

It is my sincere hope that my colleagues will join me in honoring Michael J. Shannon, Jr. for his inexhaustible enthusiasm and many achievements in the progress of organized labor and his community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AGRICULTURE EDUCATION FREEDOM ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2001

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Agriculture Education Freedom Act. This bill addresses a great injustice being perpetrated by the Federal Government on those youngsters who participate in programs such as 4-H or the Future Farmers of America. Under current tax law, children are forced to pay federal income tax when they sell livestock they have raised as part of an agricultural education program. Think about this for a moment. These kids are trying to better themselves, earn some money, save some money and what does Congress do? We pick on these kids by taxing them.

It is truly amazing that with all the hand-wringing in Congress over the alleged need to further restrict liberty and grow the size of government "for the children" we would continue to tax young people who are trying to lead responsible lives and prepare for the future. Even if the serious social problems today's youth face could be solved by new federal bureaucracies and programs, it is still unfair to pick on those kids who are trying to do the right thing.

These children are not even old enough to vote, yet we are forcing them to pay taxes! What ever happened to no taxation without representation? No wonder young people are so cynical about government!

It is time we stopped taxing youngsters who are trying to earn money to go to college by selling livestock they have raised through their participation in programs such as 4-H or Future Farmers of America. Therefore, I call on my colleagues to join me in supporting the Agriculture Education Freedom Act.

STILL A NATION AT RISK

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2001

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today marks the eighteenth anniversary of "A Nation at Risk." The sobering report on declining student performance in American public schools was first published in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). Its impact on the American education empire has been tragically negligible.

Created in 1981, the NCEE was appointed by then Secretary of Education T.H. Bell and was comprised of university presidents, high school principals, teachers, a former governor, and school board members. The commission's purpose was to "help define the problems afflicting American education and to provide solutions," according to its chairman, David Pierpont Gardner.

In its report entitled "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform," the NCEE noted the United States, which once enjoyed "unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation, is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world." Eighteen years later, the United States is still a nation at risk.

Last October, a subcommittee of the U.S. House attributed the nation's stagnant student achievement to the government's failure at prioritizing student performance and its reluctance to reward results. America's poorest children are too often trapped in schools that can't teach. Moreover, the Congressional "Education at a Crossroads" report exposed rampant waste, fraud and abuse within the U.S. Department of Education. While states and local schools are held to strict standards for use of federal funds, the Department cannot account for hundreds of millions of dollars.

Despite the NCEE's early warning that America's education system is at risk, little has changed. The government's monopoly on public school services remains unchallenged. Except for poor children in a few courageous communities, real school choice is a privilege for only the rich.

Yet while state and local schools receive billions more in federal spending, they are constrained by new burdensome regulations, unfunded mandates and paperwork requirements which divert scarce resources from classrooms. Today there are more than 760 education-related programs administered by 39 federal agencies at a cost of \$120 billion a year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

The federal government's first big offensive into local school management occurred in 1965 with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Since that time, federal policy has consistently expanded its bearing on America's classrooms and has tied the hands of state legislators and local school board members, despite the U.S. Constitution's suggestion of state and local primacy of authority. Results have been pathetic.

For example, the federal government's most massive program, Title I, was designed to improve the academic level of poor and underserved students. Federal investments totaling \$118 billion since 1965 have left 19% of Title I schools still failing to make adequate annual achievement gains, officially classified as "in need of improvement."

In testimony before Congress, Colorado's state schools chief, Dr. William Moloney explained the government's failure: "ESEA has remained, as always, a neutral phenomena based on inputs rather than results, more on accounting than accountability, an entity always more interested in what you were rather than what you were doing."

Eternally hopeful for their children's futures, taxpayers have shown remarkable patience with the government's education monopoly. So have Republicans. Since capturing the majority in Congress, the GOP has substantially outspent Democrats pumping billions into government-owned schools. In 1983, the average expenditure per student was \$3,300, while the average today tops \$8,000. Still, American students trail their international peers considerably.

According to the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study Repeat (TIMSS-R), American students have not im-

proved in the areas of math and science since the first TIMSS test in 1995. The comparison included students in 38 industrialized countries. According to the Center for Education Reform, American 8th graders are outranked by 18 other nations in math and by 17 others in science.

President George W. Bush has boldly called on Congress to "leave no child behind." He outlined his desire to empower parents, emphasize local control of schools, send dollars to the classroom and improve basic academics. Incredibly, Congress has so far drafted a 900-page-thick bill, translating Bush's sensible objectives into sizable new programs, fresh mandates, scant choice, and an outrageous 11.5 percent increase in federal education spending over last year.

Before another year of dust begins to settle on "A Nation at Risk," President Bush and the Congress should reassess Washington's education spending and regulatory frenzy. Republicans should stake their majority on free-market solutions to school reform, dramatically shrink the bureaucracy, and give real decision-making power—money—to parents of school-aged children.

America's schoolchildren deserve to be treated like real Americans; like they matter. So long as Republicans look to the federal education empire to rebuild the nation's academic prominence they do nothing to distinguish themselves nor maintain the public trust. They will only become part of the problem further betraying America's children to languish in a nation at risk.

HONORING WORLD WAR II VETERAN C.U. "PEG" O'NEILL

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2001

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute and give thanks to a Colorado resident who risked his life for our country in World War II. C.U. "Peg" O'Neill joined the U.S. Army in 1943. He became a C-47 pilot, and was stationed in England.

Peg flew 11 missions into war-torn Europe. "We could see the German anti-aircraft fire coming straight at us," said Peg in an article from the Montrose Daily Press. "We lost four planes out of our squadron of 18 planes that night." Peg's first mission began in England on June 5, 1944, were 1,000 C-47 cargo transports flew to the coast of France. The paratroopers mission on D-Day, was to disrupt German communications, secure bridges, and incite confusion, chaos and panic. This was a far cry from his days working at the Hartman Brothers Auto Dealership in Montrose.

Peg participated in the battle for Nijmegen Bridge. During the famous mission for the "bridge to far", Peg survived a mid-air collision with another allied plane trying to catch cover from anti-aircraft fire. "The Germans had opened the sea gates and had flooded the fields," said Peg of his first mission. "I had 14 men from the 101st Airborne to drop. The lightest man weighed 258 pounds in full field gear. Some of them never got out of the swamps. They were drowned."

Peg returned to the dealership after the war with several medals, and most of all, his life