tuition or we can live in a neighborhood with decent public schools. It happens all the time. Any realtor will tell you that property values vary with the competency, the performance of the schools. We all have choice.

But, my friends, there is a large and significant and dangerously vulnerable portion of our population that do not have choice. They have no say in the type of education that their children get. It may be good. There are cases where these parents are well served. But too often when parents have no choice, they have no power to either move or pay tuition, the educational product is less than any of us would accept for our children.

Probably the most important thing that we have learned from this experience is the impact that this type of parental involvement, that these parents' ability to cast their vote for the school that their child attends—the most important thing that we have learned from that is one that you might not expect. It benefits the children because the children, more often than not, much more often than not, end up getting a better education.

They go to schools where the parents are convinced that those schools are—they are treating their children in the way that they want them to be treated. They are choosing that school; they are monitoring that school. But what really happens, the thing that has amazed me, has been the change in the families, the change in the parents that we see, of these children.

We see parents who were the parents that you talk about. They are the parents that everyone is concerned about that aren't very involved; they sort of get their kids out the door in the morning and they maybe see them home in the afternoon. But they are somebody else's problem, somebody else is taking care of it; I am not going to go down there and talk to that teacher, that principal, because I left school in the sixth grade. Or I don't speak very good English; it is a very intimidating environment for me to go down there and represent my child at that school.

But give me some power, give me the ability to determine what kind of school is best for my child, and I will talk to my neighbors, I will do the kind of informal research that parents do when they

are trying to make decisions in a neighborhood, and I will come up with an answer that would surprise most of us sitting in this room with the accuracy of the evaluation. Parents are incredibly capable in using their own resources to evaluate schools.

We talk about sending money to public schools. We talk about accountability. But the truth is, we don't send money anywhere—or sending money to private schools, but we don't send—in a government-sponsored program, whether it is something that this Congress might enact, if the money follows the child, you are not sending money anywhere. What you are doing is, you are empowering that parent to send their child where they think they will receive the best education.

I have talked too long.

Chairman KASICH. Be careful, you are starting to sound like a Republican.

Mr. WALTON. I am not a Democrat, either, if that makes you feel better.

The thing that—probably the strongest impression, the lasting impression that I have come away from this with is, this truly is an issue of equal opportunity. It is an issue of providing educational opportunities to parents who have not had them the way that we have. Whether we live in good neighborhoods or whether we pay tuition in private schools, it doesn't matter; we have got choice.

This is extending opportunity to those parents; it is extending the right to vote, to cast the most important vote of their lives and their child's life, which is the educational environment that their child will be in for the 12 years that they are in school.

I am reminded often of the suffrage movement, where Wyoming was the first State to grant the right to vote for women in 1848. It took us over 70 years before that right was extended to women across this country. I cannot believe that this country will wait that long to extend the right to vote for their child's education to the poor parents of this country.

Thank you.

Chairman KASICH. Let us have Ms. Blassingame if she would come on up. I know she has a little bit of testimony. I know that Patrick Purtill wants to make a short statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Purtill follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PATRICK D. PURTILL, PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Patrick Purtill and I am the President and Executive Director of the Washington Scholarship Fund. The Fund was created in 1993 to provide low-income Washington, DC children with scholarships to attend private, parochial or independent school.

The Washington Scholarship Fund is committed to providing District children with the education they need to be full and productive citizens. Our program is aimed at increasing access to education for students who come from economically disadvantaged families. By providing partial scholarships, WSF gives DC children a chance at a brighter future.

The Fund's program is very simple. Children qualify for a scholarship if they:

- reside in Washington, DC;
- are entering grades Kindergarten through eight; and
- meet the definition of low-income as defined by the Federal School-Lunch Program.

Scholarships, ranging from 30 to 60 percent of tuition, up to a maximum of \$1,700 for elementary students and \$2,200 for high school students, are awarded by random lottery to eligible families. This is the best way to ensure that all students have an equal chance at receiving a scholarship. After recipients are notified of their award, parents decide which school their child is to attend. WSF plays no part in making nor limiting this decision.

The Fund believes in providing a positive learning environment for children as early in their development as possible. For that reason, applicants must be entering grades K-8 to be awarded an initial scholarship. However, once a student enters the program, the Fund will continue to support him or her through completion of high school.

For the 1999–2000 academic year, 1,354 low-income District children will attend over one hundred different private, parochial, and independent schools thanks to scholarships from the Washington Scholarship Fund.

