

educating non-English speaking children must be to learn English. Of course, I don't feel it's up to the U.S. Congress to set priorities in what is properly a decision of local schools and parents, but the federal government most certainly shouldn't be encouraging counter-productive measures.

Advocacy of bilingual education on the part of the teachers unions unfortunately fits the historical pattern of labor union disregard for the well-being of immigrants in the financial interest of the union's members and leadership. Just as unions in the past worked to restrict immigrants from the labor pool in order to artificially maintain their own wages, the teachers unions want to protect the salary bonuses given to bilingual-certified teachers. Never mind how effective bilingual education programs actually are in teaching these children English, say the teachers union bosses, we want to maintain the salaries they provide the instructors.

Enough with the corrupt labor unions and centralized bureaucratic power and feel-good multiculturalism that threatens to balkanize this country. Let's give power to parents and local schools and give opportunity to these immigrant children. Support the Riggs English Language Fluency Act.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to state my strong opposition to H.R. 3892. I am a strong supporter of bilingual education, however, instead of bolstering federal efforts to help immigrant children, this bill penalizes them.

This bill also does not advance our national education policy. H.R. 3892 does not attempt to establish criteria for teachers and school districts, nor does it set realistic goals for our children. This bill instead restricts local school districts and jeopardizes successful bilingual education programs by cutting federal support for teacher training and virtually eliminating successful programs that currently help immigrant children.

In fact, this bill even lowers academic standards and expectations for immigrant children by focusing exclusively on English language proficiency rather than math, science and history. H.R. 3892 jeopardizes these children's futures by setting an arbitrary and unrealistic punitive two-year federal mandate on their ability to master English. This in effect becomes a two-year "impediment" to their educational future.

I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 3892 and join me in opposing this destructive and politically motivated bill.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3892, "The English Language Fluency Act." While the supporters of this bill have argued that it will improve bilingual education for our Nation's children, all the evidence points in a different direction. In fact, this bill will make a number of changes to bilingual education that will harm children who need assistance the most. Language in the bill will require that all children have only two years of bilingual education regardless of their ability to master English. The bill will also violate the Civil Rights Act by voiding the current voluntary compliance agreements between schools, parents and the Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. Finally, this bill will block grant bilingual competitive grants to the States therefore eliminating the structure this program currently has. In Newark, NJ, a city I represent here in Congress, close to 40

percent of all students come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. In the city of Elizabeth, portions of which I also represent, the immigrant population is thriving and the schools need a structured bilingual education program to keep students in school. I recognize that many bilingual programs need improvement. However, there are many effective bilingual programs in place across the country that really do improve the language skills of children who are not yet English proficient. A new program at the Benjamin Franklin School in my district was just awarded funds from the Department of Education. This program called "Project Two-Way" will engage both English proficient students and limited English proficient (LEP) students in classes that will be taught in Spanish and English enabling both types of students to be bilingual by the time they are in the fourth grade. The need is to not pare down these programs but instead take the ones that work and educate school districts on how to replicate them. However, like many other issues on the majority's education agenda, this bill is not a remedy to the real problems that children face. It is for that reason that I will vote against passage of this bill.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to express my opposition to H.R. 3892, the English Language Fluency Act. Although I supported the bill when it was marked-up before the Education and Workforce Committee, after having an opportunity to study the Congressional Budget Office (CBO)'s scoring of H.R. 3892, I realized that I must oppose this bill because it increases expenditures for bilingual education. Thus, this bill actually increases the Federal Government's role in education.

I originally supported this bill primarily because of the provisions voiding compliance agreements between the Department of Education and local school districts. Contrary to what the name implies, compliance agreements are the means by which the Federal Government has forced 288 schools to adapt the model of bilingual education favored by the Federal bureaucrats in complete disregard of the wishes of the people in those communities.

The English Language Fluency Act also improves current law by changing the formula by which schools receive Federal bilingual funds from a competitive to a formula grant. Competitive grants are a fancy term for forcing States and localities to conform to Federal dictates before the Federal Government returns to them some of the moneys unjustly taken from the American people. Formula grants allow States and localities greater flexibility in designing their own education programs and thus are preferable to competitive grants.

Although H.R. 3892 takes some small steps forward toward restoring local control of education, it takes a giant step backward by extending bilingual education programs for three years beyond the current authorization and according to CBO this will increase Federal spending by \$719 million! Mr. Chairman, it is time that Congress realized that increasing Federal funding is utterly incompatible with increasing local control. The primary reason States and local governments submit to Federal dictates in areas such as bilingual education is because the Federal Government bribes States with moneys illegitimately taken from the American people to confer to Federal dic-

tates. Since he who pays the piper calls the tune, any measures to take more moneys from the American people and give it to Federal educators reduces parental control by enhancing the Federal stranglehold on education. Only by defunding the Federal bureaucracy can State, local and parental control be restored.

In order to restore parental control of education I have introduced the Family Education Freedom Act (H.R. 1816), which provides parents with a \$3,000 per child tax credit to pay for elementary and secondary education expenses. This bill places parents back in charge and is thus the most effective education reform bill introduced in this Congress.

Mr. Chairman, despite having some commendable features, such as eliminating consent decrees, the English Language Fluency Act, H.R. 3892, is not worthy of support because it authorizes increasing the Federal Government's control over education dollars. I therefore call on my colleagues to reject this legislation and instead work for constitutional education reform by returning money and control over education to America's parents through legislation such as the Family Education Freedom Act.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I rise to address an issue of paramount and long-term importance to California and the nation—Official English legislation.

Nothing unites a people as effectively as a common language; it is especially important when members of society, often immigrants, do not necessarily share a common heritage. The common ground which language provides has led many nations to declare an official language. The fact that America does not have an official language makes us unique among the world's leading nations. At the same time, the United States does have a common language, English. This dichotomy results in today's Americans being subjected to a barrage of language issues.

For California, bilingual education is immensely important. There are 1½ million California school children whose primary language is not English. These children need to be equipped with the absolutely essential skill of English fluency while they are at a young age and are more naturally able to learn language. It is important that the education program functions efficiently and successfully to fully integrate non-English speaking children into an English-speaking society as quickly as possible. Without this basic skill, these children will most likely remain outside mainstream society, politics, and the economy.

The bilingual education policy began in the 1970's with good intentions but has become a failure. Only 6.7% of limited English students going to school in California have been mainstreamed into English Only classrooms. California voters passed Proposition 227 last June by an overwhelming 2/3 of the vote. Proposition 227 replaces the current system that allows a slow phasing in of English into one where the curriculum supports a faster one-year English immersion program. Such a program is designed to teach children English as quickly as possible in order to help them open doors of opportunity and reach their full potential in an English speaking society.

Besides failing students, the bilingual education program is also costly. The California Department of Education reports that limited English proficiency programs received nearly