

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on official business and missed rollcall vote Nos. 200 and 201. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote Nos. 200 and 201.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR OPPORTUNITY AND RESULTS ACT

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 186, I call up the bill (H.R. 471) to reauthorize the DC opportunity scholarship program, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS of New Hampshire). Pursuant to House Resolution 186, the amendment recommended by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform now printed in the bill is adopted. The bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 471

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act" or the "SOAR Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Parents are best equipped to make decisions for their children, including the educational setting that will best serve the interests and educational needs of their child.

(2) For many parents in the District of Columbia, public school choice provided under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as well as under other public school choice programs, is inadequate. More educational options are needed to ensure all families in the District of Columbia have access to a quality education. In particular, funds are needed to provide low-income parents with enhanced public opportunities and private educational environments, regardless of whether such environments are secular or nonsecular.

(3) While the per student cost for students in the public schools of the District of Columbia is one of the highest in the United States, test scores for such students continue to be among the lowest in the Nation. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), an annual report released by the National Center for Education Statistics, reported in its 2009 study that students in the District of Columbia were being outperformed by every State in the Nation. On the 2009 NAEP, 56 percent of fourth grade students scored "below basic" in reading, and 44 percent scored "below basic" in mathematics. Among eighth grade students, 49 percent scored "below basic" in reading and 60 percent scored "below basic" in mathematics. On the 2009 NAEP reading assessment, only 17 percent of the District of Columbia fourth grade students could read proficiently, while only 13 percent of the eighth grade students scored at the proficient or advanced level.

(4) In 2003, Congress passed the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-199; 118 Stat. 126), to provide opportunity scholarships to parents of students in the District of Columbia to enable them to pursue a high-quality

education at a public or private elementary or secondary school of their choice. The DC Opportunity Scholarship Program (DC OSP) under such Act was part of a comprehensive 3-part funding arrangement that also included additional funds for the District of Columbia public schools, and additional funds for public charter schools of the District of Columbia. The intent of the approach was to ensure that progress would continue to be made to improve public schools and public charter schools, and that funding for the opportunity scholarship program would not lead to a reduction in funding for the District of Columbia public and charter schools. Resources would be available for a variety of educational options that would give families in the District of Columbia a range of choices with regard to the education of their children.

(5) The DC OSP was established in accordance with the Supreme Court decision, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, 536 U.S. 639 (2002), which found that a program enacted for the valid secular purpose of providing educational assistance to low-income children in a demonstrably failing public school system is constitutional if it is neutral with respect to religion and provides assistance to a broad class of citizens who direct government aid to religious and secular schools solely as a result of their genuine and independent private choices.

(6) Since the inception of the DC OSP, it has consistently been oversubscribed. Parents express strong support for the opportunity scholarship program. Rigorous studies of the program by the Institute of Education Sciences have shown significant improvements in parental satisfaction and in reading scores that are more dramatic when only those students consistently using the scholarships are considered. The program also was found to result in significantly higher graduation rates for DC OSP students.

(7) The DC OSP is a program that offers families in need, in the District of Columbia, important alternatives while public schools are improved. This program should be reauthorized as 1 of a 3-part comprehensive funding strategy for the District of Columbia school system that provides new and equal funding for public schools, public charter schools, and opportunity scholarships for students to attend private schools.

SEC. 3. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to provide low-income parents residing in the District of Columbia, particularly parents of students who attend elementary schools or secondary schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6316), with expanded opportunities for enrolling their children in other schools in the District of Columbia, at least until the public schools in the District of Columbia have adequately addressed shortfalls in health, safety, and security, and the students in the District of Columbia public schools are testing in mathematics and reading at or above the national average.

SEC. 4. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

(a) OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—From funds appropriated under section 14(a)(1), the Secretary shall award grants on a competitive basis to eligible entities with approved applications under section 5 to carry out a program to provide eligible students with expanded school choice opportunities. The Secretary may award a single grant or multiple grants, depending on the quality of applications submitted and the priorities of this Act.

(2) DURATION OF GRANTS.—The Secretary may make grants under this subsection for a period of not more than 5 years.

(b) DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS.—From funds appropriated under paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 14(a), the Secretary shall provide funds to the Mayor of the District of Columbia, if the Mayor agrees to the requirements described in section 11(a), for—

(1) the District of Columbia public schools to improve public education in the District of Columbia; and

(2) the District of Columbia public charter schools to improve and expand quality public charter schools in the District of Columbia.

SEC. 5. APPLICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to receive a grant under section 4(a), an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(b) CONTENTS.—The Secretary may not approve the request of an eligible entity for a grant under section 4(a) unless the entity's application includes—

(1) a detailed description of—

(A) how the entity will address the priorities described in section 6;

(B) how the entity will ensure that if more eligible students seek admission in the program of the entity than the program can accommodate, eligible students are selected for admission through a random selection process which gives weight to the priorities described in section 6;

(C) how the entity will ensure that if more participating eligible students seek admission to a participating school than the school can accommodate, participating eligible students are selected for admission through a random selection process;

(D) how the entity will notify parents of eligible students of the expanded choice opportunities in order to allow the parents to make informed decisions;

(E) the activities that the entity will carry out to provide parents of eligible students with expanded choice opportunities through the awarding of scholarships under section 7(a);

(F) how the entity will determine the amount that will be provided to parents under section 7(a)(2) for the payment of tuition, fees, and transportation expenses, if any;

(G) how the entity will seek out private elementary schools and secondary schools in the District of Columbia to participate in the program;

(H) how the entity will ensure that each participating school will meet the reporting and other program requirements under this Act;

(I) how the entity will ensure that participating schools submit to site visits by the entity as determined to be necessary by the entity, except that a participating school may not be required to submit to more than 1 site visit per school year;

(J) how the entity will ensure that participating schools are financially responsible and will use the funds received under section 7 effectively;

(K) how the entity will address the renewal of scholarships to participating eligible students, including continued eligibility; and

(L) how the entity will ensure that a majority of its voting board members or governing organization are residents of the District of Columbia; and

(2) an assurance that the entity will comply with all requests regarding any evaluation carried out under section 9(a).

SEC. 6. PRIORITIES.

In awarding grants under section 4(a), the Secretary shall give priority to applications from eligible entities that will most effectively—

(1) in awarding scholarships under section 7(a), give priority to—

(A) eligible students who, in the school year preceding the school year for which the eligible students are seeking a scholarship, attended an elementary school or secondary school identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6316);

(B) students who have been awarded a scholarship in a preceding year under this Act or the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38-

1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code), as such Act was in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, but who have not used the scholarship, including eligible students who were provided notification of selection for a scholarship for school year 2009-2010, which was later rescinded in accordance with direction from the Secretary of Education; and

(C) students whose household includes a sibling or other child who is already participating in the program of the eligible entity under this Act, regardless of whether such students have, in the past, been assigned as members of a control study group for the purposes of an evaluation under section 9(a);

(2) target resources to students and families that lack the financial resources to take advantage of available educational options; and

(3) provide students and families with the widest range of educational options.

SEC. 7. USE OF FUNDS.

(a) OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), an eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a) shall use the grant funds to provide eligible students with scholarships to pay the tuition, fees, and transportation expenses, if any, to enable the eligible students to attend the District of Columbia private elementary school or secondary school of their choice beginning in school year 2011–2012. Each such eligible entity shall ensure that the amount of any tuition or fees charged by a school participating in such entity's program under this Act to an eligible student participating in the program does not exceed the amount of tuition or fees that the school charges to students who do not participate in the program.

(2) PAYMENTS TO PARENTS.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a) shall make scholarship payments under the entity's program under this Act to the parent of the eligible student participating in the program, in a manner which ensures that such payments will be used for the payment of tuition, fees, and transportation expenses (if any), in accordance with this Act.

(3) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—

(A) VARYING AMOUNTS PERMITTED.—Subject to the other requirements of this section, an eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a) may award scholarships in larger amounts to those eligible students with the greatest need.

(B) ANNUAL LIMIT ON AMOUNT.—

(i) LIMIT FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2011–2012.—The amount of assistance provided to any eligible student by an eligible entity under the entity's program under this Act for school year 2011–2012 may not exceed—

(1) \$8,000 for attendance in kindergarten through grade 8; and

(2) \$12,000 for attendance in grades 9 through 12.

(ii) CUMULATIVE INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—Beginning the school year following the school year of the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall adjust the maximum amounts of assistance described in clause (i) for inflation, as measured by the percentage increase, if any, from the preceding fiscal year in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

(4) PARTICIPATING SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS.—None of the funds provided under this Act for opportunity scholarships may be used by an eligible student to enroll in a participating private school unless the participating school—

(A) has and maintains a valid certificate of occupancy issued by the District of Columbia;

(B) makes readily available to all prospective students information on its school accreditation;

(C) in the case of a school that has been operating for 5 years or less, submits to the eligible entity administering the program proof of adequate financial resources reflecting the financial sustainability of the school and the school's

ability to be in operation through the school year;

(D) agrees to submit to site visits as determined to be necessary by the eligible entity pursuant to section 5(b)(1)(I);

(E) has financial systems, controls, policies, and procedures to ensure that funds are used according to this Act; and

(F) ensures that each teacher of core subject matter in the school has a baccalaureate degree or equivalent degree, whether such degree was awarded in or outside of the United States.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a) may use not more than 3 percent of the amount provided under the grant each year for the administrative expenses of carrying out its program under this Act during the year, including—

(1) determining the eligibility of students to participate;

(2) selecting eligible students to receive scholarships;

(3) determining the amount of scholarships and issuing the scholarships to eligible students;

(4) compiling and maintaining financial and programmatic records; and

(5) conducting site visits as described in section 5(b)(1)(I).

(c) PARENTAL ASSISTANCE.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a) may use not more than 2 percent of the amount provided under the grant each year for the expenses of educating parents about the entity's program under this Act, and assisting parents through the application process, under this Act, including—

(1) providing information about the program and the participating schools to parents of eligible students;

(2) providing funds to assist parents of students in meeting expenses that might otherwise preclude the participation of eligible students in the program; and

(3) streamlining the application process for parents.

(d) STUDENT ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a) may use not more than 1 percent of the amount provided under the grant each year for expenses to provide tutoring services to participating eligible students that need additional academic assistance. If there are insufficient funds to provide tutoring services to all such students in a year, the eligible entity shall give priority in such year to students who previously attended an elementary school or secondary school that was identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6316).

SEC. 8. NONDISCRIMINATION AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity or a school participating in any program under this Act shall not discriminate against program participants or applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or sex.

(b) APPLICABILITY AND SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS, CLASSES, OR ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the prohibition of sex discrimination in subsection (a) shall not apply to a participating school that is operated by, supervised by, controlled by, or connected to a religious organization to the extent that the application of subsection (a) is inconsistent with the religious tenets or beliefs of the school.

(2) SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS, CLASSES, OR ACTIVITIES.—Notwithstanding subsection (a) or any other provision of law, a parent may choose and a school may offer a single sex school, class, or activity.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—For purposes of this Act, the provisions of section 909 of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1688) shall apply to this Act as if section 909 of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1688) were part of this Act.

(c) CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.—Nothing in this Act may be construed to alter or modify the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

(d) RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED SCHOOLS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a school participating in any program under this Act that is operated by, supervised by, controlled by, or connected to, a religious organization may exercise its right in matters of employment consistent with title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–1 et seq.), including the exemptions in such title.

(2) MAINTENANCE OF PURPOSE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available under this Act to eligible students, which are used at a participating school as a result of their parents' choice, shall not, consistent with the first amendment of the Constitution, necessitate any change in the participating school's teaching mission, require any participating school to remove religious art, icons, scriptures, or other symbols, or preclude any participating school from retaining religious terms in its name, selecting its board members on a religious basis, or including religious references in its mission statements and other charting or governing documents.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—A scholarship (or any other form of support provided to parents of eligible students) under this Act shall be considered assistance to the student and shall not be considered assistance to the school that enrolls the eligible student. The amount of any scholarship (or other form of support provided to parents of an eligible student) under this Act shall not be treated as income of the parents for purposes of Federal tax laws or for determining eligibility for any other Federal program.

(f) REQUESTS FOR DATA AND INFORMATION.—Each school participating in a program funded under this Act shall comply with all requests for data and information regarding evaluations conducted under section 9(a).

(g) RULES OF CONDUCT AND OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES.—A participating school, including the schools described in subsection (d), may require eligible students to abide by any rules of conduct and other requirements applicable to all other students at the school.

(h) NATIONALLY NORM-REFERENCED STANDARDIZED TESTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each participating school shall comply with any testing requirements determined to be necessary for evaluation under section 9(a)(2)(A)(i).

(2) MAKE-UP SESSION.—If a participating school does not administer a nationally norm-referenced standardized test or the Institute of Education Sciences does not receive data on a student who is receiving an opportunity scholarship, then the Secretary (through the Institute of Education Sciences of the Department of Education) shall administer such test at least one time during a school year for each student receiving an opportunity scholarship.

SEC. 9. EVALUATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY AND THE MAYOR.—The Secretary and the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall—

(A) jointly enter into an agreement with the Institute of Education Sciences of the Department of Education to evaluate annually the performance of students who received scholarships under the 5-year program under this Act;

(B) jointly enter into an agreement to monitor and evaluate the use of funds authorized and appropriated for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools under this Act; and

(C) make the evaluations described in subparagraph (A) and (B) public in accordance with subsection (c).

(2) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary, through a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, shall—

(A) ensure that the evaluation under paragraph (1)(A)—

(i) is conducted using the strongest possible research design for determining the effectiveness of the opportunity scholarship program under this Act; and

(ii) addresses the issues described in paragraph (4); and

(B) disseminate information on the impact of the program—

(i) in increasing the academic growth and achievement of participating eligible students; and

(ii) on students and schools in the District of Columbia.

(3) DUTIES OF THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES.—The Institute of Education Sciences of the Department of Education shall—

(A) use a grade appropriate, nationally norm-referenced standardized test each school year to assess participating eligible students;

(B) measure the academic achievement of all participating eligible students; and

(C) work with the eligible entities to ensure that the parents of each student who applies for a scholarship under this Act (regardless of whether the student receives the scholarship) and the parents of each student participating in the scholarship program under this Act, agree that the student will participate in the measurements given annually by the Institute of Educational Sciences for the period for which the student applied for or received the scholarship, respectively, except that nothing in this subparagraph shall affect a student's priority for an opportunity scholarship as provided under section 6.

(4) ISSUES TO BE EVALUATED.—The issues to be evaluated under paragraph (1)(A) shall include the following:

(A) A comparison of the academic growth and achievement of participating eligible students in the measurements described in paragraph (3) to the academic growth and achievement of the eligible students in the same grades who sought to participate in the scholarship program under this Act but were not selected.

(B) The success of the program in expanding choice options for parents of participating eligible students, improving parental and student satisfaction of such parents and students, respectively, and increasing parental involvement of such parents in the education of their children.

(C) The reasons parents of participating eligible students choose for their children to participate in the program, including important characteristics for selecting schools.

(D) A comparison of the retention rates, high school graduation rates, and college admission rates of participating eligible students with the retention rates, high school graduation rates, and college admission rates of students of similar backgrounds who do not participate in such program.

(E) A comparison of the safety of the schools attended by participating eligible students and the schools in the District of Columbia attended by students who do not participate in the program, based on the perceptions of the students and parents.

(F) Such other issues with respect to participating eligible students as the Secretary considers appropriate for inclusion in the evaluation, such as the impact of the program on public elementary schools and secondary schools in the District of Columbia.

(G) An analysis of the issues described in subparagraphs (A) through (F) by applying such subparagraphs by substituting "the subgroup of participating eligible students who have used each opportunity scholarship awarded to such students under this Act to attend a participating school" for "participating eligible students" each place such term appears.

(5) PROHIBITION.—Personally identifiable information regarding the results of the measurements used for the evaluations may not be dis-

closed, except to the parents of the student to whom the information relates.

(b) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Education and the Workforce, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate—

(1) annual interim reports, not later than April 1 of the year following the year of the date of enactment of this Act, and each subsequent year through the year in which the final report is submitted under paragraph (2), on the progress and preliminary results of the evaluation of the opportunity scholarship program funded under this Act; and

(2) a final report, not later than 1 year after the final year for which a grant is made under section 4(a), on the results of the evaluation of the program.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—All reports and underlying data gathered pursuant to this section shall be made available to the public upon request, in a timely manner following submission of the applicable report under subsection (b), except that personally identifiable information shall not be disclosed or made available to the public.

(d) LIMIT ON AMOUNT EXPENDED.—The amount expended by the Secretary to carry out this section for any fiscal year may not exceed 5 percent of the total amount appropriated under section 14(a)(1) for the fiscal year.

SEC. 10. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) ACTIVITIES REPORTS.—Each eligible entity receiving funds under section 4(a) during a year shall submit a report to the Secretary not later than July 30 of the following year regarding the activities carried out with the funds during the preceding year.

(b) ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the reports required under subsection (a), each eligible entity receiving funds under section 4(a) shall, not later than September 1 of the year during which the second school year of the entity's program is completed and each of the next 2 years thereafter, submit to the Secretary a report, including any pertinent data collected in the preceding 2 school years, concerning—

(A) the academic growth and achievement of students participating in the program;

(B) the high school graduation and college admission rates of students who participate in the program, where appropriate; and

(C) parental satisfaction with the program.

(2) PROHIBITING DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION.—No report under this subsection may contain any personally identifiable information.

