

this band of 400 ruffians into a well-equipped fighting force 25,000 strong, a force that one retired Green Beret told me was one of the best in the world. Diamonds still drive rebel troops and commanders and despite the 10-month-old peace agreement that bans continue mining, diamonds are still being mined today. And, despite all they know about how rebels are using their profits, diamond traders still look the other way and buy the rebels' stones—and they still transform them into symbols of love and commitment for unsuspecting Americans to treasure.

When we returned in December, Mr. WOLF and I called for the United Nations to sanction these bloody diamonds—as it did when rebels in Angola broke the peace agreement they had signed. This step is needed not only to punish the rebels; it is also essential to protecting the U.N. peacekeepers who are the victims of this diamond wealth.

While the United States contributes no troops to this U.N. effort, we are paying tens of millions of dollars for it and we have an obligation to insist that it be well equipped, adequately manned, and protected to the full extent of the United Nations' ability. However, although we got kind words from the Secretary General and Ambassador Holbrooke and don't doubt their efforts to bring lasting peace to Sierra Leone, the United Nations has not yet seriously considered this step.

Next week, in honor of the peacekeepers who have died in Sierra Leone, and in hope of protecting more from meeting that fate, I plan to introduce a Sense of the Congress resolution:

It will condemn rebels for murdering the Kenyan troops serving as U.N. peacekeepers, and the countless Sierra Leonean civilians who continue to suffer death and gross human rights violations at rebels' hands.

It will call on our country's diplomats to remind the rebels' leaders that last year's peace agreement does not provide them amnesty for war crimes committed since it was signed.

And it will call the United States to bring before the United Nations Security Council a resolution sanctioning the sale of diamonds by Sierra Leone's rebels.

Sierra Leone is a country blessed by its natural resources, by its fertile land, and by its hard-working people. Until there is real peace, though, its diamonds will be a curse—and Sierra Leone will be a ward of the international community, dependent on the charity of Americans and others. In a country as rich as Sierra Leone, there should be no need for the charity of outsiders.

In the past decade, more than \$10 billion in diamond wealth has fallen into the hands of rebel forces in Sierra Leone and three other African nations. At the same time, these same forces were using their money to inflict suffering that our country spent \$2 billion to ease. Clearly, we cannot stop Sierra Leone's suffering with food and medicine alone. We have to end the deadly trade in conflict diamonds if we don't want to see this "genocide" continue. As the consumer of 65 percent of the world's diamonds, we owe it to Africans to help them break this terrible link. As stewards of our own government's funds, we owe it to American taxpayers to cut off the funding for the weapons that have inflicted Sierra Leoneans' wounds—and the death blows to seven U.N. peacekeepers.

I urge our colleagues to join me today in my outrage, and to join me next week in supporting this Sense of the Congress resolution.

#### IDEA FULL FUNDING ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 3, 2000*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to express my opposition to H.R. 4055, which authorizes over \$160 billion in new federal spending for programs imposed on local school districts by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While I share the goal of devoting more resources to educating children with learning disabilities, I believe that there is a better way to achieve this laudable goal than increasing spending on an unconstitutional, failed program that thrusts children, parents, and schools into an administrative quagmire. Under the system set up by IDEA, parents and schools often become advisories and important decisions regarding a child's future are made via litigation. I have received compliments from a special education administrator in my district that unscrupulous trial lawyers are manipulating the IDEA process to line their pockets at the expenses of local school districts. Of course, every dollar a local school district has to spend on litigation is a dollar the district cannot spend educating children.

IDEA may also force local schools to deny children access to the education that best suits their unique needs in order to fulfill the federal command that disabled children be educated "in the least restrictive setting," which in practice means mainstreaming. Many children may thrive in a mainstream classroom environment, however, some children may be mainstreamed solely because school officials believe it is required by federal law, even though the mainstream environment is not the most appropriate for that child.

On May 10, 1994, Dr. Mary Wagner testified before the Education Committee that disabled children who are not placed in a mainstream classroom graduate from high school at a much higher rate than disabled children who are mainstreamed. Dr. Wagner quite properly accused Congress of sacrificing children to ideology.

Increasing IDEA spending also provides incentives to over-identify children as learning disabled, thus unfairly stigmatizing many children and, in a vicious cycle, leading to more demands for increased federal spending on IDEA. Instead of increasing spending on a federal program that may actually damage the children it claims to help, Congress should return control over education to those who best know the child's needs: parents. In order to restore parental control to education, I have introduced 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. My tax credit would be of greatest benefit to parents of children with learning disabilities because it would allow them to devote more of their resources to ensure their children get an education that meets the child's unique needs.

In conclusion, I would remind my colleagues that parents and local communities know their

children so much better than any federal bureaucrat, and they can do a better job of meeting a child's needs than we in Washington. There is no way that the unique needs of my grandchildren, and some young boy or girl in Los Angeles, CA or New York City can be educated by some sort of 'Cookie Cutter' approach. Thus, the best means of helping disabled children is to empower their parents with the resources to make sure their children receive an education suited to their child's special needs, instead of an education that sacrifices that child's best interest on the altar of the "Washington-knows-best" ideology.

I therefore urge my colleagues to join with me in helping parents of special needs children to provide their children with an education by repealing federal mandates that divert resources away from helping children and, instead, embrace my Family Education Freedom Act.

#### SUPPORT SPECIAL EDUCATION

**HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 4, 2000*

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House overwhelmingly approved H.R. 4055, the IDEA Full Funding Act, which will allow the federal government to fully fund their share of special education. The bill provides a \$2 billion yearly increase in special education spending, beginning with \$7 billion for fiscal year 2001 and ending with \$25 billion for fiscal year 2010.

In 1975, Congress promised every child in America a quality education, and it has failed to fulfill that promise.

Special education should be a top priority of America and this Congress as we prepare our children for the next century. No child in Colorado or America should be left behind simply because of their disability.

Currently, the state of Colorado receives \$28.4 million to educate special education students—even though the federal government promised to pay \$145.7 million. If the federal government met its 40 percent commitment to IDEA, the state would receive \$117 million more a year.

This is money that could go to pay for more computers, increased pay for teachers or smaller classrooms.

It is time for promises made to be promises kept. With millions of dollars being wasted on unauthorized or inefficient government programs, there is no excuse for failing to fulfill the promise to fund 40 percent of special education programs.

With better accountability of programs within the budget process, we would already have the funds available for special education.

Instead, we are on the path of underfunding and depriving special education students the quality education they deserve.

Again, I would like to thank my colleagues for their support of H.R. 4055 and thank Chairman GOODLING for his hard and dedicated work on this bill.