

I encourage all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to not only support this resolution but as well to vote for the funding when we do the appropriations bills.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman GOODLING).

In 1975, IDEA, which mandated every child, regardless of disability, would be given a free public education, Congress promised to fund up to 40 percent of the cost. Mr. Speaker, Congress and the President have not kept their part of the bargain. Today we fund 12 percent of the cost to educate children. Twelve percent is not 40 percent. Twelve percent is not enough.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who would say that increased IDEA funding will come at the expense of other high-priority programs, but if we in Congress fulfill our promise by picking up the slack, these other educational priorities will be funded on the local level, where they belong. Illinois alone would receive four times more than the \$103 million we received last year.

I urge Members to support the resolution on behalf all of our Nation's children.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The beauty of this resolution is, there are several, as a matter of fact. First of all, the resolution says that we do not take money from existing programs to fund this program. We heard a lot about how we will take money from existing programs to fund this. Well, if one reads the resolution, it does not do that.

Secondly, the resolution does not say fund immediately. What it says is, continue the drive that we have had the last 3 years. Forget the 20 years prior to that, where nothing was done, but continue the drive that we have had going the last 3 years, getting two billion over the last 3 years.

Then the beauty also is we do not pit one child against another child. As a matter of fact, by trying to get this money for special ed, we make sure that we take away that battle that is going on out there at the present time because the local districts have to use their money in order to fund special ed. They must take it away from other students. So we are giving an opportunity to help all students.

Yes, we are sending a get-well card, the same get-well card we sent last year; and that get-well card got us a half a billion dollars. The same get-well card we sent the year before, that get-well card got us \$600 million. I am hoping that this get-well card, when the appropriators read it, will also get us another billion.

I would say that is a pretty good investment in a get-well card. I wish I could get some other get-well cards going out there that could get those

kinds of returns that our get-well cards have gotten us in the last several years.

I want to make sure that everybody understands, yes, it was the Court who determined all children deserved an equal and a quality education. It was the Federal Government then who came along, as they generally do, and said, do it our way, do it our way, and we will give you 40 percent of that excess cost.

How attractive that is. Forty percent, that is better than trying to go it alone, but they should have known better. They should have known that that 40 percent was just a gimmick. It was not anything else.

Now, in the last 3 years we have changed all of that, and we are going to continue to change all of that because we are going to step up to the plate as we have the last 3 years and put our money where our mouth was and help all children by helping local districts fund special education.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to express my opposition to H. Con. Res. 84, the resolution calling for full-funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). My opposition to this act should in no way be interpreted as opposition to increased spending on education. However, the way to accomplish this worthy goal is to allow parents greater control over education resources by cutting taxes, thus allowing parents to devote more of their resources to educating their children in such a manner as they see fit. Massive tax cuts for the American family, not increased spending on federal programs should be this Congress' top priority.

The drafters of this bill claim that increasing federal spending on IDEA will allow local school districts to spend more money on other educational priorities. However, because an increase in federal funding will come from the same taxpayers who currently fund the IDEA mandate at the state and local level, increasing federal IDEA funding will not necessarily result in a net increase of education funds available for other programs. In fact, the only way to combine full federal funding of IDEA with an increase in expenditures on other programs by state and localities is through massive tax increases at the federal, state, and/or local level!

This bill further assures that control over the education dollar will remain centered in Washington by calling for Congress to "meet the commitment to fund existing Federal education programs." Thus, this bill not only calls on Congress to increase funding for IDEA, it also calls on Congress to not cut funds for any program favored by Congress. The practical effect of this bill is to place yet another obstacle in the road of fulfilling Congress' constitutional mandate to put control of education back into the hands of the people.

Rather than increasing federal spending, Congress should focus on returning control over education to the American people by enacting the Family Education Freedom Act (H.R. 935), which provides parents with a \$3,000 per child tax credit to pay for K-12 education expenses. Passage of this act would especially benefit parents whose children have learning disabilities as those parents have the greatest need to devote a large

portion of their income toward their child's education.

The Family Education Freedom Act will allow parents to develop an individualized education plan that will meet the needs of their own child. Each child is a unique person and we must seriously consider whether disabled children's special needs can be best met by parents, working with local educators, free from interference from Washington or federal educators. After all, an increase in expenditures cannot make a Washington bureaucrat know or love a child as much as that child's parent.

It is time for Congress to restore control over education to the American people. The only way to accomplish this goal is to defund education programs that allow federal bureaucrats to control America's schools. Therefore, I call on my colleagues to reject H. Con. Res. 84 and instead join my efforts to pass the Family Education Freedom Act. If Congress gets Washington off the backs and out of the pocketbooks of parents, American children will be better off.

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution urging Congress, and the President, to fully fund the Federal Government's obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

In 1975 the Federal Government committed to provide 40 percent funding aid for the mandate to educate those students with disabilities. As most of my colleagues know, federal funding for IDEA has never risen above 12 percent.

On average, local school districts currently spend 20 percent of their budgets on special education services. Once the Federal government begins to pay its fair share, local funds will be freed up, allowing local schools to hire and train additional high-quality teachers, reduce class size, build and renovate classrooms and invest in technology.

In my district, the Duval County School District receives about \$7 million. If IDEA were fully funded, this school district would receive over \$37 million, an increase of over \$30 million.

It is time for us to send a clear message that the Federal government must honor our commitments to help our state and local school districts educate children with disabilities.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mrs. CAPP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

When special education legislation was first enacted in 1975, the federal government, recognizing the extraordinary costs of inclusion, pledged to provide state and local education agencies with forty percent of the excess costs associated with educating students with disabilities.

Sadly, the federal government has not come close to meeting this obligation, with annual appropriations never exceeding twelve percent of excess costs.

The chronic underpayment of this federal mandate has left state and local governments with a burden of more than \$146 billion in lost funding over the past twenty-two years—a staggering shortfall that has forced education agencies to shift resources out of lower-priority, but important necessities such as building maintenance and upkeep.