An important aspect of our program is that all of our parents are required to pay at least \$500 of their child's tuition per year. Some families pay more, depending on their income and where they choose to send their child to school. The Fund requires this financial commitment because we believe that parental involvement is essential to the success of any child's education. When parents are able to invest in their children's future, they feel a true sense of pride, accomplishment and ownership. They are the real heroes working to ensure their child has a better life and I am pleased that several of them are here today to share their experiences.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THEODORE J. FORSTMANN, SENIOR PARTNER, FORSTMANN
LITTLE & CO., COCHAIRMAN AND CEO, THE CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Dante once observed that "A great flame follows a little spark." For me the spark was ignited by my work over many years with New York's Inner City Scholarship Fund, run by the New York Archdiocese. Impressed with its success at educating children for half the cost the government system fails to educate the same children, I thought: why not start a fund to help low-income families seek a good education wherever it could be found.

So I got together with John Walton and we offered 1,000 partial scholarships to students in Washington, DC. After just a couple of months, we had received nearly 8,000 applications. Confronted with this huge demand, we decided to go national: John and I put up \$100 million to fund 40,000 scholarships, and the Children's Scholarship Fund was born.

Throwing a lifeline to kids trapped in the worst schools seemed like a good idea to me, but would others be willing to brave the inevitable controversy and join our cause? I soon found out.

Those who stepped forward to join our board range from civil rights leaders such as Andy Young, Martin Luther King III and Dorothy Height—from national leaders such as General Colin Powell, White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, Barbara Bush, and both the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate, Trent Lott and Tom Daschle—from sports and entertainment figures, such as baseball legend Sammy Sosa, actor Will Smith, Michael Ovitz, Bob Johnson of Black Entertainment Television and MTV's president, Tom Freston—from business leaders such as Jill Barad, Chairman and CEO of Mattel, to Jim Kimsey, founder of America Online—just to name a few.

The diversity of our board has been a great source of our strength. People from all walks of life were generous, not just with their time and effort—but their money as well. Soon we had raised \$70 million to match our initial investment—and with this we set up programs in 40 cities and three entire states. As calls poured in I thought: why limit our scholarships to just these local programs? We worked through the logistics, came up with extra funds, and on the Oprah show we made our scholarships available to every single low income family in the United States of America.

Yet nothing, not even our experience in Washington, DC, could have begun to prepare us for the explosive level of demand for these scholarships. By our March 31st deadline we had applicants from all 50 states and territories—from 22,000 cities and towns across America. In many areas huge blocs of the eligible population applied: 26 percent in Chicago; 29 percent in New York; 33 percent in Washington, DC; and in Baltimore, MD 44 percent applied.

In total we received one million two hundred and fifty thousand applications. That is an almost inconceivable response—made even more so when you remember that this is only from people who had heard of our program.

To understand the magnitude of this demand, please remember that these are partial scholarships (parents must contribute \$1,000 per year on average) and low-

income applicants (average income less than \$22,000 a year). Consider that \$1,000 over 4 years from the parents of one million, two hundred and fifty thousand children adds up to \$5 billion. Five billion dollars from families who have very, very little—simply to escape the system that they’ve been relegated to and to obtain a decent education for their children.

In anybody’s book, that has to be an amazing demonstration of dissatisfaction with the present system—and a demand for alternatives. That’s why April 21st—our national lottery day—will be remembered as a turning point in the history of American education. The parents of 1.25 million have put an end to the debate over whether low-income families want choice in education: they passionately, desperately, unequivocally do. Now it is up to the defenders of the status quo to tell these parents, and the millions of others they represent, why they cannot have it.

We have heard most of these arguments before. But as pressure for competition and education alternatives grows—as now it must—we are bound to hear these same arguments reprised with increasing frequency and exaggeration. The arguments against choice fall into four categories:

1. Policy;
2. Historic;
3. Civic; and
4. Legal.

I’d like to address each of these briefly—since each, like all arguments designed to deny freedom, ultimately reveals a hollow core.

POLICY

The first argument against competition in education essentially runs something like this: since 90 percent of children are in the public education system, we must “fix” that system—and fight choice, because choices bring competition, and competition will “destroy” the public schools.

Let’s examine this one. It’s certainly true that 90 percent of children currently receive education from the government system, or what we call public education. But far from being a reason for rejecting competition, it is precisely why we must embrace it. Because a system that can command, indeed enforce, a 90 percent market share is a monopoly. And as everyone knows, monopolies always produce bad products at high prices. Because when there is no competition, customers have no alternatives. And with no alternatives, they have no recourse but to accept whatever a monopoly decides to produce, and pay whatever a monopoly decides to charge.

This is exactly the record of the government monopoly in education. In the past forty years alone, we have almost quadrupled per student spending—while reducing the student/teacher ratio by nearly 40 percent. Yet student achievement has stagnated, while important areas like literacy and safety have seriously gotten worse. Today, for example, a public school education in New York City costs about \$8,000 a year compared to roughly \$3,500 in an inner city parochial school. Yet the inner city public schools lose half their students before graduation, while their parochial school counterparts graduate nearly all their students and send most off to college.

In the face of this shabby performance, we are told that if we just keep plugging away at the same old failed solutions—spend more money, hire more teachers, and reduce class sizes—we will get different results.