(c) REPORTS TO PARENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity receiving funds under section 4(a) shall ensure that each school participating in the entity's program under this Act during a school year reports at least once during the year to the parents of each of the school's students who are participating in the program on—

(A) the student's academic achievement, as measured by a comparison with the aggregate academic achievement of other participating students at the student's school in the same grade or level, as appropriate, and the aggregate academic achievement of the student's peers at the student's school in the same grade or level, as appropriate;

(B) the safety of the school, including the incidence of school violence, student suspensions, and student expulsions; and

(C) the accreditation status of the school.

(2) PROHIBITING DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION.—No report under this subsection may contain any personally identifiable information, except as to the student who is the subject of the report to that student's parent.

(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 6 months after the first appropriation of funds under section 14, and each succeeding year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, Education and the Workforce, and Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, an annual report on the findings of the reports submitted under subsections (a) and (b).

SEC. 11. DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS.

(a) CONDITION OF RECEIPT OF FUNDS.—As a condition of receiving funds under this Act on behalf of the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools, the Mayor shall agree to carry out the following:

(1) INFORMATION REQUESTS.—Ensure that all the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools comply with all reasonable requests for information for purposes of the evaluation under section 9(a).

(2) AGREEMENT WITH THE SECRETARY.—Enter into the agreement described in section 9(a)(1)(B) to monitor and evaluate the use of funds authorized and appropriated for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools under this Act.

(3) SUBMISSION OF REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the first appropriation of funds under section 14, and each succeeding year thereafter, submit to the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, information on—

(A) how the funds authorized and appropriated under this Act for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools were used in the preceding school year; and

(B) how such funds are contributing to student achievement.

(b) ENFORCEMENT.—If, after reasonable notice and an opportunity for a hearing for the Mayor, the Secretary determines that the Mayor has not been in compliance with 1 or more of the requirements described in subsection (a), the Secretary may withhold from the Mayor, in whole or in part, further funds under this Act for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to reduce, or otherwise affect, funding provided under this Act for the opportunity scholarship program under this Act.

SEC. 12. TRANSITION PROVISIONS.

(a) REPEAL.—The DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38–1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code) is repealed.

(b) SPECIAL RULES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) funding appropriated to provide opportunity scholarships for students in the District of Columbia under the heading "Federal Payment for School Improvement" in title IV of division D of the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111–8; 123 Stat. 653), the heading "Federal Payment for School Improvement" in title IV of division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111–117; 123 Stat. 3181), or any other Act, may be used to provide opportunity scholarships under section 7(a) for the 2011–2012 school year to students who have not previously received such scholarships;

(2) the fourth and fifth provisos under the heading “Federal Payment for School Improvement” of title IV of Division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117; 123 Stat. 3181) shall not apply; and

(3) any unobligated amounts reserved to carry out the provisos described in paragraph (2) shall be made available to an eligible entity receiving a grant under section 4(a)—

(A) for administrative expenses described in section 7(b); or

(B) to provide opportunity scholarships under section 7(a), including to provide such scholarships for the 2011–2012 school year to students who have not previously received such scholarships.

(c) **MULTIYEAR AWARDS.**—The recipient of a grant or contract under the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38-1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code), as such Act was in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall continue to receive funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of such grant or contract, except that—

(1) the provisos relating to opportunity scholarships in the Acts described in subsection (b)(1) shall not apply; and

(2) the memorandum of understanding described in subsection (d), including any revision made under such subsection, shall apply.

(d) **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.**—The Secretary and the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall revise the memorandum of understanding entered into under the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38-1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code), as such Act was in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, to address—

(1) the implementation of the opportunity scholarship program under this Act; and

(2) how the Mayor will ensure that the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools comply with all the reasonable requests for information as necessary to fulfill the requirements for evaluations conducted under section 9(a).

(e) **ORDERLY TRANSITION.**—Subject to subsections (c) and (d), the Secretary shall take such steps as the Secretary determines to be appropriate to provide for the orderly transition to the authority of this Act from any authority under the provisions of the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38-1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code), as such Act was in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 13. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act:

(1) **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.**—The term “elementary school” means an institutional day or residential school, including a public elementary charter school, that provides elementary education, as determined under District of Columbia law.

(2) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible entity” means any of the following:

(A) A nonprofit organization.

(B) A consortium of nonprofit organizations.

(3) **ELIGIBLE STUDENT.**—The term “eligible student” means a student who is a resident of the District of Columbia and comes from a household—

(A) receiving assistance under the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.); or

(B) whose income does not exceed—

(i) 185 percent of the poverty line; or

(ii) in the case of a student participating in the opportunity scholarship program in the preceding year under this Act or the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38-1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code), as such Act was in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, 300 percent of the poverty line.

(4) **MAYOR.**—The term “Mayor” means the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

(5) **PARENT.**—The term “parent” has the meaning given that term in section 9101 of the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(6) **PARTICIPATING ELIGIBLE STUDENT.**—The term “participating eligible student” means an eligible student awarded an opportunity scholarship under this Act, without regard to whether the student uses the scholarship to attend a participating school.

(7) **PARTICIPATING SCHOOL.**—The term “participating school” means a private elementary school or secondary school participating in the opportunity scholarship program of an eligible entity under this Act.

(8) **POVERTY LINE.**—The term “poverty line” has the meaning given that term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(9) **SECONDARY SCHOOL.**—The term “secondary school” means an institutional day or residential school, including a public secondary charter school, that provides secondary education, as determined under District of Columbia law, except that the term does not include any education beyond grade 12.

(10) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Education.

SEC. 14. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appropriated \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2012 and for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years, of which—

(1) one-third shall be made available to carry out the opportunity scholarship program under this Act for each fiscal year;

(2) one-third shall be made available to carry out section 4(b)(1) for each fiscal year; and

(3) one-third shall be made available to carry out section 4(b)(2) for each fiscal year.

(b) **APPORTIONMENT.**—If the total amount of funds appropriated under subsection (a) for a fiscal year does not equal \$60,000,000, the funds shall be apportioned in the manner described in subsection (a) for such fiscal year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate on the bill, as amended, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in House Report 112-45, if offered by the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) or her designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be debatable for 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 471 and include extraneous materials thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to rise in strong support of H.R. 471, the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act.

H.R. 471 is not new but H.R. 471 is essential. It reauthorizes and makes improvements in the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which was cre-

ated by Congress in 2003 to provide eligible low-income District parents with an opportunity to send their children to a private school of their choice.

□ 1410

But it does more. It also provides an equal amount of money for chartered public schools, which are greater in the District of Columbia perhaps than anywhere else in the Nation, and an equal amount for improving the public school system in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, this Act gives twice as much money to the two categories of public schools—conventional schools and chartered public schools—than it does to the scholarship program. However, the scholarship program is a focus of this bill, and it’s a focus because this program has proven to be successful. In fact, 74 percent of all District residents, when polled, favor the continuation of this program as to these D.C. Opportunity Scholarships. Obviously among those who have had opportunities they would not otherwise have had, those who have gone on to college and enjoyed benefits because of their opportunity to seek an education of their choice, it is 100 percent valuable.

Mr. Speaker, we have pursued regular order on this bill. We have gone through both the subcommittee and the committee process. We have had an extensive hearing, and we believe this bill is absolutely essential. I will mention that, pursuant to the goals of the Republican House, we have made some austerity. Originally, this would have been \$75 million. It is \$15 million less because at this time, although we would like to do more, we have to make those kinds of trimmings that are possible.

Still, Mr. Speaker, this is a jewel of the D.C. school system. It is an opportunity for people to have the kind of choice they have in few other areas. And I want to personally thank the Speaker of the House for bringing this piece of legislation and for all of his work through all of the years in which he worked so hard on the Education Committee to understand this program in a way that no other Member does.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 471.

Let me be very clear: Public funds should support public education. But this bill, which would authorize \$300 million to support education in the District of Columbia, includes an authorization for the expenditure of \$100 million over 5 years to enable a tiny fraction of D.C. students to attend private schools. We have been told that the purpose of this bill is to help D.C. children get a better education. But House Republicans passed legislation earlier this year that slashes billions of dollars from educational programs across the country. In H.R. 1, which passed the House in February, House

Republicans cut \$5.7 billion from the Pell Grant program, \$1 billion from Head Start, \$757 million from Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, \$694 million from Title I-A grants, and \$100 million from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Under these Republican cuts, nearly 44,000 students from the District of Columbia could see their Pell Grants reduced, 700 would lose their Head Start placements, 500 could face reduced or eliminated after-school placements, and 2,500 would lose supplemental educational services.

Remarkably now, after voting to leave so many behind, the Republican leadership wants to authorize \$100 million in new spending just for private schools in the District as part of a \$300 million authorization for education in that one district. And the majority does not even pay for any part of this \$300 million bill. Let me be clear on this point: There is no offset for this bill. For that reason, H.R. 471 also appears to violate the legislative protocols issued by the majority with such fanfare at the beginning of this Congress. So all the rhetoric supposedly justifying massive cuts to education funding, all the talks about budget constraints, about tightening our belts, and about making sacrifices, all that goes out the window when the majority wants to give \$100 million in taxpayer funds to private schools.

Also problematic is that the D.C. voucher program has not resulted in better student achievement. The Institute for Education Sciences evaluated this program and found that in 2010, there was no overall statistically significant impact on student achievement in reading or math. By comparison, reading and math test scores did improve among students enrolled in the District's public schools and its public charter schools from 2007 to 2010.

The bill is also a direct assault on D.C. home rule. The Speaker did not consult with the District's representative or its elected officials before introducing the bill. Our committee did not receive testimony from the mayor of the District before we marked up this bill. And the Republicans have not introduced a national voucher bill because using taxpayer dollars to fund private schools is highly unpopular and has failed in every referendum placed on State ballots.

Despite all of these arguments against the bill, to me, the most significant problem is that it diverts funds away from educational programs that help all of the District's 70,000 students. Instead, the bill would use a lottery system to award vouchers to send about 1.3 percent of District students to private schools. I know there are Members on the other side of the aisle who are truly concerned about the education of our Nation's children, and they have a sincere desire to help students of the District of Columbia. But we should help all of the students. We should provide a high-quality edu-

cation for all of them, and we should support continued improvements that raise all student achievement.

I have said it over and over again: The greatest threat to our national security is the failure to properly educate every single one of our children, every one of them. We should not adopt a measure that spends \$100 million so that about 1,000 students can go to private schools. And as a graduate of public schools and a longtime advocate of quality public education, as one who has sat on a charter school board, I agree with the President's statement of the administration's policy which opposes creating or expanding a voucher program and asserts that the "Federal Government should focus its attention and available resources on improving the quality of public schools for all students." Because this bill does not do that, I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 471 in its current form.

Mr. Speaker, later during this debate, my distinguished colleague Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, who represents the District of Columbia, will offer an amendment to redirect funding for private schools to improve public education for all of the District's students. This amendment is a thoughtful improvement, and I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, it's now my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. KLINE. I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 471, this legislation that would reauthorize the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. This program was created in 2004 with bipartisan support. This program has provided an educational lifeline and meaningful choices to thousands of District families. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Everyone agrees now that our educational system is broken. As we work to craft targeted reforms, we must support existing education programs that improve student achievement. The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program is one such initiative with a proven track record of success. Over the past 7 years, this program has helped more than 3,000 low-income children receive a high-quality education at the private school of their choice. The Department of Education's own research confirms the program's success in increasing graduation rates to more than 90 percent in the low-income population of students previously trapped in underperforming schools.

□ 1420

Additionally, this scholarship program has improved parental involvement in education. Four consecutive studies have shown parents of program participants are more engaged in their

children's education and more satisfied with their academic progress than parents of public school students.

The evidence is clear, Mr. Speaker. This innovative program works and serves as a real alternative for parents who want to give their children the educational opportunities they never had. Yet, despite this proof, the administration and some in Congress are determined to destroy this groundbreaking program.

Without the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, thousands of parents will be denied an opportunity to make decisions about their children's education. Equally troubling, thousands of children will be denied the opportunity to achieve their full potential, leaving them unequipped to succeed in a 21st century workforce. We must put children first and stop a vocal minority from taking vital opportunities away from thousands of D.C. families.

The program has received widespread support from Washington residents, including three former Democratic Mayors, several members of the D.C. City Council, and thousands of students and parents. Congress cannot turn its back and deny students a chance, a chance for a better future.

As our Nation fights to get back to the path to prosperity, we cannot afford to eliminate critical educational opportunities that will prepare our Nation's youth for tomorrow's workforce.

All parents should be empowered to decide what school is best for their child. A quality education should not be a luxury available only to those who can afford it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from the District of Columbia, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for his terrific help on all we have done on this bill.

Let me count the ways I strongly oppose H.R. 471:

Because it reestablished a program that failed to improve academic achievement as measured by standardized reading and math tests;

Because it infringes on the local government's right to make decisions about quintessentially local education matters;

Because it was introduced without so much as consultation with any elected official from the affected jurisdiction, the jurisdiction I represent;

Because it provides Federal funds to send students to religious and other private schools, despite the absence of support for vouchers, as demonstrated by the failure of every State referendum to authorize vouchers, including two in California; and

Because it increases the deficit by \$300 million, violating the majority's own CutGo for discretionary authorization legislative protocols.

Although I am a proud graduate of the D.C. Public Schools and strongly

support our public schools, especially given their great improvement, I have always supported public charter alternatives for those parents who are dissatisfied with our traditional public schools. Children can't wait until public schools now in the throes of "a race to the top" meet the top.

I'm proud that the District of Columbia has the largest charter school system in the United States of America, with almost half of our children attending. Parents and organizations in the District of Columbia have made this alternative, not the Congress of the United States.

The existence and the phenomenal growth of our public charter schools has fueled the competition that has actually helped our public schools improve. The reason is because the charter schools and the public schools, unlike the voucher schools, are competing for the same local dollars.

So, today, it is interesting to note that the National Assessment of Educational Progress found that the D.C. Public Schools have awakened to the competition, and now is the only one of 18 large urban school systems that showed improvement in the fourth and eighth-grade achievement tests over the past 2 years.

Now, contrast this with what the Bush Education Department found for the very voucher program we will be voting on in H.R. 471, and I'm quoting:

The Department of education found "no conclusive evidence that the Opportunity Scholarship Program affected student achievement" as measured by standardized reading and math tests. Yet the program was established precisely to measure and improve performance of the lowest achieving students in our schools.

D.C. charter schools, however, outperform the D.C. public schools and greatly outperform the voucher schools. Our public charter schools at the middle and high school level, with a majority of economically disadvantaged students, scored almost twice as high as their D.C. Public School counterparts in math and reading, and the graduation rate of charter school students is 24 percent higher than the graduation rate of our traditional public high schools and 8 percent higher than the national average. Yet these public charter schools have a higher percentage of African American students and of disadvantaged students than our public schools.

They are entirely accountable. They can be closed and, like public schools, they have been closed.

With this remarkable record, why in the world would anyone pick the District of Columbia to impose a voucher program on, or target the only big school system that has set up an alternative public charter school system?

If the majority were truly interested in our education agenda, instead of their own, they would do what former Speaker Newt Gingrich did. When he approached me about private school

vouchers, I told him of public opposition to vouchers in the city, but not to charter schools, as demonstrated by a fledgling charter school program in the District that had attracted few charters. And there was a District of Columbia charter school law. He worked with me, not against me, to introduce a bill—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I grant the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. NORTON. To introduce P.L. 104-134, which has helped us produce a large-scale robust alternative public school system that is now a model for the Nation.

The pattern of this Congress could not be clearer. They began by stripping the District of Columbia of its vote. They have done nothing but try to take from the District of Columbia with bill after bill. Now they want to help us, against our will.

We reject the insult of your help with the children of the District of Columbia. We are not second-class citizens. We are not children. If you want to help us, give us the courtesy, have the good grace to ask us how we want to be helped.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, as it says in the Constitution, to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over the District, and that is what we are doing.

It gives me great pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the whip of the House.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. As I listen to the debate, people want to know if anybody was asked. You realize that there are four times as many children who want a scholarship than there's one for? Those are the people we should ask. Those are the people who have been asked. Those are the people that have asked to be able to have a new life, a new direction and a hope that we all dream about in America.

I will tell you, this morning, like almost every morning when I'm in Washington, D.C., we get that time, we call home. As a husband and a parent, I call my wife, and the first thing we talk about is our children. We talk about our children, about how they're feeling, how they're doing, but more importantly, how's their education—who are the latest and where they are going. It's the same question that every single parent that's a Member of this body asks. Every Member of this body that's a parent doesn't care about what they will become. You care about what your children will become.

□ 1430

The greatest opportunity you have for your children to expand all the dreams and hopes they have as an American is making sure they have the right education. But it is not just for a select few. We want to make sure everybody does.

Last Congress, one of the toughest times I watched on this floor was the new Obama administration and the Democratic majority, where they worked to terminate this program to prevent new children from participating, and going so far as revoking 216 new children for a scholarship that had already been elected to the 2009-2010 school year. Not only was it unfair; it was unwise.

We have an opportunity on this floor to do something different. We have an opportunity on this floor to actually make a correction. It is not a correction for you and me. It is a correction of a hope and a dream that a child can unleash and unshackle something that holds them back. It is a dream that they can rise to the occasion, they can have the foundation, they can have the ability that the country has always talked about. That is why I support the SOAR Act, because I believe these children can soar higher. I believe these children can reach a new dream, and I do not believe in holding them back.

For all those who sit there and still want more, four to every one, I for one am going to join with them. Support this bill and support a new hope and dream. It is not about what we will become. It will be about what the next generation in America can achieve, and we want them to soar to new heights.

Mr. CUMMINGS. In regards to what was just stated by the gentleman, we care about all these children. And it would be helpful if \$5.7 billion was not slashed from the Pell Grants when these kids get to college.

It is my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK).

Mr. LOEBSACK. I thank the chair for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the floor today to say that I think this debate is a distraction. I have spent a lot of time visiting schools and talking with teachers and parents in my district, and this debate does nothing to address what they tell me they need.

What they want is for us to work together to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and to fix the things that we know are wrong with No Child Left Behind.

If we care about improving their education, we should be working to make our system more flexible and less punitive, which is something that both sides of the aisle agree needs to happen.

I urge my colleagues to come together to work on the pressing education issues: America's decline in international education rankings; unacceptable dropout rates and achievement gaps; and the need to create a smart, innovative workforce prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, no one has worked harder on this than my subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY), to whom I yield 3 minutes.

Mr. GOWDY. I would like to thank the distinguished chairman of Oversight for his graciousness and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we have found consensus. Sweet, elusive consensus. We found it. Not in a final committee vote; that would be too much to ask. Not even in the testimony of the witnesses who came before the subcommittee. But we found consensus among the Members themselves, one after the other after the other who testified as to the power and the magic of education to transform not just their lives but generations of lives.

I spoke with a distinguished Member from the other side of the aisle, a gentleman that I happen to like and respect very much and is one of the most powerful speakers in this body. And I will not call his name because the conversation was not public. But he recalled for me the day that he was sworn into office, and how his father came to him with tears streaming down his face. And some of the tears were the tears that only a father can have who is delighting in the success of a child. But some of the tears were also the acknowledgement that it could have been the father and not the son had the father not been born in the wrong town, at the wrong time, and in the wrong State, and, yes, in the eyes of our educational system of yesterday, the wrong race.

It is that shared acknowledgement that education is the pathway to prosperity that makes me struggle with how someone can oppose this bill. The parents want it. They feel more vested. They feel like their children are safer.

Mr. Speaker, you should have seen the parents that came and crossed political and cultural and racial lines to testify on behalf of this bill in the subcommittee. They want it desperately. The students want it. They feel safer. They feel like it's an educational environment that is conducive to their learning. Their test scores are higher. But even if they were not, their graduation rates are higher.

As a former prosecutor who cannot remember the last high school graduate that I prosecuted, the simple fact that they are graduated from high school in and of itself is enough of a reason to support this. Educational achievement is higher. Educational attainment is higher.

The parents want the same choices for their kids that the President of the United States and, indeed, most of us who are Members of Congress have for ours. Even the United States Department of Education once lauded this program as an example of something that works, until someone or something told them to think otherwise. The residents of the District of Columbia, again crossing racial, political lines overwhelmingly support this program.

And the most insidious argument is also the most demonstrably false, that somehow this program takes dollars

away from the three-sectored approach that the District of Columbia uses. The public schools will still be funded. Their charter schools will still be funded. This just provides a third alternative, a third choice for parents who desperately want it and need it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ISSA. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. GOWDY. One of the reasons that public approval for our body is sometimes so historically low is we have a tendency to demagogue those with whom we disagree and we create false dichotomies. This bill is no more about the independence of the District of Columbia than anything else. The District of Columbia does not think twice before accepting Federal dollars for the public school system, the charter school system, or a host of other agendas. Nor does the District of Columbia think twice when it accepts Pell Grant monies that allow an 18-year-old to go to Georgetown, which is a private school, but will not allow a 17-year-old to go to a private high school.

Nor is this bill about whether or not someone believes in the public school system. I went to the public schools in South Carolina. My wife teaches in the public schools in South Carolina. And my son will graduate from the public schools in South Carolina. But I will miss his graduation, like many of you have missed things in your lives, because we will be in session.

What I will not miss is the opportunity to throw a lifeline to kids who were born through the vicissitudes of life into poverty. We will give them the same choices and chances that we have had.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, it is not a false dichotomy when, through H.R. 1, \$1.8 billion is being slashed from the Head Start budget, causing 218,220 Head Start students to not get a start.

I now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois, Congressman DANNY DAVIS.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in opposition to H.R. 471, the D.C. voucher bill. While I share the same commitment to improving the quality of education here in D.C., in Chicago, and throughout the Nation, as a staunch supporter of public schools I strongly disagree with vouchering public dollars to private schools and institutions. I do not believe that the D.C. public schools should become experimental labs for the rest of the Nation. As I have stated previously on a number of occasions, paying for school vouchers translates into fewer taxpayer dollars for traditional public schools which have the responsibility to educate all, and I emphasize, all of the children.

Improving public education in the District of Columbia, as in the rest of the Nation, has been and continues to be a long and arduous task. It is an ab-

solute priority of mine. However, now is not the time to abandon our obligation to ensure top-notch public education for all students by shifting Federal dollars to private schools.

I understand and commend the Federal Government for playing a critical role in providing the District with badly needed funding for improving education since 2004.

□ 1440

But I have never found any conclusive evidence that vouchers have increased achievement, nor have I seen any evidence in any study that an overall school district has improved as a result of vouchers. If the Federal Government is serious about improving the quality of education for the city's 70,000-plus deservedly young minds, then we should place our resources towards educational opportunities for all.

I must add that in the District we have seen improvement during the last 2 and 3 years. And while we didn't seek any real testimony from the officials of the District of Columbia or school officials and students in public schools, we did hear from Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, whose thoughts represent the thinking of a large number of Washingtonians, and she has told us that continued investment in D.C.'s public school reform efforts will yield far greater benefits for the city as a whole rather than spending millions of dollars on less than 2,000 students to attend private schools.

I agree with Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON. She represents the thinking of the people of the District of Columbia. I urge that we vote down this voucher bill and support the amendment that will be presented by Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to yield the customary 1 minute to the author of the bill, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), Speaker of the House.

Mr. BOEHNER. Let me thank my colleague for yielding and let me start by also thanking him and the members of the Government Reform Committee for their work on this bill. Also I want to thank our 50 cosponsors and all the Members on both sides of the aisle who are standing with us today. I also appreciate the efforts of our colleagues in the Senate, particularly Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, who are working on similar legislation.

Today, the House will have the opportunity to do something special for the future of our country. I think just about every Member would agree that we have got to do everything we can to help our education system. Americans are concerned that their children won't be able to have the same blessings that they have had, and if we want to protect the American Dream, there is no substitute for a quality education.

My view has always been that education reform starts with giving children a way out of our most under-achieving public schools. Of course,

that doesn't mean that we abandon those schools. It means we take some of the pressure off of them while they work to turn themselves around.

So we came together here about 7 years ago and said let's try something different. Instead of just throwing money at the problem, let's empower parents from lower-income families to choose the schools that are best for them. We wouldn't deny any school money that they had already been receiving. We would be injecting freedom and competition into a system that is caught up in the status quo.

We had a strong bipartisan coalition, including Anthony Williams, who was the Mayor here at the time, and Dick Arme, who for years led this fight in the House, paving the way for this program. He and I started working together on school choice in the early nineties when we served on the Education and Labor Committee together. We said let's give kids in our capital city a real chance at success and a real shot at the American Dream that they don't have. We thought to ourselves, what do we have to be afraid of? Well, as it turned out, there was nothing that we needed to be afraid of.

Thousands of families have taken advantage of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, and there is strong evidence that it is both effective and cost-effective. Unfortunately, the education establishment in our country sees this Opportunity Scholarship Program as a threat. In reality, this is an opportunity to raise the bar, because competition makes everybody better. I think if you look beyond the talking points and focus on the facts, you will find that the D.C. program provides a model that can work in other communities around our Nation.

Now, I think all of you know that this issue is important to me, but I will tell you this: This is not about me. I am proud to say that I have supported the Opportunity Scholarship Program from the get-go, but I am even more proud of the fact that I had nothing to do with its success. For that, we can thank the students and parents who have become more than the program's beneficiaries—they are its greatest ambassadors.

In recent days, I have received letters from many of them asking Congress to do the right thing, and I will be submitting some of those for the RECORD. You see, they know what it was like before. They remember living just blocks from great schools, but feeling miles away from them, and all they did was ask us to have a chance to have the same kind of education that kids down the street were getting. There is no controversial idea here. It is the American way.

So if we are serious about bipartisan education reform, we should start by saving this successful bipartisan program that has helped so many underprivileged children here in D.C. get a chance at a quality education. I urge the House to support and save this important program.

MARCH 29, 2011.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, I want to thank you for spending so much time and energy on a cause that does not benefit you but helps me and a lot of other DC children.

I was a lucky one. I had the opportunity to be a scholar and it worked! I was accepted into Archbishop Carroll and Bishop McNamara High School. I'm proud of my success. One day I would like to attend Spellman College. When I get to college I know it will be because of the solid foundation I received in my elementary school. The foundation for my future was possible because of my scholarship.

Again, thank you for fighting to save the Opportunity Scholarship. I know you care about us and I wish you a lot of good luck!

Sincerely,

SAMAYA MACK,
8th grade,
St. Anthony Catholic School.

MARCH 29, 2011.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, my name is Katherine Campos and I am a recipient of the Opportunity Scholarship. I am an eighth grader at Sacred Heart School and have received the scholarship for the past six years.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for introducing the SOAR Act to Congress. I know that you really believe in the Opportunity Scholarship and that means the world to me. I believe in the scholarship, too.

The scholarship has offered me an escape from some of the harsher realities of the city. It has offered me a chance to grow in my spirituality and academics because it allowed my mom to choose Sacred Heart for me. My family is happy now that I have a better chance of getting into a good high school. Without the scholarship, I wouldn't be where I am today and I wouldn't have as much hope for tomorrow. I know that I am better prepared for a successful future because I am a recipient of the Opportunity Scholarship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for all that you are doing to help me and all the other scholarship recipients. You really do make a difference in my world.

Sincerely,

KATHERINE CAMPOS,
8th grade,
Sacred Heart School.

MARCH 29, 2011.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, We met for the first time at the State of the Union. Remember you gave me advice on giving interviews? Since then a lot of people have asked me about OSP and I just wanted to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, for all of the hard work you're putting into bringing back this Program. This program has helped me and a lot of other DC children.

Without this program I would not have attended St. Anthony Catholic School and probably would not have achieved the success I have. I love my school and am glad my parents had the option to send me here.

Since we met I am proud to share that I earned a full four year academic scholarship to Gonzaga and will be going there in the fall. This high school scholarship was possible because the elementary school that my parents chose for me provided me with a strong academic foundation. I know I will do well in high school. And then, I plan to do well at Ohio State University for college.

I hope the SOAR Act passes so other kids will get the chance I did. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

OBI MBANEFO,
8th grade,
St. Anthony Catholic School.

MARCH 29, 2011.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, The Capitol, Washington,
DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, I am writing to thank you for never giving up in your fight to restore the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

As a mother who has seen the benefits of the program first-hand, I can attest to the value of this program. Nico, my nine year old son attends Naylor Road Private School on an opportunity scholarship and is excelling in his small classes. If Nico were unable to attend Naylor Road, he would have been forced to attend a failing, underperforming school.

I can also attest to the heartbreak of having my daughter's scholarship revoked by President Obama's Secretary of Education. My daughter Nia received an opportunity scholarship in 2009 to attend the same school as her brother and receive the same educational opportunities. But that is no longer the case.

My daughter was one of 216 students who received a letter from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan retracting her scholarship. Suddenly, I did not know where I was going to send my daughter to school. I know that I will not send my daughter to any of the schools in my area. While I have been blessed by emergency, private scholarships to send Nia to Naylor Road with her brother, I do not know if this support will continue.

As a single mother on disability, I am unable to work enough to afford tuition. Education is the first priority in my household, and this program allows my children to attend safe schools and thrive.

I can tell you that your work, and that of so many other Members of Congress, has not gone unnoticed in the parts of our city that many people too often ignore.

For me, it will mean a quality education for my children. It will also mean peace of mind, because I will know that my children will not, one day, be separated—my son to attend a safe and nurturing school, and my daughter, forced elsewhere.

Please keep fighting for this program. Please. And I encourage all Members of Congress to follow your lead in voting YES for the SOAR Act. I know that with the chance to thrive in better schools, my children will truly SOAR!

Sincerely,

LATASHA BENNETT.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, most respectfully to our Speaker, I know his intentions are very good and honorable, and I wanted to be clear on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, that we care about every single child being educated and becoming all that God meant for them to be, too. That is why we oppose the \$1.08 billion cut from Head Start in H.R. 1 and the \$5.7 billion cut from the Federal Pell Grant program.

With that, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the ranking member of the Education and Workforce Committee.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for his discussion of this legislation on the floor.

I rise in opposition to this legislation because I don't believe that we can afford to spend \$100 million on a program

that in fact, in spite of what has been said on the other side, has been proven time and again to be ineffective and inefficient.

Supporting our students, especially in poor minority communities, is the right thing to do, and particularly in this economy it is absolutely essential. But that is not what this bill does.

If you really care about school reform, you want to help our students, our future, you do it in a sustainable and systematic way. You can't arbitrarily throw money at a small group of students and just hope against overwhelming evidence that your ideology somehow will work this time. You can't decide that only a handful of students deserve special attention. You can't ask Congress to vote for programs that the citizens of D.C. and the elected officials and the Mayor have not asked for. You certainly can't decide to continue a program that does not help students succeed.

There are a number of concerns about this bill. First and most importantly, the program does not help the students succeed. Just 2 weeks ago, the Republicans made harmful cuts in proven programs based upon purported standards of inefficiency, seeking to get rid of inefficient programs. If this is the standard, the D.C. voucher program fails the test.

The D.C. voucher program does not increase student achievement or graduate students so they are prepared to go on to college or careers. In fact, four Department of Education studies over both administrations found that the voucher program has had no effect on the academic achievement of the voucher students.

These findings are consistent with other private school voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland. Just yesterday, the State test results showed that voucher students in Milwaukee's 20-year voucher program are actually performing similar or worse than other poor Milwaukee students. The study mandated by Congress about the D.C. voucher program says very clearly that the use of vouchers had no statistically significant impact on the overall student achievement in math or reading.

So what is the purpose of the expenditure of this money, other than to prop up an inefficient, an ineffective, ideological point of view about how these students might learn? These students are not going to the schools that will change the outcomes.

□ 1450

These students are not graduating with a set of skills that will allow them to succeed in college or a career. But the fact of the matter is there are many public schools in the District of Columbia that are in fact achieving those goals that are working for those parents and for those students.

The District of Columbia has open choice. Parents can go wherever. But we simply decided to take these Federal dollars and put it into a program

on the belief that it works in spite of all of the evidence that it's not working for these students. So why are we paying a premium of another \$100 million in taxpayers' money to pursue this effort when on its face it's not working? Yes, you've done telephone surveys of parents and they said, I think I made a good choice. Okay. You do telephone surveys of the students, Are you any safer? The answer is: No, we don't feel any safer.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentleman 1½ additional minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. A great deal is made about the choice of these parents. It's to be honored and respected. What about the choice of the parents of Head Start students that made a choice to put their children into Head Start, in an effective program that makes a difference when they leave that program on whether or not they are school ready, whether or not they're prepared to proceed at fourth grade and eighth grade and tenth grade, those critical points when a student decides to drop out of school. Those parents who are making the choice about effective education for their children, they get cut, a quarter of a million of them. But if you make an ineffective choice and it's consistent with the ideology, you get funded.

That's just not the way we should do business here, and that's not the way to do business in terms of school reform. That's not the way to help these children, and that's not the way to incentivize the other schools that are struggling to achieve better results, to achieve better success for their students.

If you're going to say, We'll fund them, whether it's successful or not, we'll put a \$100 million into it because it comports with our view of the constellations, that's just the wrong way to proceed in this effort for these children and for other children who will follow them.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. BUERKLE).

Ms. BUERKLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 471, the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, because today I stand here not only as a Member of Congress but also as a mother of six children and a grandmother of 11. I know from personal experience the process that parents follow when they're choosing which school is the best choice for their children. Each child has different needs, different strengths. And as a parent reaches out to make that choice, we can realize that school choice is not cookie cutter. It should not and it must not be. And who better to make that decision than the parents of that child? Who knows best the needs of that student? Certainly, not the government bureaucracy.

The SOAR Act is about empowering parents to make the choice that's best for their own child. The Act is about giving them the freedom to pursue educational opportunities not available to them in failing public schools. The parents of the D.C. public school children deserve the same opportunities as Members of Congress, the Secretary of Education, and the President of the United States. Sadly, the parents of the children in the D.C. voucher program do not have the ability to pick up and move elsewhere for better public schools, and they can't afford private schools.

The D.C. system needs substantial and sustained reform, but that reform process does not have to come at the expense of the children who live in the District. I stand here and I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 471.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, Mr. BOBBY SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, our public schools need more resources, not less. This bill diverts funds that could be used for public schools into private school vouchers. Instead of helping public schools, the bill helps the privileged few who can both win the lottery and have the resources to pay the difference between the voucher and the cost of an education. That cost of education is usually more than just the tuition charged. So the recipient not only has to cover the whole tuition but also has to get access to a charity or a religious institution that would subsidize the cost of the education. Many who win the voucher lottery find that they can't even use the voucher because they can't afford the remaining cost of education.

And so we've heard a lot about the so-called choice of a private school education. That choice is only available to those who win the voucher lottery. So it's not a choice. It's a chance. With that same logic we can solve the Social Security problem by just selling Lotto tickets. Those who win the Lotto will be much better off. But, of course, few will win. Likewise, 90 percent of those who seek a voucher will lose the voucher lottery, and so they don't have a choice. Even though they have chosen the lottery, they don't have the choice. They will remain in public schools. And those schools will be worse because the money has been diverted.