In the meantime, what happens to the child? To people who want to maintain the status quo, this is not the primary concern. The primary concern is not what happens to the child if he is forced to stay—but rather what happens to the system if he is free to leave. By their reasoning, no matter how bad the situation gets, we must not help the child to leave lest in leaving he makes a bad situation worse. Does this make any sense at all? Does the child exist to serve the system, or does the system exist to serve the child?

But even if this argument were not so morally bankrupt, it runs completely counter to long settled economic truths. Long before the Sherman Anti-Trust Act we knew that monopolies stifle innovation and defraud the customer. The solution has never been to increase the power of the monopoly. The remedy, which has worked time and time again in American experience, is to encourage competition.

HISTORY

Competition may be deeply ingrained in America—but according to defenders of the status quo, so is what they call public education. America, many of us have been led to believe, was founded upon a system where government was responsible for educating the public and, as such, this system must be considered an underpinning of our democracy, and a reflection of our Founding Fathers’ deepest aspirations and ideals.

The only problem with this argument is that it is a total and complete falsehood. The government delivery system we have come to know as public education wasn't established until roughly 100 years after our country's founding. The system it replaced—the system of education our country was founded upon—was characterized above all by diversity, competition and choice. Parents could choose from a mix of different options—while competition spurred innovation and expanded services. This approach wasn't perfect, but worked well and was improving. Not only did it arguably produce some of the greatest Americans of our history, the most basic measure of achievement—literacy—was very high, in many states higher than it is today.

CIVIC

The third argument claims that the free market approach may have worked in a more homogeneous society, but in today's diverse culture we need the government system to promote social harmony and teach civic values.

At least the civic argument is a more honest echo of the sentiments first voiced by public education's early pioneers. Because while Horace Mann and his followers did believe in the efficiency of a government model, there was also something else at work in the mid-19th century. As huge waves of immigrants fanned some Americans' fear of foreigners, education reformers played upon these concerns to raise doubts about the ability of immigrant parents, with their exotic religions and multi-cultural backgrounds, to make proper decisions with regard to the education of their children. The proposed solution was to filter these foreign children through some sort of standardized system.

Conflict began immediately. After the creation of uniform institutions for all, the same families that had peacefully co-existed in all kinds of different schools—non denominational, Quaker and Lutheran, classical and technical—now found themselves at odds. Parents were faced with an unwelcome dilemma, either accept that others' values would be imposed on their children, or try to impose their own values by taking control of the system. Issues changed, but the dynamic remained the same, erupting in conflict over Creationism, sex education, school prayer, religious holidays, and values education such as the "rainbow curriculum."

Attempts to deal with America's religious diversity—whether the radical secularism promoted by the left, or the common-denominator school prayer promoted by the right—have failed because they remain locked inside the parameters of the status quo. By claiming to deliver what families need, rather than giving them the power to pursue what they want—they needlessly trample individual rights and create social conflict.

LLEGAL

Why not simply enable parents to pursue the education they want? According to the fourth, and final argument: it's against the law.

Here's where the legal argument against choice binds parents in a Catch-22. Because the same people who insist that the First Amendment prevents children from exercising their faith within the public system, argue that it also prevents families from using a fraction of their own tax money in order to leave it.

Since some children might flee to the inexpensive option of parochial schools, we're told this would represent an unconstitutional establishment of state religion. This argument holds true if, and only if, you take one thing out of the picture: the parent. Because in a competitive system, it would be the parent who would get the money and do the choosing. The fact that this argument fails to take the parent into account can't merely be an oversight: it's almost as if the government monopoly has so long discounted the customers—the parents—that they've forgotten that they even exist.

The irony is that so long as the current monopoly continues to shut out competition, non-profit, religious schools will be the only option many families will be able to afford. Of course, this is a ridiculous result. A truly open, competitive environment in education would witness all kinds of new suppliers coming to the fore. If I can persuade you for just one moment to look beyond the status quo, perhaps you can begin to see the vibrant possibilities, dancing on the horizon of a not too distant tomorrow. Who knows where the schools will come from. It might be Microsoft, or IBM, or National Geographic, or the Museum of Fine Arts.

To refuse to let such potential suppliers compete with a government monopoly is not only senseless—it is wrong. We have seen what state-sponsored, government-run monopolies have produced in terms of cars, like the Yugo, or airplanes like the ones built in the former Soviet Union. There has never been an industry, a business or a product that competition has not improved. And here, please remember, we are not talking about cars or airplanes—we're talking about our children.

In short, we must introduce competition into education, by bringing down barriers to alternative sources of supply, allowing some new providers to compete, and allowing parents to decide where their children will go to school. Competition, as in all other aspects of American life, will be good for education. It will be good for teachers, for parents, for children, and for any schools that can deliver high quality education. Competition will not hurt public education, it should renew it. I believe that every child, regardless of their parents' income, should have access to a high quality education, and that can be achieved only through opening up the government's monopoly on education.