The evidence now shows that even those who win the lottery may not be better off. Studies of the D.C. voucher program reveal that there's virtually no improvement in education. Furthermore, those the program was supposed to help are the ones that are benefiting. Those in failing schools represent a small portion of those who use vouchers. Many of those who use vouchers were already in private schools. And many more would have gone to private schools anyway.

The schools that these children attend with vouchers are not covered by the same educational accountability standards as public schools, and the students and employees are not covered by the same civil rights protections. So we should defeat this bill and channel these funds into the public schools in Washington, D.C.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, sometimes you just hear something that's hard to believe. We're wasting money here in Washington. The American people are hearing it first here today.

[From the Washington Post]

WHITE HOUSE IGNORES EVIDENCE OF HOW D.C. SCHOOL VOUCHERS WORK

With the House poised to vote Wednesday on legislation to reestablish a voucher program that allows low-income D.C. students to attend private schools, the Obama administration issued a strongly worded statement of opposition. The White House of course has a right to its own opinion, as wrongheaded as we believe it to be. It doesn't have a right to make up facts.

"Rigorous evaluation over several years demonstrates that the D.C. program has not yielded improved student achievement by its scholarship recipients compared to other students in D.C.," President Obama's Office of Management and Budget proclaimed Tuesday, in response to H.R. 471, sponsored by House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio).

That dismissal might come as a surprise to Patrick J. Wolf, the principal investigator who helped conduct the rigorous studies of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program and who has more than a decade of experience evaluating school choice programs.

Here's what Mr. Wolf had to say about the program in Feb. 16 testimony to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Operations. "In my opinion, by demonstrating statistically significant experimental impacts on boosting high school graduation rates and generating a wealth of evidence suggesting that students also benefited in reading achievement, the DC OSP has accomplished what few educational interventions can claim: It markedly improved important education outcomes for low-income inner-city students."

There are, we believe, other benefits to a program that expands educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. The program, which provides vouchers of \$7,500 to low-income, mainly minority students to attend private schools, is highly regarded by parents, who often feel it allows their children to attend safer schools or ones that strongly promote achievement. Our view has never been that this voucher program is a substitute for public school or public school reform. But while that reform proceeds, scholarships allow a few thousand poor children to escape failing schools and exercise a right that middle-class parents take for granted—the right, and dignity, of choice.

We understand the argument against using public funds for private, and especially parochial, schools. But it is parents, not government, choosing where to spend the vouchers. Given that this program takes no money away from public or public charter schools; that the administration does not object to parents directing Pell grants to Notre Dame or Georgetown; and that members of the administration would never accept having to send their own children to failing schools, we don't think the argument is very persuasive. Maybe that's why an administration that promised never to let ideology trump evidence is making an exception in this case.

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 30, 2011]

SCHOOL CHOICE IS NOT A PARTISAN ISSUE

(By Kevin P. Chavous)

Seventy-four percent of people rarely agree on anything.

In Pew poll in September, for instance, not even 60 percent of Americans could correctly name Joe Biden as the vice president. But here in Washington, there is overwhelming consensus on something: education reform. More specifically—the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Indeed, 74 percent of city residents, multiple members of the D.C. Council—including Chairman Kwame R. Brown—former local Democratic elected officials like me and former mayor Anthony A. Williams, and thousands of parents, students and other activists all support the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act, set for a vote in the House today. This legislation would reauthorize the Opportunity Scholarship Program, a federally funded initiative that provides low-income children with money to attend private schools. It would also infuse the District's traditional public and public charter schools with \$40 million in additional funding per year.

It's a smart, well-constructed plan. But if we were to listen only to the national narrative surrounding school choice in the District, it would seem as if all of the program's supporters were Republicans and none of them have any connection to the city besides happening to work here on weekdays.

In reality, local support for returning all options to the District's low-income children comes from all corners of the city. After years of divisive battles over the creation of the program, its destruction in 2009, and its path toward resurrection in the current Congress, there is wide support among local leaders for the view that reauthorizing the program will be beneficial for students and families, as well as all three education sectors serving children in the city. Even Mayor Vincent Gray has in the past expressed support for the three-sector federal initiative, and it was noteworthy that he was not critical of the voucher program itself—emphasizing instead home-rule issues and the success of the city's public and charter schools—in his lone Capitol Hill appearance to testify on the reauthorization bill.

The only significant local opposition comes from D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who claimed at a House oversight hearing on the SOAR Act that providing educational options for low-income students was somehow a ploy by Republicans to use District children to further a set of "ideological preferences" by dismissing the "independent, self-governing" nature of Washington.

But if the city is to truly be self-governing as its representative suggests she wants, Norton and other scholarship opponents must do what they so often criticize others for not doing. They must listen to the city's residents.

The only common ideology among supporters of the Opportunity Scholarship Program is that it's the right thing to do. Parents of the 91 percent of program participants who graduate from high school know that, as do the parents of students who have seen their children increase their reading scores through the program. These are certainly many of the same people who elected Norton to her 11th term as their representative in Congress with 89 percent of the vote in November.

This is not, as pundits often contend, a partisan issue. The large majority of the city's residents are Democrats—myself included—and we believe in a set of core values that are consistent with both Democratic

ideals and a more fundamental set of ideals rooted in the belief that all children deserve a chance to receive a quality education by any means necessary.

And we're tired of seeing opponents of school choice use traditional party breakdowns as cover for opposition to a program that works or use disparaging language about the intentions of the other side. The fact of the matter is that those who continue to fight for this program want what's best for the District's children, and there is a simple reason why a city full of Democrats want to bring the Opportunity Scholarship Program back to the nation's capital: It's the right thing to do.

[From Politico, Mar. 30, 2011]

GIVING STUDENTS A CHANCE AT SUCCESS

(By Rep. Darrell Issa and Rep. John Kline and Rep. Harold Rogers)

The House is due to vote Wednesday on reinstating the Opportunity Scholarship Program for the District of Columbia.

This is a critical education reform that can offer low-income students and their parents the chance to break out of low-performing public schools and receive a quality education. The reauthorized program would give an annual voucher of \$8,000 for elementary students and \$12,000 for secondary students within 185 percent of the poverty line. It could make it possible for thousands of district school children to prepare for college at the competitive private school of their choice.

But it is not just about helping one city's schoolchildren. This is part of a larger national conversation about school reform. Across the country, an increasing number of states are looking for ways to break the cycle of low graduation rates and substandard public education to give underprivileged students an educational environment where they can succeed.

Opponents of school choice represent some of the most powerful special interests in the country. Teachers unions, for example, have long opposed school choice and have tried to block voucher programs like the DC Opportunity Scholarship. It was pressure from these groups that influenced President Barack Obama's decision to end the DC scholarship two years ago. This injustice must be corrected.

The success of school choice programs like this one—which was originally passed in 2004—is convincing. Parental satisfaction for scholarship recipients far exceeds that of parents whose children are trapped in failing public schools.

Students in the Washington program who get to attend better-performing private schools in the District are approximately three months ahead in reading ability, compared to non-scholarship students. Graduation rates for scholarship recipients are more than 30 percentage points higher than others in the district's public schools.

These programs enjoy widespread support among those involved. Almost 75 percent of D.C. residents believe the Opportunity Scholarship Program's success deserves reauthorization, according to a recent poll by the American Federation of Children. The D.C. City Council chairman, Kwame Brown, favors continuing the program, as do two former Washington mayors.

Growing bipartisan support in Congress means Democrats and Republicans can work together to help underprivileged students in Washington—which is Congress's responsibility under the Constitution.

School choice programs, like the DC Opportunity Scholarship, strengthen public education systems by offering greater competition. A study by economist David Figlio

of Northwestern University demonstrated that similar school choice programs in other parts of the country have improved public education.

In fact, no study to date has suggested school choice hurts student achievement in public schools.

Everyone benefits from the success of these school choice programs. High-performing students are better-equipped for a college education. College graduates are better prepared for well-paying jobs.

In this economy, Congress should be doing everything it can to give the next generation of lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers and entrepreneurs a chance to succeed. School choice is a critical part of the path to success.

Support for school choice is about providing immediate assistance for parents and their children—many of whom now wait years to get into charter schools. In many cases, these parents know that their kids attend some of the nation's worst public schools, with some of the highest rates of drug use and crime. No parent should be forced to keep their children in unsafe schools that fail to provide a quality education.

We can think of no reason why Washington students should wait for long-term public school reform when immediate relief is now possible.

Reauthorizing the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program can open the doors to success for thousands of students living in the shadow of their nation's Capitol. More than that, it provides an example for states across the country to follow as they seek to reform a broken system of public education.

I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona, Dr. GOSAR.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our children are being let down. Our education system is no longer the world's best. In the District of Columbia, they are facing an education crisis like none other in our country. According to some experts, the D.C. public schools spend over \$20,000 per year on each and every student. Despite this, D.C. students perform the worst when compared to all 50 States. One study found that only 13 percent of eighth-graders in the D.C. public schools were proficient in reading. This must change.

You may be wondering, Why is Congress focusing on just the D.C. schools today? That is because the D.C. public schools are unique, in that under the Constitution, Congress has the sole responsibility to govern over the District of Columbia. With that in mind, it is our responsibility to ensure that we no longer allow these students to slip through the cracks. That is why I'm urging my colleagues to support H.R. 471, the SOAR Act. This bill allows low-income D.C. students a scholarship to attend a school of their parents' choice. Seventy-four percent of parents in D.C. support this plan because that has achieved real results.

While I believe education is best decided on the local level, Congress is constitutionally obligated to fund D.C. students and their education. That is why we must give parents the choice as to where their children will attend school. We can't afford to continue to

ignore these students. They deserve a chance to attend better schools that achieve greater results.

Today, we have a golden opportunity to make D.C. public schools better. Today, we have an opportunity to help students in the lowest-achieving school district in the country. Today, we can give D.C. students an opportunity to succeed and pursue their dreams. Join me in supporting H.R. 471.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO).

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this bill to expand the failed private school voucher program in Washington, D.C. In this time of budget strife and cutbacks for public school districts all across the country, this is the wrong time to take Federal money away from public schools and give it to private schools.

When I evaluate education or any other policy, I want to see the research on what works. Despite claims that the D.C. voucher system would improve academic achievement of D.C. students, multiple congressionally mandated Department of Education studies have concluded that the program has not improved these students' academic achievement in reading or math.

□ 1500

Further, the studies found the voucher program to have had no effect on student satisfaction, engagement, motivation, or students' feelings of security. The studies found no significant impact on students' career aspirations, participation in extracurricular activities, homework completion, reading for fun, or tardiness. Students with special education needs, English language learners, and gifted students in the voucher program were less likely to have access to key services than their peers in public school.

Despite receiving public money under the D.C. voucher program, these private schools do not take all students. In addition, teachers at these private schools are not subject to the same certification requirements as those in D.C. public schools.

This bill also makes an exception to the majority's own budget rules, which require that all legislation proposing new funding must slash funding from somewhere else. This bill adds \$300 million to the deficit without any such offset. These kinds of exceptions make a mockery of their own rules, particularly when there is little evidence to support the underlying bill, itself.

I understand that many voucher supporters are disappointed with the quality of our public schools. This says to me that there is common ground for Members from both sides of the aisle to improve our public schools. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill.

Mr. ISSA. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

This is a fascinating discussion we are having here. The gentleman who spoke a while ago said, because this is a lottery and because not every one of the children who wants in this program can get in the program, it represents not a choice but a chance. I can tell you a lot of these kids will settle for a chance. I mean, give them a chance. Give them a choice, a chance, whatever. Just give them the opportunity, however slim it might be. The fact that they only have a chance and that not all of them can get in the program speaks about the demand for the program. It speaks about how many people actually need it and value it and want it, and we ought to expand it further and give more individuals a chance.

I live in an area where there are pretty good public schools. My children—I have five of them—have either been in the public schools or are currently in the public schools. Those public schools are better because of the competition around them. We have a robust charter school program in Arizona. There are lots of them around. There are many choices for kids to have. The public schools my kids attend are better for it, and the same will hold true in D.C. as well.

If you want to improve the public schools where most children typically attend, then offer a choice and a chance. Competition and accountability does that. It does it all across the economy. It does it in every other phase of our lives. Why we say it won't happen in public education is just beyond me.

So I commend those who have put this bill forward. I wholeheartedly support it. I was involved several years ago in crafting the original one, and I am very pleased to support this today. This will be good for all kids.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is left on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 4½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California has 10½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great excitement. My Republican colleagues have made a vow to offset new spending, but they found a cause worthy enough to bypass this promise.

My Republican colleagues have rallied behind the SOAR Act, a \$300 million bill without an offset. Reportedly, the goal of the bill is to give "all students a shot to win the future" by "restoring hope" and "building stronger public schools." This is truly encouraging as it matches my goals as well as those of many of my Democratic colleagues. However, I strongly disagree with the proposed solution. The \$300 million bill will continue the D.C. Opportunities Scholarship Program, which was ineffective.

Department of Education reports show the voucher program had no statistically significant impact on overall

student achievement, aspirations for the future, the frequency of doing homework, or attendance or tardiness rates. Further, although built on the premise of choice, voucher schools can and do reject students based on prior academic achievement, economic background, English language ability, or disciplinary history, which significantly limits choice.

This \$300 million program, which has proven ineffective, is not the solution for the intended goal. To reach this goal, we can begin by repealing the H.R. 1 cuts to programs that remove barriers for low-income students, such as title I programs, Head Start and TRIO.

I urge my colleagues who are truly invested in the goal to reject these cuts to key education programs and to oppose the SOAR Act.

Earlier, I heard one of the persons on the other side talk about persons who support vouchers in D.C. Most of the political persons who support it either were defeated or have left and have no more say.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of talk, and it seems like most of the talk is about how we are being unfair to the District of Columbia by giving them money that, in fact, they don't really need. Let me just be candid. The District of Columbia gets all the other Federal money that the States get and other cities. This is additional money, but here is the amazing fact:

Depending upon whose figures you use, for each student in the District of Columbia, they spend between \$17,000 and \$28,000 per student. Cato says \$28,000. We'll take the District at \$17,000. These Opportunity Scholarships go between \$7,500 and \$12,000. I'll agree that perhaps some of those students would have gone to a parochial or to a private school otherwise; but for those who leave the public school to take advantage of this scholarship, they leave all \$28,000 behind; and they leave with \$7,500 in opportunity and some parent who cares enough to find a way to make up the rest if there is additional cost. Many of the parochial schools mentioned that are high school equivalents of Georgetown—except they're not getting Pell Grants; they're getting this grant—in fact, take this as the entire payment.

So the truth is that this is a gift to the District of Columbia in several ways, and I want it understood here today: when you look at the ranking of all of the States, if the District of Columbia were a State, it would be 51st. If you rank it against the top 50 inner cities, it's still only around 22nd. It is a failed school system with the second highest amount, by their own figures, per capita spent on students. If you take Cato's figures, they're far and away the most expensive public schools anywhere in the country.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a lot of talk about how Republicans are cruel be-

cause we're funding less than the Democrats would like, and we're actually funding less on this program than they would have. The difference is they were simply handing \$75 million a year for the next 5 years, or at least for this year, to the public schools, with no strings attached, while, in fact, we are breaking it into three pots of \$20 million in order to allow the public school to get something.

The Speaker, in this bill, believes strongly they should get something so they're net better off. There is another \$20 million so that children can go to charter schools. Let's understand something. If you go to the public school, they say you have choice, but the regular public schools have districts, boundaries. You can't exceed them. Going to a charter school gives you an opportunity to cross town for the school of your choice. The last 20, a mere \$20 million out of hundreds of millions of dollars, in fact, goes to these few lottery winners.

The gentleman on the other side of the aisle—and rightfully so—said it's a lottery. Yet as a former businessman—and I don't call myself a recovering businessman because I hope to never forget the lessons I learned in business—if you came to the State of California and said, We'll give you, whether it was \$60 million or \$600 million, but you've got to take a small amount of that and put it out for lotteries, and if you asked the voters in California would they take it, you'd get the same 74 to 80 percent absolute approval. If it were absolutely new money, they would.

□ 1510

But if you went to a businessman, if you went to somebody who had to understand how to make a dollar go further, there's no question what you would find is—let's do the math. I spend between \$17,000 and \$28,000 on each student; \$7,500 in expanding these Opportunity Scholarships. If they were to use their own in-district money, for every time they hand out \$7,500, they would leave themselves over \$17,000. It means that every student who remained would have more dollars.

The fact is, it's a self-inflicted wound for the District of Columbia not just to take all of this money but to take additional money because every student who exits is an opportunity to have more for those who stay, but that's not the way public education thinks. It thinks in terms of how much do I get per student, how many union teachers do I make sure I employ, how much union dues do I get.

I'm sorry, but that's not way the rest of America thinks. It's not the way the Speaker thinks when he crafted a bill that was incredibly fair to the District of Columbia and fair to many of the students who, yes, have an opportunity to get these few scholarships; and God help us, I just wish there were more because they wish there were more.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the majority has been obsessed with depriving the District of Columbia of its home-rule rights ever since this Congress opened. They have come now with their choice, their preference, for the people I represent. If, in fact, the majority is correct that this program has been so effective, I ask you why you have not brought a national voucher bill to the floor so that your constituents could have the very same thing my constituents have? I know why. It's the height of hypocrisy to put it on us and not bring a bill to the floor to give the same wonderful, wonderful opportunity to your own people.