Mr. Walton, if you would just stay, I am sure we will have a few questions for you.

Is it Rose? Can I call you Rose?

Ms. BLASSINGAME. Yes, you can.

Chairman KASICH. OK, Rose, you have got the time.

STATEMENT OF ROSE BLASSINGAME

Ms. BLASSINGAME. It is an honor to be here today speaking to the House Budget Committee. It is an even greater honor to receive scholarships for my grandchildren from the Washington Scholarship Fund. This is primarily because my grandson, Franciscoe, was in public school until the sixth grade.

Looking ahead, I knew what he had learned. I knew what was possible for him, and I knew what kind of safety I wanted him to have. And I did not see that future in the D.C. public school system. But it was also impossible financially for me to send him to private school. So I said some prayers and things sort of fell into place.

We won a scholarship through the Washington Scholarship Fund and Ted Forstmann. Franciscoe went into St. Thomas More and just graduated from the eighth grade there.

I always knew that he would go a long way even in public school. But I realized that he would have to go to college. To do this, he would have to be prepared. Public school and home teaching was not enough. He needed good preparation at high school, and I did not see that in D.C. public high schools. There are a few good schools but not enough. So now he is in Archbishop Carroll High School.

Education was my uppermost concern, and then safety. I found those in St. Thomas More, which I could not have afforded without the Washington Scholarship Fund. With the tutorial programs and teachers that care about him, Franciscoe just blossomed. I knew after his second year in St. Thomas More, he would go into private high school.

Diamonesha went to public school prekindergarten, and then to St. Thomas More kindergarten. She was not prepared. The children there were already reading and writing. But she is younger and she adapted more easily. By her second semester, she was making straight As. She is even taking Spanish. The teachers change with different subjects and are more specialized.

I am for public school education. There are still people who are too poor to go to private school even with help. But I think any sacrifice is worth it for a child.

D.C. public schools need to be revamped or fixed. I was listening to a WOL radio show. The commentator said that it would take 6 or 7 years to fix the D.C. public school system. Franciscoe does not

have that long. Diamonesha would not be prepared to go to college. What happens to the children now?

President Clinton said that you should repair a roof while the sun is shining. With D.C. public schools, the sun is not shining. The D.C. public school system is just like the Titanic, sinking very fast. By the time they fix it, where will these kids be?

My youngest granddaughter, Lapria, is not a child the D.C. public school system was even interested in educating. She was slated to go to special ed. She supposedly needed physical and occupational therapy, but she is in St. Thomas More doing well. I wish all the money spent and all the taxes I paid could properly educate children, but it can't. There is no sense in having lost children.

People say better children are going to private schools. That might be true, but any child has the potential to be academically strong. So children will be left behind.

I will end with this. I met a woman a few years ago named Kim. She was dying. The two things uppermost in her mind were that her children were taken care of and that they would be educated. That way she knew that they could take care of themselves and their own children. The first wish was fulfilled by her husband. The second wish was answered by the Washington Scholarship Fund and Mr. Forstmann. When she died, she had no other regrets besides leaving her husband and her girls. She knew that her children would be educated.

To me, that is the most important thing. No matter the color, we all want our children to do better than us, to be happy and prosperous. The only way to be that way is with a better education.

Chairman KASICH. I want to thank you, ma'am, for that testimony.

[The statement of Ms. Blassingame follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROSE BLASSINGAME, GRANDPARENT, WASHINGTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND

It is an honor to be here today speaking to the House Budget Committee. It is an even greater honor to receive scholarships for my grandchildren from the Washington Scholarship Fund. This is primarily because my grandson was in public school until the 6th grade. Looking ahead, I knew what he had learned, I knew what was possible for him, and I knew what kind of safety I wanted him to have, and I did not see that future in the DC public schools system. But it was also impossible financially for me to send him to private school. So I said some prayers, and things sort of fell into place. We won scholarships through WSF and Ted Forstmann. Franciscos went into St. Thomas More and just graduated from the 8th grade there. I always knew he would go a long way even in public school, but I realized that he would have to go to college. And to do this he would have to be prepared. Public school and at home teaching was not enough. He needed good preparation at high school, and I did not see that in DC public high schools. There are a few good schools but not enough. So, now he is in Archbishop Carroll High School.

Education was my uppermost concern and then safety. I found those in St. Thomas More, which I could not have afforded without WSF. With the tutorial programs and teachers that cared about him, Franciscos just blossomed. And I knew after his second year in St. Thomas More he could go into private high school.

Diamonesha went to public school pre-kindergarten and then to St. Thomas More kindergarten—and she was not prepared. The children there were already reading and writing. But she is younger and she adapted more easily. By her second semester she was making straight A's. She is even taking Spanish. The teachers change with different subjects and are more specialized.

I am for public school education—there are still people who are too poor to go to private school even with help. But I think any sacrifice is worth it for a child. DC public schools need to be revamped or fixed. I was listening to a radio show and the commentator said that it would take 6-7 years to fix the DC public school sys-

tem. Franciscocoe does not have that long; Diamonesha would not be prepared for college. What happens to the children now?

President Clinton said that you should repair roof while sun is shining. With DC public schools the sun is not shining. The DC public system is just like the Titanic—sinking very fast. By time they fix it where will these kids be?

My youngest granddaughter is not a child the DC public school system was even interested in educating. She was slated to go to special ed. She supposedly needed physical and occupational therapy. But she is in St. Thomas More doing well. I wish all the money spent and all the taxes I paid could properly educate children but it can't. There is no sense in having lost children. People say better children are going to private schools. That may be true, but any child has the potential to be academically strong. So children will be left behind.

I will end with this. I met a woman a few years ago named Kim. She was dying and the two things uppermost in her mind were that her children were taken care of and that they would be educated. That way she knew that they could take care of themselves and their own children. The first wish was fulfilled by her husband. The second wish was answered by the Washington Scholarship Fund and Mr. Forstmann. When she died, she had no other regrets beside leaving her husband and her girls. She knew that her children would be educated.

To me that is the most important thing. No matter the color, we all want our children to do better than us. To be happy and prosperous. And the only way to be that way is with a better education.

Chairman KASICH. Mrs. White is also here to testify.

Mrs. White, you have got the stage, go ahead and grab that microphone.

STATEMENT OF MS. VERMONT WHITE

Ms. WHITE. Good afternoon. My name is Vermont White. I am a single parent of four children, three girls, one son. Three of them attend St. Francis, thanks to the assistance of the Washington Scholarship Fund.

I applied for the Washington Scholarship Fund because I wanted a chance to offer my children a better quality of learning. I knew the chances of winning a scholarship were low, but a cousin of mine convinced me to apply. I also saw the Oprah Winfrey show, who featured the program on her show. Then I found out that I had received a gift of the Washington Scholarship Fund for my kids.

If I had not received the Washington scholarships, I still would have done my best to send my children to private school.

Their education at St. Francis Xavier isn't free. I have to pay a portion of their tuition. The scholarship has helped ease my financial burden I was facing paying for three kids to attend a private school. I honestly can breathe now to know that my kids' education is funded by the Washington Scholarship Fund. But if I have to get a second job to keep them at a private school, I will. If I have to scrub floors, they are going to get the education they deserve.

I have given up my social life. It does not matter to me as long as my kids get a good education. If Washington Scholarship Fund gives you so much, you have to give the rest.

It gives me a chance to be even more involved in my children's lives. Since I can't count on a public school bus to pick up my children, I have rearranged my current work schedule and taken an afternoon job at St. Francis Xavier where my children are now attending. That way, transportation won't be a problem.

Before I won the scholarship, I worked hard to get my children into the best public schools I could find. Every day I sent them by Metro to a school in northeast Washington that I thought would

give them a better education than the schools they were—where I lived. The public school in my neighborhood shut down, forcing the students to move. The teachers could not spend as much time with each child as we needed. Just from being in southeast Washington, I think some public schools suffer.

What the private school offers my children is smaller classrooms, one-on-one time with their teachers, and not a lot of classroom disruption or disturbance. They will have to work hard; actually, they will have to work extra hard to catch up with the kids who have been there for a while. But my children want to go to college. One wants to be a teacher, the other wants to be a doctor or nurse. And another has decided that she wants to go to Yale Law School. So I will work hard to do whatever I need to do to make sure she goes to Yale.

[The prepared statement of Ms. White follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VERMONT WHITE, PARENT, WASHINGTON SCHOLARSHIP
FUND

Good afternoon. My name is Vermont White and I am a single parent of four children, three of whom attend St. Francis Xavier School thanks to the assistance of the Washington Scholarship Fund.

I applied for the scholarship because I wanted the chance to offer my children a better quality of learning. I knew the chances of winning one of the scholarships were low but a friend of mine convinced me to apply. I also saw Oprah Winfrey's feature of the program on her show. Then I found out that I had received the gift of WSF scholarships for my kids.

If I had not received the scholarships, I still would have done my best to send my children to private school. Their education at St. Francis Xavier isn't free. I have to pay a portion of their tuition. The scholarships help ease the financial burden I was facing with paying for three kids to attend a private school. I can breathe now. But if I have to get a second job to keep them at private school, I will. If I have to scrub floors, they are going to get the education they deserve. I have given up my social life. It does not matter to me as long as the kids get a good education. If WSF gives you so much, you have to give the rest. It gives me the chance to be even more involved in the lives of my children.

Since I can't count on a public school bus to pick up my children, I have rearranged my current work schedule and taken an afternoon job at St. Francis Xavier where my children are going to school. That way transportation won't be a problem.