I have a home-rule agenda in the amendment coming up. I challenge you, I challenge you to bring a national voucher bill to the floor this session.

Mr. ISSA. I would like to inquire of the minority, do you have additional speakers at this time?

Mr. CUMMINGS. No, I do not.

Mr. ISSA. Then are you prepared to close?

Mr. CUMMINGS. I am prepared to close, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. ISSA. Then I will reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Might I inquire how much time each side has.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 1½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me say this, Mr. Speaker. The ranking member said that basically this is a gift to the District of Columbia, and you know, the chairman of the committee—and I would appreciate it if he would take into consideration—while handing the District of Columbia \$20 million in vouchers, H.R. 1, which he voted for, would take from the District of Columbia now \$2.39 million from the D.C.'s title I funding, \$500,000 for the funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. This is just from the District of Columbia; \$23.5 million from Pell Grants so that when these kids get through the system like he just said, they would be able to have some money to go to school; but H.R. 1 takes away \$845 per year. That's a lot of money for a college student. \$5.7 million from Federal supplemental educational opportunity grants, \$3.92 million from Head Start programs which would disallow 700 Head Start students from going to Head Start.

So when you talk about giving a gift, I mean, that's one thing; but just in Pell Grants alone you've taken away from the very people that you say you support.

And, you know, let's just be fair about this. Mr. Speaker, this is about every child. I've said it in committee, and I'll say it again. There is nobody

on this side of the aisle who wants more for every child to have an education and have a good education than we do; and so hopefully this matter will be resolved, but this is not the way to do it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

You know, there has been a lot of talk about H.R. 1, and I think that's a bigger picture than what we're looking at here today; but it should be considered.

Republicans offered on this floor, and passed without the support for the most part of the other party, a continuing resolution. We have been responsible in trying to fund the government, and we tried to fund the government at over 90-some percent of what it would have been funded had the majority not changed and certainly at or above 2008 levels.

But that bill died in the Senate. Everything seems to have died in the Senate. And yet it can be demagogued as though we've cut, but you can't cut what you haven't done and you can't cut what you haven't offered an alternative for. We cut what was already on the book: \$75 million to \$60 million.

We did decide, the Speaker's leadership, that we were going to keep this program which we believe works. At \$20 million, it's just a fairly large pilot program. As one of the speakers on the Democratic side so aptly said, you have to win the lottery, there aren't enough slots. You're right, there aren't enough opportunities for the District of Columbia. But unlike what the gentle lady, the Delegate from the District of Columbia said, we don't have an authority to go out and do this as a national referendum; but more importantly, we don't have the money. This is more a matter of showing the benefit to States which may or may not choose and giving an opportunity to one of the worst school systems, most failed school systems in the Nation.

Students in the District of Columbia in math and science and reading are typically 51st when compared to the 50 States. This is, in fact, a difficult area if you happen to be a student in this District. If you're like the President's family or his predecessor or his predecessor or his predecessor, if they have school-age children, they don't go to public school. They go to private school. That's pretty well-known.

But private school offers opportunities and it offers choice; and, Mr. Speaker, this \$20 million per year of special funding for Opportunity Scholarships is all we're talking about today. One of the speakers, rightfully so, called it \$100 million over 5 years. The Delegate from the District of Columbia called it \$300 million, but she was forgetting the other \$200 million goes right where she wants it to go. The only thing we're debating is over 5 years will \$100 million go to Opportunity Scholarships that don't basi-

cally go to union schoolteachers that are failing the students in a system that is failing.

We just lost the head of education here, Ms. Rhee; and, in fact, part of the reason she left was she saw a new administration that didn't seem to live up to the high expectations that the previous one did. That's a local matter. That's local control and local rule. We're not preempting that. They have a right to fail, and they are failing; but Congress has a right to at least intervene.

And in closing, what I want the Speaker to understand and America to understand is in 1996, when chartered public schools were authorized in the District, it was authorized by my predecessor on the Republican side, Mr. Davis. He got it in and got it funded, and he got it made law over the objection at that time of the people of the District. We've looked through our records and can find no broad support for this mandate. The District did not do chartered public schools on their own. They did it with an act of Congress, with help.

I believe they should take the same suggestion. If they want to choose to disagree with the conservative extreme Washington Post, so be it, but I think they have to begin to look at themselves more deeply, at those that they actually represent, those who voted for them but did not vote to have this money rejected.

I urge strong support for this bill, for this opportunity for the few who win the lottery.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today the House will vote on H.R. 471, a bill to make Congress the de-facto School Board for the District of Columbia. This legislation, introduced without a hint of irony by self-proclaimed small-government conservatives, would authorize \$60 million in federal taxpayer subsidies for private schools in the District of Columbia. The same party that just cut \$1.2 billion in Head Start funding for Americans across the country will readily transfer tax money from all Americans to the District of Columbia. Moreover, the concern expressed today for District of Columbia students rings hollow in light of the Republicans' repeal of voting rights of the Delegate from the District of Columbia, which occurred in the first vote this session. Thus, this legislation is hypocritical on three levels, as it represents federal intrusion in local affairs, a federal spending increase in D.C. in contrast to nationwide education funding cuts, and disingenuous concern for the welfare of D.C. residents.

Although H.R. 471 is blatantly inconsistent with Republicans' alleged fealty to fiscal conservatism and federalism, it is quite consistent with Republicans' ideologically driven efforts to unravel public education. This bill is not about providing educational alternatives for students: It is about defunding public schools and gutting teachers' unions. Does this sound familiar? Middle class Americans are attempting to survive a similar assault by Republican governors and state legislatures in Wisconsin and Ohio. Ultimately, this bill isn't even about vouchers, but rather about power. There is not any compelling data that vouchers work, after

all, while there are several studies suggesting that, at best, they divert resources and talented students from public schools. But whether vouchers work or not is irrelevant to the party whose goal is elimination of the public education system as we know it, for vouchers are just a means to that end.

Educational policy should put students first rather than sacrifice them for ideological objectives. H.R. 471 would make District of Columbia students lab rats in a Republican experiment to gut public education and replace it with an unproven alternative. H.R. 471 makes a mockery of Republican commitments to federalism and fiscal conservatism, even as it belies their callousness to the welfare of their own constituents.

Finally, my colleagues should be aware that this bill did not pass out of the Oversight and Reform Committee without controversy. Congressman PLATTS of Pennsylvania made what may have been the most articulate speech in opposition to the bill. He reminded us that even if vouchers did work—and there's no evidence they do—they would still abandon the rest of our students. Mr. PLATTS called on all of us to work toward an education system that helps all students succeed, and I would hope that we could identify that as our objective rather than diverting money from public schools through vouchers.

I urge my colleagues to put students first and vote against H.R. 471.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 471, the DC voucher bill. I opposed the creation of the DC Voucher Program when it came before the House in the 108th Congress and I oppose today's bill that would extend this unsuccessful program. As a mother and a former educator, I understand the desire and the value of giving children the best educational opportunities. That is not what this bill would do.

This program has neither the same accountability standards for improving student academic achievement as public schools nor do students in the program have the same civil rights protections as students in public schools. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) evaluated the Washington, DC voucher program in both the Bush and Obama Administrations and issued reports indicating the program was ineffective and has not lived up to its promises. In its 2010 Final Report, the ED concluded that the use of a voucher had no statistically significant impact on overall student achievement in reading and math. There also is concern that students in the voucher program who have special needs, including those with learning disabilities and those in ESL courses, do not have access to programs or resources to address these needs.

Unlike our nation's public schools, the private schools in the DC voucher program are not accountable for the public dollars they receive. In 2007, GAO issued a report on the DC voucher program documenting concerns with the accountability of the program operator, questioning whether the operator has sufficient oversight to govern the use of federal funds. Furthermore, the GAO report found that this program does not proportionally reach the students it is meant to target, those from schools in need of improvement. It also raised concerns that many teachers in the voucher program do not have adequate educational attainment or certification to teach.

This bill extends and expands the only federally funded voucher program in the U.S. At a time when the utmost fiscal responsibility is needed, and especially when our public schools are facing giant cuts, we should not be wasting money on programs that do not work and fail our students. My colleagues who support this bill have neither paid for the \$300 million cost nor have they kept to their own legislative rules by making the cost offset by cuts to other programs. This voucher program is clearly not the best use of federal taxpayer dollars and does not provide the youth of our nation's capital with the best learning opportunities.

I fully support measures that encourage our children and youth to rise to new heights. However, this legislation extends a program that does not do what the title suggests and usurps DC's prerogative of self-governance. Congress should be focusing on providing the best educational resources to youth from every part of our nation. I repeat, that is not what this bill would do. I oppose H.R. 471.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 471, the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act (SOAR Act).

This bipartisan bill, which I am proud to co-sponsor, reauthorizes the incredibly successful District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program, which provides low-income D.C. children an opportunity to compete for a scholarship to attend the private school of their choice. Last year, after half a decade of increased graduation rates and opportunities for a better life, the current Administration unilaterally rescinded the Opportunity Scholarships that had been promised to 216 children. This is unacceptable. The SOAR Act renews the Opportunity Scholarship Program to again provide low-income children and their parents the opportunity to choose what educational environment suits them best.

Additionally, in recognition that not every child will be able to earn an Opportunity Scholarship, the SOAR Act also invests equally into the D.C. public and charter school systems. For far too long, the D.C. public school system has under-promised and under-performed, leaving children's educational future dependent on their zip code. Giving students and their parents the opportunity to choose what learning environment is best—whether it is a private, charter, or public school—should be the standard, not the exception.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the SOAR Act because it takes an all of the above approach to improving educational opportunities for low-income children in our Nation's capital.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 471. This bill provides \$300 million in unfunded appropriations at a time when the same leadership that is advancing this bill has told us that cuts to education programs, like Head Start and Pell grants, that affect students around the country, are a fiscal necessity.

The Majority is pushing an ideological agenda designed to satisfy their base framed as an effort to improve the lives of children in the District.

While Congress retains an oversight role over the District of Columbia, D.C. should not be treated as a petri dish for conservative ideas that are opposed by the voters in the District.

There have been two major studies of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program.

The first found "no conclusive evidence" that the vouchers program affected student achievement.

The second found that while math scores did not improve, there was a modest improvement in reading. Unfortunately, those gains occurred strictly for those students who came from the least troubled D.C. schools and scored the highest on the baseline test.

Unfortunately, this program has failed to help those who need it the most.

Critically, the gains in student achievement witnessed in the vouchers program do not match those achieved by the District's charter schools. If this body is truly interested in supporting effective school choice and education reform in D.C., we should focus on funding to reduce long waiting lists for the best charter schools.

Congresswoman NORTON, the only Member of this House democratically accountable to the parents and students of the District, has offered a substitute amendment which would divide the funding equally between DCPS and the city's charter schools. I will support the substitute.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 471, a bill that would resurrect the failed District of Columbia school voucher program. This legislation is nothing more than a pet project of the Republican majority that has not proven successful for students or popular with the American people. This is the same majority that just last month voted to cut \$5 billion in education funding, potentially hurting students all across this country. Now they want to spend \$300 million on a program that serves only a handful of students, and doesn't even serve those few students well.

Evaluations of the former D.C. voucher program by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Department of Education found no statistically significant effects on student achievement. GAO also found that the program was poorly managed, concluding that, "accountability and internal control were inadequate." Subsidizing private schools undermines public education in the District of Columbia by shifting resources to private and religious schools, rather than working on ideas for real reform in our public schools.

This bill also violates the District's right to home rule by using its school systems for a federally funded social experiment. As a former chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, I am well aware of the long struggle the District has waged for self-determination and a voting member of Congress. Unfortunately, instead of moving legislation to enfranchise the people of the District, we are voting today to impose more ideological mandates on the city.

Public opinion is not in favor of taxpayer-funded school voucher programs. They consistently fail when they are brought up in state referendums. A majority of Americans do not approve of the idea under any circumstances, and as many as 70 percent are against vouchers if they take money away from public schools.

Vouchers don't work, they hurt public schools, and Americans do not support them. I urge all of my colleagues to stand with the District of Columbia and oppose this legislation.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, let me start out by thanking the members of the Oversight & Government Reform Committee for their work on this bill. Thank you also to our 50 co-sponsors and all the members on both sides who are standing with us today. I appreciate the efforts of our colleagues in the Senate—particularly JOE LIEBERMAN—who are working on similar legislation.

Today, the House will have the opportunity to do something special for the future of our country. I think just about every member would agree we have work to do when it comes to our education system.

Americans are concerned that their children won't come to know the same blessings they have. And if we want to protect the American Dream, there's no substitute for a quality education.

My view's always been, education reform starts with giving children in need a way out of our most underachieving public schools. Of course, that doesn't mean we abandon those schools. It means we take some of the pressure off of them while they work to turn themselves around.

So we came together here about seven years ago and said, let's try something different. Instead of just throwing more money at the problem, let's empower parents from lower-income families to choose the schools that are best for their children. We wouldn't deny any school money they would already be receiving—we would just be injecting freedom and competition into a system caught up in the status quo.

We had a strong bipartisan coalition, including: Anthony Williams, our mayor here at the time; and Dick Armey, who for years led this fight in the House, paving the way for this program. We started working together on school choice in the early 1990s when we served on the Ed & Labor Committee.

We said, let's give these kids in our capital city a real chance at success and a real shot at the American Dream that they do not have. What do we have to be afraid of? Nothing, as it turned out. Thousands of families have taken advantage of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. There's strong evidence that it has been both effective and cost-effective.

Unfortunately, the education establishment in our country sees the Opportunity Scholarship Program as a threat. In reality, this is an opportunity to raise the bar. Competition makes everyone better.

I think if you look beyond the talking points and focus on the facts, you'll find that the D.C. program provides a model that can work well in other communities around the nation.

Now, this issue is important to me—but it's not about me. I'm proud to say I've supported the Opportunity Scholarship Program from the get-go, but I'm even more proud of the fact I had nothing to do with its success. For that, we can thank the students and the parents who have become more than just the program's beneficiaries—they are its greatest ambassadors.

In recent days, I've received letters from many of them asking their Congress to do the right thing, I'll be submitting some of those for the record.

You see, they know what it was like before. They remember living just blocks from these great schools, but feeling miles away from them. All they ask us to do is help ensure others get the same chance they've had. That's

no controversial idea—it's just the American way.

So if we're serious about bipartisan education reform, we should start by saving this successful, bipartisan program that has helped so many underprivileged children get a quality education.

I urge the House to support this measure to save and renew the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2011.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, I am writing to thank you for never giving up in your fight to restore the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

As a mother who has seen the benefits of the program first-hand, I can attest to the value of this program. Nico, my nine year old son attends Naylor Road Private School on an opportunity scholarship and is excelling in his small classes. If Nico were unable to attend Naylor Road, he would have been forced to attend a failing, underperforming school.

I can also attest to the heartbreak of having my daughter's scholarship revoked by President Obama's Secretary of Education. My daughter Nia received an opportunity scholarship in 2009 to attend the same school as her brother and receive the same educational opportunities. But that is no longer the case.

My daughter was one of 216 students who received a letter from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan retracting her scholarship. Suddenly, I did not know where I was going to send my daughter to school. I know that I will not send my daughter to any of the schools in my area. While I have been blessed by emergency, private scholarships to send Nia to Naylor Road with her brother, I do not know if this support will continue.

As a single mother on disability, I am unable to work enough to afford tuition. Education is the first priority in my household, and this program allows my children to attend safe schools and thrive.

I can tell you that your work, and that of so many other Members of Congress, has not gone unnoticed in the parts of our city that many people too often ignore.

For me, it will mean a quality education for my children. It will also mean peace of mind, because I will know that my children will not, one day, be separated—my son to attend a safe and nurturing school, and my daughter, forced elsewhere.

Please keep fighting for this program. Please. And I encourage all Members of Congress to follow your lead in voting YES for the SOAR Act. I know that with the chance to thrive in better schools, my children will truly SOAR!

Sincerely,

LATASHA BENNETT.

MARCH 29, 2011.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, I want to thank you for spending so much time and energy on a cause that does not benefit you but helps me and a lot other DC children.

I was a lucky one. I had the opportunity to be a scholar and it worked! I was accepted into Archbishop Carroll and Bishop McNamara High School. Pm proud of my success. One day I would like to attend Spellman College. When I get to college I know it will be because of the solid foundation I received in my elementary school. The foundation for my future was possible because of my scholarship.

Again, thank you for fighting to save the Opportunity Scholarship. I know you care about us and I wish you a lot of good luck!

Sincerely,

SAMAYA MACK,

8th grade, St. Anthony Catholic School.

MARCH 29, 2011.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, My name is Katherine Campos and I am a recipient of the Opportunity Scholarship. I am an eighth grader at Sacred Heart School and have received the scholarship for the past six years.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for introducing the SOAR Act to Congress. I know that you really believe in the Opportunity Scholarship and that means the world to me. I believe in the scholarship, too.

The scholarship has offered me an escape from some of the harsher realities of the city. It has offered me a chance to grow in my spirituality and academics because it allowed my mom to choose Sacred Heart for me. My family is happy now that I have a better chance of getting into a good high school. Without the scholarship, I wouldn't be where I am today and I wouldn't have as much hope for tomorrow. I know that I am better prepared for a successful future because I am a recipient of the Opportunity Scholarship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for all that you are doing to help me and all the other scholarship recipients. You really do make a difference in my world.

Sincerely,

KATHERINE CAMPOS,
8th grade, Sacred Heart School.

MARCH 29, 2011.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, we met for the first time at the State of the Union. Remember you gave me advice on giving interviews? Since then a lot of people have asked me about OSP and I just wanted to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, for all of the hard work you're putting into bringing back this Program. This program has helped me and a lot of other DC children.

Without this program I would not have attended St. Anthony Catholic School and probably would not have achieved the success I have. I love my school and am glad my parents had the option to send me here.

Since we met I am proud to share that I earned a full four year academic scholarship to Gonzaga and will be going there in the fall. This high school scholarship was possible because the elementary school that my parents chose for me provided me with a strong academic foundation. I know I will do well in high school. And then, I plan to do well at Ohio State University for college.

I hope the SOAR Act passes so other kids will get the chance I did. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

OBI MBANEFO,

8th grade, St. Anthony Catholic School.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 471. Today's vote comes just weeks after House Republicans brought a Continuing Resolution to the floor to slash billions from public education programs—legislation that would cut Head Start slots, reduce critical support to thousands of schools, and decrease afterschool services at high-poverty and low-performing schools. My colleagues across the aisle argued that we simply cannot afford these investments in our nation's children.

But today, the Majority brings to the floor a bill to provide private school vouchers in the District of Columbia. This bill adds \$300 million to the deficit, a violation of their own new "Cut-Go" rule that requires offsets for all new spending.

Mr. Speaker, I support investments in education. We all want our children to have the opportunity to succeed. But we should be using public funds to improve our public schools first. And it is totally hypocritical to have a vote one month to cut public school

funding under the guise of deficit reduction and vote the next month to increase the deficit to support some schools over all others. I urge my colleagues oppose this bill.

Mr. ISSA. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
OFFERED BY MS. NORTON

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have a substitute amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Public Funds for Public Education Act".

SEC. 2. FUNDING FOR DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—From the funds appropriated under section 4, the Secretary of Education (in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall provide funds to the Mayor of the District of Columbia (in this Act referred to as the "Mayor"), if the Mayor agrees to the requirements described in subsection (b), for—

(1) the District of Columbia public schools to improve public education in the District of Columbia; and

(2) the District of Columbia public charter schools to improve and expand quality public charter schools in the District of Columbia.

(b) CONDITION OF RECEIPT OF FUNDS.—As a condition of receiving funds under this Act on behalf of the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools, the Mayor shall agree to carry out the following:

(1) AGREEMENT WITH THE SECRETARY.—Enter into an agreement with the Secretary to monitor and evaluate the use of funds authorized and appropriated for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools under this Act.

(2) INFORMATION REQUESTS.—Ensure that all District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools comply with all reasonable requests for information for purposes of the evaluation described in paragraph (1).

(3) SUBMISSION OF REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the first appropriation of funds under section 4, and each succeeding year thereafter, submit to the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, information on—

(A) how the funds authorized and appropriated under this Act for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools were used in the preceding school year; and

(B) how such funds are contributing to student achievement.

(4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Ensure that all reports and underlying data gathered pursuant to this subsection shall be made available to the public upon request, in a timely

manner following submission of the applicable report under paragraph (3), except that personally identifiable information shall not be disclosed or made available to the public.

(c) ENFORCEMENT.—If, after reasonable notice and an opportunity for a hearing for the Mayor, the Secretary determines that the Mayor has not been in compliance with 1 or more of the requirements described in subsection (b), the Secretary may withhold from the Mayor, in whole or in part, further funds under this Act for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools.

SEC. 3. PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS.

Each District of Columbia public charter school, in selecting new students for admission to the school, shall give priority to students who were provided notification of selection for an opportunity scholarship under the DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 (sec. 38-1851.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code) for the 2009-2010 school year, but whose scholarship was later rescinded in accordance with direction from the Secretary of Education.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2012 and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years, of which—

(1) 50 percent shall be made available to carry out paragraph (1) of section 2(a) for each fiscal year; and

(2) 50 percent shall be made available to carry out paragraph (2) of section 2(a) for each fiscal year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 186, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and a Member opposed each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

□ 1520

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have to correct the gentleman from California. The District charter school bill was created by Speaker Gingrich in partnership with me. He came to me and proposed a voucher bill. I asked him, since the District had a local charter school bill, if he would introduce, instead, a charter school law. We consulted with the local public officials, with the school board, with citizens. It was the home rule alternative to vouchers, and you can check with Speaker Gingrich.

Now, my home rule substitute would redirect the \$300 million in H.R. 471, 50 percent to the District public charter schools, 50 percent to the District of Columbia Public Schools. If the majority wants to add \$300 million to the deficit without an offset, then let it at least be on the basis of educational merit; then it should be added to the public schools which have shown major growth, the only public school system of the 18 largest urban school systems that showed significant improvements in math and reading over the last 2 years.

If you want to add to the deficit, then at least add to it by giving money to our public charter schools which outdo the D.C. public schools and way outdo, of course, the voucher schools, which show no improvement. The public charter middle and high schools scored twice as high as the traditional

public charter schools in the District in math and reading, and they have a graduation rate 24 percent above the D.C. public schools and 8 percent above the national average. This is where you would give the money if you had any interest in education in the District of Columbia instead of your own parochial interests in making the District a petri dish of the pet project of a few Members of Congress. You would look at our public charter schools as the alternative to the District's public schools.

There are 53 campuses, amounting to almost 100 different charter schools, almost half of the children of the District of Columbia. How did they get there? They voted with their feet. I mean, listen to some of the names of these schools: Washington Latin School; Washington Math, Science, and Technology High School. I have, myself, appointed two students from Washington Math, Science, and Technology to Service Academies. Early Childhood Academy; Hospitality Academy; Howard University Middle School—that's a charter school; the KIPP Schools. We've got eight of them. Those are the top charter schools and some of the best public charter schools in the United States. SEED Residential charter school. You have some money? You want to spend some money? Here is the place to spend it.

To show you just what kind of a home rule alternative this is, with almost 100 different schools, they have got 19 new charter school applications coming for 2012. People keep coming despite the improvements in the District public schools. They are going to have a preschool charter. They are going to have three new high schools: one an all male college prep, one that focuses on public service, another that focuses on math and science.

You want to talk choices, you want to talk creative choices, look at the District of Columbia. We know how to create choices for ourselves, choices that our parents want, choices that our parents create and pay for because they want their own choices, not the choices of the Republicans of the House of Representatives. In a democracy, the choices of a self-governing local jurisdiction trump all other choices, and especially the choices of Members who are not responsible to the people of the District of Columbia, who do not have to stand for election in the District of Columbia but get a free ride, as I do not.

If you insist on adding to the deficit, then, for goodness sake, reinforce the home rule, hard work of our own parents and our own local organizations. Commend them for the dazzling array of almost 100 public, accountable charter schools they have created. Relieve their long waiting lists, which now contain thousands of students waiting to get into our charter schools.

The District of Columbia did not appreciate being an unwilling object of a Republican experiment once. With your

cavalier defiance of our choices, we like it much less the second time around.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 20 minutes.

Mr. ISSA. I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY), the subcommittee chairman who has worked so hard on this issue and who truly does understand the gentlelady's passion, if not her accuracy.

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, again I would like to thank the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from California, for his leadership.

It is instructive, it is informative, not to mention ironic, that there were opponents to the D.C. charter school system, just like there is resistance to the Opportunity Scholarship Program. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, some of the very same people who rise today in opposition to the Opportunity Scholarship Program, lauding the virtues of the D.C. charter school system, once opposed that very charter school system.

The charter school system is a success—I will acknowledge that—just like the Opportunity Scholarship Program is a success. They are both successful because the parents in the District of Columbia want choice.

I hate to be redundant. I don't want to beat a dead horse, although it does not hurt the horse to return to the evidence. And the evidence proves beyond a reasonable doubt by any reasonable, statistical measurement: the parents want this program; the students want this program; the community wants this program; even some elected officials want this program. They just happen to not be ones we have heard from on the other side of the aisle today.

Reading scores are up. Educational attainment is up. Graduation rates are up. And it bears repeating again. There is a myriad of maladies that are connected to the dropout rate in this country. And if all we do is to get kids to graduate, it is worth it for this program alone if they just get kids to graduate.

Opposition to this bill, Mr. Speaker—and make no mistake about this. Opposition to this bill is political and not factual. I will say that because 18-year-olds in the District of Columbia can take Federal dollars and they can go to Notre Dame and BYU, and they can go to Stanford and they can go to Baylor and they can go to Rice. So why do we oppose Federal dollars helping 17-year-olds? Let that point sink in. So 18-year-olds can take Federal dollars and go to whatever private school they want to, but 17-year-olds cannot take private dollars to go to whatever high school they want to. And I defy anyone to explain to me that distinction.

My colleague from the District of Columbia is a passionate, zealous advocate for her constituents, and I commend her for that. I genuinely commend her for her passion and her zeal

in representing her constituents. But even her passion is no match for the passion of parents who hope for a better future for their children. Even her passion cannot match the passion of the parents who came to testify before our subcommittee that this is a lifeline. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. And for us to say “no” to the Opportunity Scholarship Program because of pure, raw, gutter politics is wrong.

□ 1530

I would oppose this amendment, and I would ask my colleagues to support the Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Ms. NORTON. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member of the committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, let me say this: The last speaker said something that I found very offensive when he said it's about raw, gutter politics. I personally resent that, and the reason why I resent it is because it sends the wrong message on this floor.

We can have disagreements, but this is not about raw, gutter politics. This is about standing up for every child. I've said it over and over and over again. And I, as a product of public schools, and my children who have gone to charter schools and public schools, and I've sat on a charter school board, and living in an area in Baltimore where “The Wire” is filmed, I can tell you that this is not about raw, gutter politics. This is about the politics of lifting children up so that they can be the best that they can be. That's what this is all about.

And I've said it in committee and I'll say it over and over again: There is not one Member on this side who does not care about every single child. And when we talk about this program, this voucher program, one of the things that we need to consider is we're talking about right now about 1,012 kids. We're also talking about a charter school program with over 27,000 and counting. And it affects a lot more people. What we're trying to do is help as many kids as possible.

You talk about the graduation rates. The graduation rates for the charter schools are better than this voucher program graduation rates. And so what do we try to do?

We need to be trying to address things in the most effective and efficient manner. And so it's easy to talk about gutter politics. But what we're talking about is trying to help every child.

Now, you talked also about how we can take this money, children can take this money, when they get to college and go to various places, colleges; and you're right. But the fact is that you just voted in H.R. 1 to slash \$845 per year. And I see students every year, the board I sit on, the college board in Baltimore where kids, for \$845, that \$845 would cause kids not to be able to attend college, period. So it's nice to lift them up.

First of all, we don't give them, we cut off money from the Head Start so they can't get the Head Start. We want children to even get to the point of being able to be in a position to go to high school. But then after they get out of high school—and it is not about gutter politics—after they get out of high school, we want to make sure that they're able to have the necessary funding to go forward. And so I don't consider what the other side is saying one bit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. NORTON. I am pleased to yield the gentleman another minute.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Let me be clear. I do not consider it gutter politics for the other side to argue what it's arguing. I believe there are philosophical differences, and that's okay. And we will differ. And I have never, not once, and I don't think anybody on this side has not once, said that we don't all want to lift our children up. That's what America's all about. That's how we became the great country that we are. For every child.

And again I say it: The worst thing, the greatest threat to our national security is our failure to properly educate every single one of our children. Leave no child behind.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WALSH).

Mr. WALSH of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, what are they afraid of? What are my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, afraid of?

Let me second my colleague from South Carolina, respectfully. It is about raw, gutter politics. Respectfully, my colleague from Maryland talks about standing up for every child, helping every child.

What are they afraid of? Why won't they help every single child?

And it is politics. My colleagues on the other side can dance around any rationale they want to dance around. The evidence on this issue, we're beyond it. We are beyond having to debate empowering parents. We're past that.

So what, respectfully, on the other side of the aisle, is causing my colleagues to be against empowering—and I'll emphasize the word “every”—every parent?

Ms. NORTON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WALSH of Illinois. Respectfully, no.

My colleague from South Carolina respectfully said raw, gutter politics because my colleagues on the other side are scared to death of offending the teachers' unions.

And ladies and gentlemen and Mr. Speaker, the teachers' unions are scared to death of this scholarship program because, look out, if this scholarship program demonstrates success, and it has, it will be modeled all over the country, and that, respectfully, is what scares the teachers' unions, because they don't want kids to be able to escape.

And my colleagues on the other side will answer to what they want. That's the politics that we're talking about.

We're talking about power. The power should go to the parent, plain and simple, every parent. Charter school, public school, home school, private school, you name it. That's where the power should lie.

Ms. NORTON. How much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia has 10½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California has 14½ minutes remaining.

Ms. NORTON. To the gentleman who didn't have the nerve to yield to me, this bill, of course—

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will suspend.

The gentleman will kindly state his point of order.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, isn't it true that the House rules prohibit direct accusations about the intent or the personal features of somebody or, in fact, whether or not they have nerve?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is not going to respond to a hypothetical question.

Mr. ISSA. And I am not going to take down the gentlewoman's words because it is too short a period of time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is recognized.

Ms. NORTON. The speaker before the last speaker wanted to know what the offense was. The offense is to the home-rule prerogative to the people of the District of Columbia to decide on educational choices for their own children. That's what the offense is.

Now I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. One of the previous speakers said that he wanted to empower the parents of the District of Columbia. I agree. I think we should empower the parents of the District of Columbia to elect a representative who has a vote in this Chamber. Why don't we start with that?

The irony of the proposition that this bill is allegedly about empowerment of adults in the District of Columbia and their children comes from people who, I assume, would resist the notion that the representative of the District of Columbia should have a vote in this Chamber.

And let me bring up some very recent history. Under our majority, votes in the Committee of the Whole were, in fact, accorded to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia. On the first day of the new majority, it repealed her right and the rights of others from the territories to vote on matters in the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1540

There is one issue in this bill: Taxation without representation is tyranny. Decisionmaking without representation is wrong. The duly-elected representative of the people of the District of Columbia supports this amendment and opposes this bill. So do I for that reason.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that tomorrow we should consider a bill reorganizing the public schools of Cincinnati, Ohio, because we have just about as much prerogative to do that as we do this.

Support the amendment. Defeat the underlying bill.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, we should bear in mind that home rule is not the right of the District of Columbia to rule people's private homes and how they make their choices for their children.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 471, the Scholarship Opportunity and Results Act, and against the Norton amendment.

Coming from South Carolina, for 8 years in the general assembly, we debated the positive benefits of school choice. I have heard every argument. But what I have seen prior to 2009 is that here, in D.C., school choice was a model for the Nation as a very successful program. We have seen the positive impact of injecting free market principles into the education system here in Washington, D.C. We have seen thousands of students' lives changed. We have seen them line up for a chance at a better life because they could escape a failing school and have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Because all students learn differently, it is imperative that we empower parents. And that is what it is about, empowering parents to make choices for the education of their children; give them the ability to choose the best educational experience for their child, whether it is public, charter, private, or home school.

Neither the State nor the Federal Government knows what is best for our children. We do as parents. Parents know what is best for their children, and parents and teachers should have the freedom to work together to find and create motivating learning environments that are necessary for every child to succeed.

This bill restores to the parents the ability to make the right choices that this administration and the previous Congress stripped away, and it provides an escape from the failed bureaucratic system of the District of Columbia.

Without question, when students are placed in a learning environment that best fits their individual needs, our educational system will become exceptional. This bill brings more transparency and accountability to the program, raises the scholarship amounts

for both elementary school and high school students, as my colleague from South Carolina said, and caps the administrative costs. This bill takes a successful program and makes it even better, and does so without spending new taxpayer dollars or growing the size of government. In fact, school choice saves the government money while providing a better education for the children.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that other States will follow suit. Even as parental school choice is working for American students and families in Washington, D.C., we have also seen its effectiveness in States like Pennsylvania, Arizona, Georgia, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Florida, where the achievement gap between white students and minorities is disappearing. My home State of South Carolina is debating school choice right now in their legislative session, creating a bill that would expand educational choice opportunities for all children across my home State. And I urge my fellow colleagues in South Carolina to get the job done and pass that legislation.

Let me thank the Speaker of the House for introducing this bill. I thank him for his leadership of parental choice on behalf of Washington, D.C.'s families and students who demand effective schools.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the Norton amendment and "yes" on the SOAR Act.

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman cited a number of schools that he said vouchers had helped. There is no data showing that voucher schools—and there have been a few in the United States—have ever scored better than children in public schools. And since Milwaukee was mentioned, let me indicate some news that just came out Tuesday.

Results from the first administration of Statewide exams for students participating in the Milwaukee voucher program showed lower academic achievement than students attending Milwaukee public schools. The results also show that the Milwaukee public schools and voucher schools have significant lower achievement than the Statewide average.

But here, you have a big city public school system that is doing better than the voucher schools. And that is what the data shows all over the United States, including the District of Columbia, where the Bush Department of Education specifically found that the children in voucher schools did not show significant improvement in math and reading scores. While I have shown details here this afternoon of significant improvement of the D.C. public schools, the only urban school system that has in fact shown significant improvement in math and science, and particularly dazzling results in the D.C. charter schools.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield 5 minutes to my distin-

guished colleague from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

Mr. PENCE. I thank the distinguished chairman for yielding and for his leadership on this issue, which is near and dear to my heart, as it is to the hearts of thousands upon thousands of families in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise in opposition to the Norton funding amendment. The gentlewoman and I have worked together on occasion on issues, and I know her devotion to the District of Columbia. But we will just have to respectfully disagree on this issue, because I simply believe that the Scholarships for Opportunities and Results Act represents the continuation of one of the most important programs that I have had the privilege of being a part of here in Washington, D.C.