Before I won the scholarship, I worked hard to get my children into the best public schools I could find. Every day, I sent them by metro to a school in Northeast Washington that I thought would give them a better education than the schools where I live. The public school in my neighborhood shut down, forcing the students to move. The teachers could not spend as much time with each child as was needed. Just from being in Southeast Washington, I think some public schools suffer.

What the private school offers my children is smaller classrooms, one on one time with their teachers, and not a lot of classroom disturbance or disruption. They will have to work extra hard to catch up with the kids who have been there for a while. But my children want to go to college. One wants to be a teacher, another wants to be a doctor or a nurse, and another has decided she wants to go to Yale Law School. I will work so that college happens for them.

Chairman KASICH. Let me ask the two ladies, Rose and Vermont, it would just seem to me intuitively that there are a lot of people who feel as though they really don't have much power and much control in terms of their children's future.

Have you women given any consideration to linking with other women around the country who have received these scholarships and trying to create some kind of a movement, some kind of an effort, to demand the kind of reform and freedom that you have for everyone who could be in your situation and didn't get the break,

right? Have you given any thought as to how you can create a movement to try to create more reform in our public schools?

And, Mr. Walton, have you given any consideration?

I tell you, we have a lot of very smart people here today, but these are the only two testimonies I am taking with me. They are as compelling as anything I have heard here in this committee room since I have been in this committee room. What are we going to do to get you to be part of a movement to touch other ordinary Americans who feel as though they don't have this chance?

Ms. BLASSINGAME. Well, myself, I have met other parents through Mr. Forstmann—

Chairman KASICH. You need to use that microphone, Rose.

Ms. BLASSINGAME [continuing]. Through Mr. Forstmann. Francisco, the girls and I have met other parents with scholarships—one in particular in California; the other, a couple in New York; one here, like I said, Kim Rogers, who was very, very special to me. I have met several other parents who are scuffling even with the scholarships to keep their kids.

I often think about other children that I wish to be in the scholarship fund and can't be because I can't afford to put them in. I look at kids in my neighborhood, I don't have to go across the country. I live in a building with 400 apartments. The majority of these kids have to go to Leckie School or P.R. Harris Junior High School. I have them in my home.

I try to get—I went to Leckie Elementary School, and I suggested to the principal there that she distribute fliers for the Washington Scholarship Fund. At that point, I was also discussing Lapria, who was a child born 24 weeks, only weighed 18 ounces, went into cardiac arrest when she was 3 weeks old and had some brain damage. She was never supposed to walk, talk, sit up or do any of those things. I was discussing Lapria's education with this principal, and the possibility of D.C. public schools being able to educate children like her.

The doctor says she is an exception. She doesn't have to be the exception; she can be the rule. It is only a matter of retraining these children's brains. And if a child like Lapria with 10 percent of the brain in her head damaged—the 10 percent that we use was damaged in her head—she is actually using the other 90 percent of her brain. Now, if a child like her can be retrained, then any child can.

I was told by the principal of Leckie Elementary School that if I wanted that child educated, I had better get her out of the D.C. public school system. This remark was made by a principal.

Now—DC, I am not knocking D.C. Schools and this is not unusual. This is really not unusual for D.C. public schools. You all aren't involved in this. We are; we know what is happening, and it is not just happening here. The lady that I talked to from California, it is the same thing there. In New York, it is the same thing. It costs money for us to do anything like you are talking about. It is not something I haven't thought of. But right now I am scuffling just to send these children to school.

They used to get one night, one evening a month we used to go to McDonald's. That doesn't happen anymore. One time every 6 months, I could go to the hairdresser; that doesn't happen any-

more. It is harder than you think for people, even with scholarships, to do these things. You can talk to people forever, but if you don't show them how it can be done—and it is really, really hard.

Sure, I imagine, I wish I could go around the country, I wish I could travel and talk to other parents. I wish we could really put this together, but we don't have the money. There is no point in sitting here to try to talk about it. I dream about it, I think about it, I see it; I see it right there in my own neighborhood, but—it is nothing I don't see.

Uppermost in my mind at this point is educating my children. And that is—it is being selfish, it is really a selfish thought. But in order to do what you are suggesting that we do, I would have to put their education aside, and I can't do that.

Chairman KASICH. Well, you just taught me something, ma'am, something I forgot. It is what you can do where you live, not where you do—what you do other places. It is just that you are such powerful voices that fight against a sense of injustice, you know. And if Americans hear this, maybe the politicians would be a little bit more brave.

And that is not meant to say that we don't need a lesson on our side of the aisle, that we have got all the answers either. Sometimes we put big interests ahead of the resources that are necessary for people who don't have any clout. We all need to have more courage, and you are showing it.

And, John, I just wonder if there is a way in which some of these stories—they are just so compelling—can be displayed across the country. Have you given this any thought at all, videotapes or—you know, there is hope.

But it is a movement. Can you help stoke that movement a little bit more, not just with the program itself, but some vivid illustrations of how giving parents more power can make a huge difference?