Now, there is a suggestion that this legislation takes money away from the public schools. But I think, as we have heard in this debate, because of the three-sector approach created by the original authorizing legislation, District public schools and public charter schools have received over one-quarter of \$1 billion in additional direct Federal payments since 2004. Both DCPS and the charter schools will continue to receive increased Federal dollars under this legislation.

So the old arguments against giving students and parents more choices because it denies funding to public schools don't even attach here on the facts.

But beyond that, let me say the reason why I felt the need to come to the floor today. The reason why I so respect Speaker JOHN BOEHNER's leadership on this issue is because of meetings that I have had in my office with oftentimes the teary-eyed parents of children in the District of Columbia.

I will just never forget last year meeting with moms and dads from the District of Columbia, most of them from the minority community, who came to me with tears in their eyes and said, "I have one child that is in a private school. I was able to take advantage of the D.C. scholarship. But because this administration and the last Congress terminated it, I cannot give that other opportunity to their younger brother or sister." And they literally came to me—at that time I was in a leadership position in the Republican majority—and they said, "Please do something about this." And my heart went out to those families.

We had an election, and now we find ourselves in a renewed Republican majority. And the Speaker of the House of Representatives today is a man who probably has a larger heart for kids as a former chairman of the Education Committee than maybe any other former Speaker in the history of this institution.

□ 1550

So we find ourselves at this moment when I can say with no small amount of emotion, I can say to those families,

yes, we are going to put the scholarship back. We are going to say to the rest of your children that they deserve the best choice for their education future as well.

It is a noble moment for this Congress. The Old Book tells us that whatever you do for the least of these, that you do for Him. I think this is one of those moments where we look at families that are struggling under the weight of some of the most beleaguered public schools in America and we are putting our arms around those families and saying, we are going to give you more choices. We are going to let you as parents, regardless of your race or income or status in society, we are going to give you the opportunity to make the same choice for a private school and a public school and a charter school as Americans that have the means to do so can make.

Let me also say I see this debate over educational choice, whether it is in the District of Columbia or in my own beloved Indiana, as all tied up in the debate over education reform that has been manifest throughout this country over the last half century and more. I mean, there was a day almost in my lifetime, just on the periphery of my lifetime, when some stood in the schoolhouse door and said, You may not come in.

But we fixed that as a nation. And now there are some in the massive education establishment in this country who stand in the schoolhouse door and say, You may not come out. You may not have the same choices that other Americans have, simply because of your means and your condition in life.

The Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act levels the playing field.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ISSA. I yield the gentleman 30 additional seconds.

Mr. PENCE. The SOAR Act opens the schoolhouse door. It reopens the door for opportunities for these families and for their children in the District of Columbia. And I believe it was before a model for the Nation, and it can be so again.

So I encourage my colleagues to join me in respectfully opposing the Norton funding amendment but vigorously supporting H.R. 471. Let's stand with those families. Let's put joy in their hearts. Let's create a boundless future for their children. Let's pass the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act.

Ms. NORTON. I respect my good friend, but I have got to stand for and with the people I represent. And if the gentleman wants to put the joy in the hearts of my parents, I challenge him to put joy in the hearts of the parents of his beloved Indiana, as he says, by bringing a national vouchers bill to the floor so that some of them may have the choice that we have not asked for.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member of our committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, as I listened to our last speaker talk about teary-eyed parents, well, guess what: I see teary-eyed parents who want to put their kids in Head Start. I just saw them last week at a town hall meeting. H.R. 1 slashes over \$1 billion from Head Start. They are in tears, too.

In my district, by the way, a total of 20,000 kids will not get Pell Grants or get \$1,000 slashed per year from Pell Grants. They are in tears, too. Do you know why? Because they will drop out of school and many of them will never return to school because they don't have the money. They are in tears, too.

I believe with all my heart that the Speaker's intentions are good. You won't hear me say anything opposite of that. But, again, I am trying to figure out how do we take the dollars that we have and spend them in the most effective and efficient manner.

When we talk about the least of these, I really want to see kids get that head start that I am talking about; and, for the life of me, maybe I am missing something, I don't see how on the one hand we talk about these children that we love, how we want to embrace them and how we want to embrace their parents and bring joy to their hearts, but then take away the very money that would allow them to be able to get to where they have got to go.

So you are right that there was a time when people could not get in that schoolhouse door all over this country. My parents, they would be walking to school for 4 miles and other kids would come riding the bus spitting on them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. NORTON. I am pleased to yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. CUMMINGS. And they were unable to get an education.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is let's embrace all of our kids. I want for my colleagues' kids, Mr. Speaker, the same thing I would want for mine. This program affects about 1,000 kids. Well, just in charter schools, there are over 27,000 in the District.

So I would just support the gentleman's amendment.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, maybe we should lighten up just a little here. Yogi Berra apparently said, "Nobody goes there anymore; it's too crowded," when referring to a restaurant that had long lines to get in. Mr. Speaker, we are finding a way to say a program isn't good because it has long lines waiting to get in. And, oddly enough, when it comes to the charter public schools that have been lauded on a wide basis here, they too have no free rights to automatically go and they have lines. Perhaps what we should be asking is, on a bipartisan basis: What could we do to reduce the lines to both to provide that opportunity to all the children in the District of Columbia?

I will say one thing in maybe a Yogi Berra-type way. If the Democrats will

come halfway to the center of the aisle to talk about how we can hit a reasonable number for spending, I will put everything on the table, at least as to my vote, to meet them the other half. But we can't simply say all cuts are bad and have no alternatives, all programs are so needy they can't be cut, and then complain even when we preserve a program.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the residents of the District of Columbia see a pattern here. The majority begins by taking away my vote in the Committee of the Whole so I can't vote on any part of this bill this afternoon, then they take away or try to take away the needle exchange program that keeps HIV-AIDS from being spread throughout the District of Columbia. Then they are also trying to take away the choice of low-income women in the District in two bills, the reproductive choice of low-income women in two bills: H.R. 1 and H.R. 3.

They have introduced a bill to put their version of gun laws on the District of Columbia, although the courts have found our new gun laws to be constitutional. This morning we hear that they are coming forward yet again with more to do to the District of Columbia by trying to erase our marriage equality law.

Now they say, after taking all of that from you, we have got something for you, something you never asked for, vouchers, instead of funding your own home rule choice, your public charter schools.

Yes, we know you fund the charter schools as well; but you then fund your choice, not ours. My amendment says if you want to fund something, ask us. Fund what we want, not what you want. And if you want vouchers, bring a national voucher bill right to the floor.

□ 1600

I can understand Republicans voting against my substitute. They will argue perhaps that it adds to the deficit. But if you vote against my substitute, then I don't see how you can vote for H.R. 471, because it certainly adds to the deficit, too; and you will be voting for your choice, not ours.

Many of you have come to the House under the banner of liberty, to get the Federal Government out of even Federal matters. Now you're trying to get into a purely local matter involving our children and our local schools. If this were your district, you would ask us to defer to you. I'm asking you to defer to our preferences. The District of Columbia asks to be treated exactly as you would want to be treated—as free and equal citizens of the United States of America and not as second-class citizens, not as children, and certainly not as the colonial subjects of the Congress of the United States.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind the Members to direct their comments to the Chair.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, in closing, we won't fund failure from this side of the dais. Yes, we're giving additional money to the failed public schools. Yes, we're giving additional money to a chartered public school system that tries valiantly to help those children trapped in those failed public schools. And, yes, we are going to make a continued small investment in children having an opportunity to find other alternatives, just as we do when children a little older get to go to Georgetown or Catholic University with Pell Grants that in fact go to these parochial colleges.

Elections have consequences. The majority a year ago had planned on simply giving it all to union schools, to government schools, because the party of government was in charge. Mr. Speaker, the election made a difference. We consider ourselves—and we try valiantly on this side of the aisle—to be the party of the people. And we believe that the small amount of money to empower people and parents to do something they choose, and they stand in lines—in lotteries, as the other side has said—to escape those schools and to have an opportunity for these scholarships, we believe they have spoken loud and clear.

And although the Delegate will talk about elections and home rule, she ignores those long lines to get out of failed public schools. She ignores the hearings we had in which people came and said, Please don't take our scholarships. And, Mr. Speaker, she even ignores her own party, and she ignores what is in her own amendment.

Mr. Speaker, her amendment would leave 216 special cases that were denied still in for this year. Her amendment would leave in, the same as the Democrats did when they closed out the previous bill, it would leave those already in school in private schools getting additional funding every year. And there's a reason. President Obama's children were not going to watch their schoolmates be thrown out because a successful program that allowed them to be side by side as peers rather than relegated to a failed school was going to be stopped.

So all we're doing is keeping a program of hope alive for the District of Columbia. And I have never been so insulted to be told that if we give money, we're bad; and if we don't give money every place the other side wants it, we're bad. We're trying to give the best we can to parental choice to failed school districts.

With that, I urge the defeat of this amendment, that does nothing but retain the public school status quo that has failed, and the passage of the underlying bill.

Mr. ISSA. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 185, nays 237, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 202]

YEAS—185

Ackerman Fudge
 Altmire Garamendi
 Andrews Gonzalez
 Baca Green, Al
 Baldwin Green, Gene
 Barrow Grijalva
 Bass (CA) Gutierrez
 Becerra Hanabusa
 Berkley Hastings (FL)
 Berman Heinrich
 Biggart Higgins
 Bishop (GA) Himes
 Bishop (NY) Hinchey
 Blumenauer Hinojosa
 Boren Hirono
 Boswell Holden
 Brady (PA) Holt
 Braley (IA) Honda
 Brown (FL) Hoyer
 Butterfield Insee
 Capps Israel
 Capuano Jackson (IL)
 Cardoza Jackson Lee
 Carnahan (TX)
 Carney Johnson (GA)
 Carson (IN) Johnson, E. B.
 Castor (FL) Kaptur
 Chandler Keating
 Cicilline Kildee
 Clarke (MI) Kind
 Clarke (NY) Kissell
 Clay Kucinich
 Cleaver Langevin
 Clyburn Larsen (WA)
 Cohen Larson (CT)
 Connolly (VA) Lee (CA)
 Conyers Levin
 Cooper Lewis (GA)
 Costa Loebsack
 Costello Lofgren, Zoe
 Courtney Lowey
 Crowley Lujan
 Cuellar Lynch
 Cummings Maloney
 Davis (CA) Markey
 Davis (IL) Matheson
 DeFazio Matsui
 DeGette McCarthy (NY)
 DeLauro McCollum
 Deutch McDermott
 Dicks McGovern
 Dingell McIntyre
 Doggett McNerney
 Dold Meeks
 Doyle Michaud
 Edwards Miller (NC)
 Ellison Miller, George
 Engel Moore
 Eshoo Moran
 Farr Murphy (CT)
 Fattah Nadler
 Filner Napolitano
 Frank (MA) Neal

NAYS—237

Adams Bishop (UT)
 Aderholt Black
 Akin Blackburn
 Alexander Bonner
 Amash Bono Mack
 Austria Boustany
 Bachmann Brady (TX)
 Bachus Brooks
 Barletta Broun (GA)
 Bartlett Buchanan
 Bass (NH) Buschon
 Benishek Buerkle
 Berg Burgess
 Bilbray Burton (IN)
 Bilirakis Calvert

Crenshaw
 Critz
 Culberson
 Davis (KY)
 Denham
 Dent
 DesJarlais
 Diaz-Balart
 Donnelly (IN)
 Dreier
 Duffy
 Duncan (SC)
 Duncan (TN)
 Ellmers
 Emerson
 Farenthold
 Fincher
 Fitzpatrick
 Flake
 Fleischmann
 Fleming
 Flores
 Forbes
 Fortenberry
 Foy
 Franks (AZ)
 Gallegly
 Gardner
 Garrett
 Gerlach
 Gibbs
 Gibson
 Gingrey (GA)
 Gohmert
 Goodlatte
 Gosar
 Gowdy
 Griffin (AR)
 Griffith (VA)
 Grimm
 Guinta
 Guthrie
 Hall
 Hanna
 Harper
 Harris
 Hartzler
 Schiff
 Schrader
 Schwartz
 Scott (VA)
 Scott, David
 Serrano
 Sewell
 Sherman
 Sires
 Slaughter
 Speier
 Stark
 Sutton
 Thompson (CA)
 Thompson (MS)
 Tierney
 Tonko
 Towns
 Tsongas
 Van Hollen
 Velázquez
 Visclosky
 Walz (MN)
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Waters
 Watt
 Waxman
 Weiner
 Welch
 Wilson (FL)
 Woolsey
 Wu
 Yarmuth
 Young (AK)

Jordan
 Kelly
 King (IA)
 King (NY)
 Kingston
 Kinzinger (IL)
 Kline
 Labrador
 Lamborn
 Lance
 Landry
 Lankford
 Latham
 LaTourette
 Latta
 Lewis (CA)
 Lipinski
 LoBiondo
 Long
 Lucas
 Luetkemeyer
 Lummis
 Lungren, Daniel
 E.
 Mack
 Manzullo
 Marchant
 Marino
 McCarthy (CA)
 McCaul
 McClintock
 McCotter
 McHenry
 McKeon
 McKinley
 McMorris
 Rodgers
 Meehan
 Mica
 Miller (FL)
 Miller (MI)
 Miller, Gary
 Mulvaney
 Murphy (PA)
 Myrick
 Neugebauer
 Noem
 Nugent
 Nunes
 Nunnelee
 Olson
 Palazzo
 Hensarling
 Herger
 Paul
 Paulsen
 Pearce
 Pence
 Peters
 Petri
 Pitts
 Poe (TX)
 Pompeo
 Posey
 Price (GA)
 Quayle
 Reed
 Rehberg
 Reichert
 Renacci
 Ribble
 Rigell
 Rivera
 Roby
 Roe (TN)
 Rogers (AL)
 Rogers (KY)
 Rogers (MI)
 Rohrabacher
 Rokita
 Rooney
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross (FL)
 Royce
 Runyan
 Ryan (OH)
 Ryan (WI)
 Scalise
 Schilling
 Schmidt
 Schock
 Schweikert
 Scott (SC)
 Scott, Austin
 Sensenbrenner
 Sessions
 Shimkus
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smith (WA)
 Southerland
 Starns
 Stivers
 Stutzman
 Sullivan
 Terry
 Thompson (PA)
 Thornberry
 Tiberi
 Tipton
 Turner
 Upton
 Walberg
 Walden
 Walsh (IL)
 Paul
 Webster
 West
 Westmoreland
 Whitfield
 Wilson (SC)
 Wittman
 Wolf
 Womack
 Woodall
 Yoder
 Young (FL)
 Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—10

Barton (TX) Granger
 Campbell Graves (GA)
 Frelinghuysen Graves (MO)
 Giffords Pascrell

□ 1629

Messrs. SCHWEIKERT, RENACCI, COFFMAN of Colorado, YOUNG of Florida, and FORBES changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Messrs. CARSON of Indiana, RANGEL, GRIJALVA, ALTMIRE, DOLD, and CLEAVER changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I make a point of order against consideration of this bill because the legislation violates clause 10 of rule XXI which states

that it is not in order to consider a bill if it has the effect of increasing spending for the current year and a 5-year window. CBO estimates this bill will cost \$500 million over 5 years without an offset in the bill.

□ 1630

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, "We are setting PAYGO aside and instituting Cut-As-You-Go, which means if there is any spending called for in any new way or authorization, that there has to be some cutting somewhere." ERIC CANTOR.

Further, the Speaker said:

"Very simply under the Cut-Go rule, if it is your intention to create a new government program, you must also terminate or reduce spending on an existing government program of equal or greater size—in the same bill."

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, as we already know, on January 5, there was a violation of the rules where Members failed to take the oath when they were not in the room.

On February 9: Failed to offer a proper constitutionality statement with legislation that was offered.

On March 3: Failed to require a three-fifths majority for the passage of a bill that raised tax rates.

On March 17, we failed to make legislation available for 72 hours.

And now we are failing to include an offset for a new government program required under these rules under Cut-Go.

In order for these rules to be taken seriously, we can't simply say, Because it's a favorite program of the Speaker, we're going to waive the rules. The rules are there for a reason. We voted on those rules, and they were made an important part of the change of hands in this House. When you have statements like this by the Speaker, they should be taken seriously. There is no argument that the funds in this bill are simply not paid for, and I insist on my point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is not aware of any point of order against the pending measure that would be timely or cognizable at this time.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. WEINER. Is it not the rules of the House that, under clause 10(a) of rule XXI, what the Speaker articulated in this sentence is in fact the rule, that if you have money that needs to be offset, it has to be offset in the same bill? And it is further not the case that in this bill, it has been stipulated on both sides that this expense of \$300 million over 5 years is not paid for.

Is that or is that not the rule of the House?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The House does have a clause 10 of rule XXI. That rule does not support a point

of order at this stage of the proceedings.

Mr. WEINER. The rule exists, but we don't need to follow it.

I withdraw my parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point is that the gentleman is untimely.

Mr. WEINER. Further parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. WEINER. It's a simple question: Doesn't the rule stipulated here exist? And is the only reason we're not following it is that I didn't get to the floor in time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not respond to political commentary.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. CUMMINGS. Yes, I am, in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the dispensing of the reading, and I reserve a point of order against the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order is reserved.