Mr. WALTON. Well, I am sure that can be done. I think there are people obviously very capable of doing that, and I think it should be done because these are stories that are—I mean, I simply cannot ignore these stories. You cannot ignore the parents. You cannot ignore their experiences. You cannot ignore what is at work when these parents are empowered to cast that deciding vote for their child. This story does need to be told.

I am afraid, in another sense, we have been a little bit like Rose, that we have been focusing in on trying to get the kids——

Chairman KASICH. Put the fire out?

Mr. WALTON. Right.

Chairman KASICH. We can think about that at a little later date; we can talk about that.

Let me recognize Mr. Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. Let me join the chairman and say it has been a very compelling presentation on the part of all of you.

I had a daughter who went to public school in Washington at John Eaton Elementary School, and one of the reasons that school worked was there was a lot of parental involvement in it, dating way back to the time when Mrs. Mondale herself, who lived in the neighborhood, got involved; and it was sort of a magnet school.

I can remember when I was at Yale Law School, I had friends who went to public high school in Washington, D.C., and they thought Woodrow Wilson High School was one of the best schools in the country. And what has happened in D.C.? What is it about the private schools that your children are now able to attend that makes them so much better than the D.C. public schools? Is it safety and security in the classroom, teacher relationships, better students with whom they go to school, students who want to learn, better extracurricular programs? All of the above? What is it and can we replicate it and do it—obviously we have got to improve the D.C. public schools, as well as support programs like yours.

Ms. BLASSINGAME. I think it is all of the above.

I will give her a chance to talk.

I think with the extension of—they are not better kids; they are just kids given the opportunity to learn. Kids—with everything else, you just said.

There are extracurricular activities. Franciscos went into St. Thomas in seventh grade, so he had a lot of catching up to do. But the tutorial programs were there for him. The teachers in private schools have to tutor. Even where he is at Archbishop Carroll, if they don't tutor at 7 in the morning then they have to tutor in the evening. This is mandatory. The D.C. public schools, it doesn't happen.

Don't get me wrong, I was born and raised in Washington, D.C. I am a product of the D.C. public school system in Washington, D.C., the old public school system. It worked at that time. I got the type of education in D.C. That Franciscos is getting in private school now. I remember my 12th—I can remember my first grade teacher. My first grade teacher was a real sweet teacher, and I remember her because she was always tying my ribbon.

My second grade teacher, I thought she was the meanest person in the world. But she told us all we were not getting out of her classroom—they called it cursive writing, we were printing then—unless we could write, because she would not have us go into a third grade class without her having taught us properly. And that happened, and we all wrote legibly. I still have the big writing now to this day.

In the 12th grade, I remember my English IV teacher telling me that no one got an A in her class unless they was as smart as she was. She had been going to college all the time and was still going to college. So, of course, no one ever got an A.

But I am saying D.C. public school system worked at one time, and a product of like—and like you say, you know, people who are a product of that. It is not working now. That is where he is not—the education that I got, I am paying for him to get. We played volleyball, we had playgrounds to play on. They were safe. There was no one running around or shooting or the gangs or all that other stuff.

Mr. SPRATT. You live here now. Do you think we can restore those conditions, do you think the school system is fixable; and if so, what does it take?

Ms. BLASSINGAME. You can fix anything. And that was what I read in my statement, and was what I intended to put in there:

What do you do with the children now until you fix it? Because you can't fix it overnight. It didn't fall down overnight.

Mr. SPRATT. Ms. White.

Ms. WHITE. I have a daughter who goes—my oldest daughter attends a public school; she goes to Jefferson Junior High. She when to Burville Elementary School in Northeast, one of very few elementary schools where it was mandatory that they wore their uniforms. In the private schools now, I have a 9-year-old daughter who just did not like her teachers at the public schools. She would not do homework; she would not even do her work in class. Every day I was called to go to her school, but before I got the call at 1 in the afternoon to let me know that she had been sitting in the office all day, when they decided to call me.

So I decided that I was going to put them into a private school. Before I even got the Washington Scholarship, I looked to St. Francis.

She is in a classroom now of maybe 13 kids. When I pick her up in the evening before I even go to After Care, because I am in the After Care program, in the after-school program, every day she comes to me and she says, Mommy, can you please help me with my homework? Whereas when she was in elementary school, when I would get home from work, I would say, Do you have homework, she would say no. Now it is like, Can you please sign the papers, they have to be back at school tomorrow.

So where they were in elementary school, I cared, but it wasn't like, well, have you to get this done. Just like in his statement he gave earlier, you just—you dread going to the school because you know that there is going to be a problem. Now, I look forward to getting up every morning at 5 o'clock, making sure they have their bath, making sure I cook breakfast, making sure they get there, because I know they are going to get the proper education that they need now in order to be a doctor, a nurse or in order for my seventh grade daughter to go to Yale Law School. So it is—we, as adults, need to take the time to go into the schools, take a day off of work, whereas work is important, but the—our children are our future. They will be the future leaders sitting up in the chairs talking about the education they have or sitting here saying, well, we need to do this.