The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Cummings moves to recommit the bill, H.R. 471, to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. FUNDING FOR DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—From the funds appropriated under section 2, the Secretary of Education (in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall provide funds to the Mayor of the District of Columbia (in this Act referred to as the "Mayor"), if the Mayor agrees to the requirements described in subsection (b), for—

(1) the District of Columbia public schools for continued improvements in the academic achievement of all students in the District of Columbia public schools;

(2) the District of Columbia public charter schools for continued improvements in the academic achievement of all students in the District of Columbia public charter schools; and

(3) special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) for students eligible for

such services in the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools.

(b) CONDITION OF RECEIPT OF FUNDS.—As a condition of receiving funds under this Act, the Mayor shall—

(1) enter into an agreement with the Secretary to monitor and evaluate the use of funds authorized and appropriated for the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools under this Act; and

(2) ensure that the funds are used by the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools for continued improvements in the academic achievement of all students in the District of Columbia public schools and the District of Columbia public charter schools, respectively, by using effective methods and instructional strategies, which are based on scientifically based research, that strengthen the core academic program of schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6316).

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2012 and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years, of which—

(1) \$10,000,000 shall be made available to carry out paragraph (1) of section 1(a) for each fiscal year;

(2) \$10,000,000 shall be made available to carry out paragraph (2) of section 1(a) for each fiscal year; and

(3) \$10,000,000 shall be made available to carry out paragraph (3) of section 1(a) for each fiscal year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from California continue to reserve his point of order?

Mr. ISSA. No, I do not.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman withdraws his point of order.

The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, the final amendment before us would accomplish two important goals: First, the amendment would cut the funding authorized by H.R. 471 in half, thereby reducing the Federal deficit over the next 5 years by \$150 million below what was authorized for expenditure in the base text of H.R. 471.

We have heard a lot of rhetoric from the other side today, Mr. Speaker. But one thing is clear: Voting for this motion will save \$150 million over 5 years.

So the question for my Republican colleagues is will you be true to your promises to address the deficit, or will you put these promises aside to support a pet project that advances a narrow ideological agenda?

Second, instead of spending money on a miniscule fraction of students who would receive a voucher, this amendment would target scarce Federal resources to areas where they would do the most good: D.C. public schools, charter schools, and special education/IDEA activities.

As we have discussed, students participating in the existing D.C. voucher program have shown no statistically significant improvement in reading or math skills. By contrast, students in the D.C. public schools and charter schools have shown significant gains

over the last few years. This amendment would direct funds to support schools that have been proven to improve student achievement. This amendment would also provide funds to support special education and IDEA-related programs in the District.

□ 1640

IDEA funding goes toward critical services for children with disabilities, such as early intervention, support for special education teachers, and assistance to help students gain access to a suitable curriculum.

Since the enactment of IDEA, achievement among students served by this program has improved dramatically, but more progress must be made.

As Mayor Gray discussed Monday in his State of the District address, D.C. has been unable to serve all of its special needs kids in public facilities and is paying nearly \$250 million to send students to nonpublic schools that can serve disabled students' unique educational needs. This amendment would help D.C. better serve students who need special education services in the public system.

Importantly, let it be clear that if you vote "yes" on this motion, the amendment it proposes will be voted on immediately following this debate. That vote will be followed by a vote on final passage of the bill. Adoption of this amendment will not delay consideration of this legislation; and, therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote for deficit reduction. I urge my colleagues to direct scarce Federal dollars where they will do the most good.

I urge a "yes" vote on this final amendment to the bill.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. The point of this amendment is, if you're going to spend this money in violation of the rule and you're going to create additional deficit, you at least ought to spend it on something that's effective and that works for the children and improves their educational opportunity.

Investing in the D.C. voucher program that has now run over a period of years by every study that has been done on it says that these students are doing no better than when they left the school, but we're spending \$100 million to educate them. They statistically are not improved over the performance of the school that they left, but we continue to spend the money on the myth that somehow this is a model program that you would replicate all over the country.

Why would you replicate a program that is so inefficient and does not provide an educational advantage for the students participating in it?

I understand their parents who chose them to participate in the voucher program feel they made a good decision, but that's not a mark of whether or not they're getting the educational opportunity that they're entitled to.

With Mr. CUMMINGS' amendment, you can invest in what is working. You can invest in the public schools where African American high school students have seen double-digit gains in reading and math, and the percentage of high school students that have achieved advance status in reading and math has more than doubled. The percentage of special education students achieving proficient status has more than doubled. These schools, public and public charter schools, are working for the children of D.C.

But the Republicans would have you insist that what you really ought to do is take \$100 billion in new deficit spending and park it in this voucher program because of their commitment on an ideological basis, but not on programs that work. We ought to choose the programs that work for the children of the District of Columbia.

Mr. ISSA. I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. We spent an hour and 40 minutes discussing the bill and the amendment, and at least the delegate from the District of Columbia attempted to move these dollars all to the public school system.

This bill, in fact, not only denies the children who are in these programs today, some of them side by side with the President's children; but, in fact, it cuts funding for public education.

Under this motion to recommit, the funding for public education on a yearly basis would go from \$40 million to \$20 million. There would be less money in the public school system, in addition to being no money for Opportunity Scholarships.

I oppose the motion to recommit and urge the support of the underlying bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 185, noes 238, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 203]

AYES—185

Ackerman	Baldwin	Berkley
Altmire	Barrow	Berman
Andrews	Bass (CA)	Bishop (GA)
Baca	Becerra	Bishop (NY)

Blumenauer	Heinrich	Pelosi
Boren	Higgins	Perlmutter
Boswell	Himes	Peters
Brady (PA)	Hinchee	Peterson
Braley (IA)	Hinojosa	Polis
Brown (FL)	Hirono	Price (NC)
Butterfield	Holden	Quigley
Capps	Holt	Rahall
Capuano	Honda	Rangel
Cardoza	Hoyer	Reyes
Carnahan	Inslee	Richardson
Carney	Israel	Richmond
Carson (IN)	Jackson (IL)	Ross (AR)
Castor (FL)	Jackson Lee	Rothman (NJ)
Chandler	(TX)	Royal-Allard
Cicilline	Johnson (GA)	Ruppersberger
Clarke (MI)	Johnson, E. B.	Rush
Clarke (NY)	Kaptur	Ryan (OH)
Clay	Keating	Sánchez, Linda
Cleaver	Kildee	T.
Clyburn	Kind	Sanchez, Loretta
Cohen	Kissell	Sarbanes
Connolly (VA)	Kucinich	Schakowsky
Conyers	Langevin	Schiff
Cooper	Larsen (WA)	Schrader
Costa	Larson (CT)	Schwartz
Costello	Lee (CA)	Scott (VA)
Courtney	Levin	Scott, David
Critz	Lewis (GA)	Serrano
Crowley	Loebsock	Sewell
Cuellar	Lofgren, Zoe	Sherman
Cummings	Lowey	Sires
Davis (CA)	Luján	Slaughter
Davis (IL)	Lynch	Smith (WA)
DeFazio	Maloney	Speier
DeGette	Markey	Stark
DeLauro	Matheson	Sutton
Deutch	Matsui	Thompson (CA)
Dicks	McCarthy (NY)	Thompson (MS)
Dingell	McCollum	Tierney
Doggett	McDermott	Tonko
Doyle	McGovern	Towns
Edwards	McIntyre	Tsongas
Ellison	McNerney	Van Hollen
Engel	Meeks	Velázquez
Eshoo	Michaud	Visclosky
Farr	Miller (NC)	Walz (MN)
Fattah	Miller, George	Wasserman
Filner	Moore	Schultz
Frank (MA)	Moran	Waters
Fudge	Murphy (CT)	Watt
Garamendi	Nadler	Waxman
Gonzalez	Napolitano	Weiner
Green, Al	Neal	Welch
Green, Gene	Oliver	Wilson (FL)
Grijalva	Owens	Woolsey
Gutierrez	Pallone	Wu
Hanabusa	Pastor (AZ)	Yarmuth
Hastings (FL)	Payne	

NOES—238

Adams	Chaffetz	Gibbs
Aderholt	Chu	Gibson
Akin	Coble	Gingrey (GA)
Alexander	Coffman (CO)	Gohmert
Amash	Cole	Goodlatte
Austria	Conaway	Gosar
Bachmann	Cravaack	Gowdy
Bachus	Crawford	Granger
Barletta	Crenshaw	Graves (GA)
Bartlett	Culberson	Graves (MO)
Bass (NH)	Davis (KY)	Griffin (AR)
Benishek	Denham	Griffith (VA)
Berg	Dent	Grimm
Biggart	DesJarlais	Guinta
Bilbray	Diaz-Balart	Guthrie
Bilirakis	Dold	Hall
Bishop (UT)	Donnelly (IN)	Hanna
Black	Dreier	Harper
Blackburn	Duffy	Harris
Bonner	Duncan (SC)	Hartzler
Bono Mack	Duncan (TN)	Hastings (WA)
Boustany	Ellmers	Hayworth
Brady (TX)	Emerson	Heck
Brooks	Farenthold	Heller
Broun (GA)	Fincher	Hensarling
Buchanan	Fitzpatrick	Herger
Bucshon	Flake	Herrera Beutler
Buerkle	Fleischmann	Huelskamp
Burgess	Fleming	Huizenga (MI)
Burton (IN)	Flores	Hultgren
Calvert	Forbes	Hunter
Camp	Fortenberry	Hurt
Canseco	Fox	Issa
Cantor	Franks (AZ)	Jenkins
Capito	Gardner	Gallegly
Carter	Garrett	Johnson (IL)
Cassidy	Gerlach	Johnson (OH)
Chabot		Johnson, Sam
		Jones

Jordan	Mulvaney	Scalise	Gardner	Long	Rogers (MI)	Neal	Roybal-Allard	Stark
Kelly	Murphy (PA)	Schilling	Garrett	Lucas	Rohrabacher	Olver	Ruppersberger	Sutton
King (IA)	Myrick	Schmidt	Gerlach	Luetkemeyer	Rokita	Owens	Rush	Thompson (CA)
King (NY)	Neugebauer	Schock	Gibbs	Lummis	Rooney	Pallone	Ryan (OH)	Thompson (MS)
Kingston	Noem	Schweikert	Gibson	Lungren, Daniel	Ros-Lehtinen	Pastor (AZ)	Sánchez, Linda	Tierney
Kinzinger (IL)	Nugent	Scott (SC)	Gingrey (GA)	E.	Roskam	Paul	T.	Tonko
Kline	Nunes	Scott, Austin	Gohmert	Mack	Ross (FL)	Payne	Sanchez, Loretta	Towns
Labrador	Nunnelee	Sensenbrenner	Goodlatte	Manzullo	Royce	Pelosi	Sarbanes	Tsongas
Lamborn	Olson	Sessions	Gosar	Marchant	Runyan	Perlmutter	Schakowsky	Van Hollen
Lance	Palazzo	Shimkus	Gowdy	Marino	Ryan (WI)	Peters	Schiff	Visclosky
Landry	Paul	Shuster	Granger	McCarthy (CA)	Scalise	Peterson	Schrader	Walz (MN)
Lankford	Paulsen	Simpson	Graves (GA)	McCaul	Schilling	Polis	Schwartz	Wasserman
Latham	Pearce	Smith (NE)	Griffin (AR)	McClintock	Schmidt	Price (NC)	Scott (VA)	Schultz
LaTourette	Pence	Smith (NJ)	Grimm	McCotter	Schock	Quigley	Scott, David	Waters
Latta	Petri	Smith (TX)	Guinta	McHenry	Schweikert	Rahall	Serrano	Watt
Lewis (CA)	Pitts	Southernland	Guthrie	McKeon	Scott (SC)	Rangel	Sewell	Waxman
Lipinski	Poe (TX)	Stearns	Hall	McKinley	Scott, Austin	Reichert	Sherman	Weiner
LoBiondo	Pompeo	Stivers	Hanna	McMorris	Sensenbrenner	Reyes	Simpson	Welch
Long	Posey	Sullivan	Harper	Rodgers	Sessions	Richardson	Sires	Wilson (FL)
Lucas	Price (GA)	Terry	Harris	Meehan	Shimkus	Richmond	Slaughter	Woolsey
Luetkemeyer	Quayle	Thompson (PA)	Hartzler	Miller (FL)	Shuster	Ross (AR)	Smith (WA)	Wu
Lummis	Reed	Thornberry	Hastings (WA)	Miller (MI)	Smith (NE)	Rothman (NJ)	Speier	Yarmuth
Lungren, Daniel	Rehberg	Tiberi	Hayworth	Miller, Gary	Smith (NJ)			
E.	Reichert	Tipton	Heck	Mulvaney	Smith (TX)			
Mack	Renacci	Turner	Heller	Murphy (PA)	Southerland			
Manzullo	Ribble	Upton	Hensarling	Myrick	Stearns			
Marchant	Rigell	Walberg	Herrera Beutler	Neugebauer	Stivers			
Marino	Rivera	Walden	Huelskamp	Noem	Stutzman			
McCarthy (CA)	Roby	Walsh (IL)	Huizenga (MI)	Nugent	Sullivan			
McCaul	Roe (TN)	Webster	Hultgren	Nunes	Terry			
McClintock	Rogers (AL)	West	Hurt	Nunnelee	Thompson (PA)			
McCotter	Rogers (KY)	Westmoreland	Issa	Olson	Thornberry			
McHenry	Rogers (MI)	Whitfield	Jenkins	Palazzo	Tiberi			
McKeon	Rohrabacher	Wilson (SC)	Johnson (OH)	Paulsen	Tipton			
McKinley	Rokita	Wittman	Johnson, Sam	Pearce	Turner			
McMorris	Rooney	Wolf	Jones	Pence	Upton			
Rodgers	Ros-Lehtinen	Womack	Jordan	Petri	Walberg			
Meehan	Roskam	Woodall	Kelly	Pitts	Walden			
Mica	Ross (FL)	Yoder	King (IA)	Poe (TX)	Walsh (IL)			
Miller (FL)	Royce	Young (AK)	King (NY)	Pompeo	Webster			
Miller (MI)	Runyan	Young (FL)	Kingston	Posey	West			
Miller, Gary	Ryan (WI)	Young (IN)	Kinzinger (IL)	Price (GA)	Westmoreland			

NOT VOTING—9

Barton (TX)	Giffords	Platts
Campbell	Pascrell	Shuler
Frelinghuysen	Pingree (ME)	Stutzman

□ 1701

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 225, noes 195, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 204]

AYES—225

Adams	Broun (GA)	Davis (KY)
Aderholt	Buchanan	Denham
Akin	Bucshon	Dent
Alexander	Buerkle	DesJarlais
Amash	Burgess	Diaz-Balart
Austria	Burton (IN)	Dreier
Bachmann	Calvert	Duffy
Bachus	Camp	Duncan (SC)
Barletta	Canseco	Duncan (TN)
Bartlett	Cantor	Ellmers
Bass (NH)	Capito	Emerson
Benishkek	Carter	Farenthold
Berg	Cassidy	Pincher
Bilbray	Chabot	Fitzpatrick
Bilirakis	Chaffetz	Flake
Bishop (UT)	Coble	Fleischmann
Black	Coffman (CO)	Fleming
Blackburn	Cole	Flores
Bonner	Conaway	Forbes
Bono Mack	Cravaack	Fortenberry
Boustany	Crawford	Fox
Brady (TX)	Crenshaw	Franks (AZ)
Brooks	Culberson	Galgely

Ackerman	Cuellar
Altmire	Cummings
Andrews	Davis (CA)
Baca	Davis (IL)
Baldwin	DeFazio
Barrow	DeGette
Bass (CA)	DeLauro
Becerra	Deutch
Berkley	Dicks
Berman	Dingell
Biggert	Doggett
Bishop (GA)	Dold
Bishop (NY)	Donnelly (IN)
Blumenauer	Doyle
Boren	Edwards
Boswell	Ellison
Brady (PA)	Engel
Braley (IA)	Eshoo
Brown (FL)	Farr
Butterfield	Fattah
Capps	Filner
Capuano	Frank (MA)
Cardoza	Fudge
Carnahan	Garamendi
Carney	Gonzalez
Carson (IN)	Graves (MO)
Castor (FL)	Green, Al
Chandler	Green, Gene
Chu	Griffith (VA)
Cicilline	Grijalva
Clarke (MI)	Gutierrez
Clarke (NY)	Hanabusa
Clay	Hastings (FL)
Cleaver	Heinrich
Clyburn	Higgins
Cohen	Himes
Connolly (VA)	Hinche
Conyers	Hinojosa
Cooper	Hirono
Costa	Holden
Costello	Holt
Courtney	Honda
Critz	Hoyer
Crowley	Inslee

NOES—195

Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee
(TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kildee
Kind
Kissell
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
LoBiondo
Loeb
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lujan
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (CT)
Nadler
Napolitano

NOT VOTING—12

Barton (TX)	Herger	Pingree (ME)
Campbell	Hunter	Platts
Frelinghuysen	Mica	Shuler
Giffords	Pascrell	Velázquez

□ 1708

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 204, I was not present for the vote due to my participation, as Co-Chair of the House Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Task Force, in a meeting with Department of Defense officials regarding the treatment of wounded warriors suffering from TBIs.

Had I been present, I would have voted “nay.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PASCHELL. Mr. Speaker, on March 30th, I was unavoidably detained and missed three rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall vote #202 on agreeing to the Norton Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute. Had I been present I would have voted “yea” on rollcall vote #203, on the Motion to Recommit H.R. 471 With Instructions. And finally, had I been present, I would have voted an emphatic “nay” on rollcall vote #204, on passage of H.R. 471, the “Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act.”

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 30, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, H-232 U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 30, 2011 at 9:32 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1079.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.