There are a whole lot of other things that we need to change, but we need to take the time out to say, OK, today is the day that I am to go into a public school and sit down and help read to a child, help a child do math, help a child learn their times tables. It is just we need to take the time; as an adult, we need to take the time. Because you gave your daughter the proper times, there are other parents who just do not care. Their child could be the next president; they just won't sit down and take the time. That is what we need to do, take the time to give to our children, give them back what we have already learned.

Chairman KASICH. Any other questions?

Mr. NUSSLE. I think I would like to take the time right now and hear from Franciscos, and if he wants to tell us a little bit about his school, his favorite subject and how he likes his school.

The stories we have heard from these witnesses are very enlightening. You are helping to show the light. We thank you for that.

It demonstrates to me how little Washington does know in a one-size-fits-all system when the struggles you are telling us about are different certainly from the ones we deal with in Iowa and in the State of Florida that we heard about this morning.

But maybe this young man here who is our future would like to tell us a little bit about school and what his favorite subject is.

Mr. FRANCISCOE BLASSINGAME. My name is Franciscosco Blassingame. I go to Archbishop Carroll. My favorite subjects are math, music, and PE.

Chairman KASICH. PE, phys ed.

Mr. NUSSLE. Well, now I know you are just a regular school kid. I can tell you that much. My son is the same way; his favorite subject is PE. I am not surprised.

Do you sing or play an instrument for music?

Mr. FRANCISCOE BLASSINGAME. Neither. I am in what they call "intro to music," where it teaches us how to read the notes and listen to how the different beats are in songs.

Mr. NUSSLE. We hope you continue to work hard, and we sure need you and thank you for coming today and talking to us.

I hope your friends get to watch this maybe a little bit on TV.

Chairman KASICH. Next time in, we will have your sisters come up here.

John, any questions?

Mr. SUNUNU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, ladies and thank you, John, for taking the time to talk with us. My only observation is, after hearing you describe the programs and the attitudes of your children and grandchildren, and provide a different perspective, that the Scholarship Fund and the Opportunity Scholarships to a large degree are about empowerment, they are about accountability, accountability for both the schools and your students. And, of course, they are about your own involvement, parental involvement. And both the members of the committee here and the administration, that hasn't supported the Opportunity Scholarships, recognize that parental involvement and accountability and performance standards for students are essential to good education. I think that is exactly what the—what it appears the result of your experience with the Scholarship Fund has been.

So I thank you for bringing the personal experience of the Scholarship Fund to the committee.

And my only question, I think, for Mr. Walton would be, are you seeing, or what are you seeing at the State or the local level as obstacles to the success of the fund? Obviously, money is always going to be an issue, the more funds you have, the more scholarships you can offer. But aside from finances, are there political obstacles or informational obstacles that you are seeing and is there anything that we can do to help you be more successful?

Mr. WALTON. No. Actually, the biggest obstacle to the Scholarship Fund is simply the limited resources of the private sector to provide enough scholarships for all the parents that would like to have them, to provide them in an amount that would allow low-income parents to—in other words, you have a system that is spending \$6- to \$8-or \$9,000 per child, and these parents are getting

\$1,000, \$1,100, and they are chipping in another \$1,000 or whatever on their own.

It is really a good resource problem, but quite frankly, the political side that we deal with—very little political opposition in the Scholarship Fund. I think I—but of course, private funds are limited for this sort of thing. And we do what we can with them, but there are limits. The real obstacles come, of course, when it moves into public policy.

Mr. SUNUNU. Do you think that the Opportunity Scholarship Program that Governor Bush talked about in Florida or that has been proposed for the Washington, D.C., public schools would meet with the same kind of success, the parental involvement, the accountability and the performance that you have seen as a result of the work of the Scholarship Fund?

Mr. WALTON. You know, I am somewhat familiar with the Florida program. I am not familiar with the detail of the Washington program. But basically, if you empower parents, if you give parents, low-income parents the same opportunity to choose that we have, and the program is intelligently designed, it is going to do exactly what our scholarship programs do. It is really that simple.

Mr. SUNUNU. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KASICH. Let me thank all of you for coming. And, ladies and Mr. Walton, I want you to know, as determined as you are for this—well, I am not sure I can be as determined as you two ladies are, but I am as determined as I can possibly be to my core to fight for this issue. Either in the government or out of the government, I am going to help as much as I possibly can.

And we appreciate the fact, Mr. Walton that you have stood up to the plate with some great success and things I can take from this hearing today.

I want to thank the members for being here since about 10:15 this morning. I think it has been an excellent day. We look forward to further hearings on this subject, and I want to thank everybody for being here today.

The committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:45 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]