The Senator from Montana [Mr. BURNS] for Mr. LEAHY, proposes an amendment numbered 3147.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 2, line 10, strike ''May 1, 1978'' and insert ''January 1, 1978''.

On page 2, line 12, strike ''October 1, 1978'' and insert ''January 1, 1978''.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I know that Senator ROBB strongly supports this bill and I was glad to work with him and Senator ASHCROFT to expedite Judiciary Committee action in February and finally to achieve Senate consideration today.

I support extending the educational assistance benefits to the families of public safety officers who died in the line of duty. I supported those efforts when we acted for federal officers' families back in 1996 and when we extended those benefits to State and local officers' families in 1998.

A number of us joined with Senator SPECTER and Senator KOHL back in 1996 to pass the Federal Law Enforcement Dependents Assistance Act. Our efforts grew out of the Ruby Ridge investigation and our shared concern to help the family of U.S. Marshal Bill Degan and the families of others killed in the line of duty.

At the time we were unable to gain the consensus needed to authorize these education benefits to State and local law enforcement officers. Some thought that would cost too much. We came back in 1997 and 1998 and were able to pass the Public Safety Officers Educational Benefits Assistance Act to extend these educational benefits to State and local public safety officers. We were led in that effort by Senators SPECTER and BIDEN.

I am delighted to see these benefits expanded further by extending them retroactively by this bill, S. 1638. We were told in February that the estimated cost of this expansion would be $125 million. Since then we have received a significantly revised estimate from the CBO greatly diminishing the estimated costs. I do not know whether CBO was wrong in February or is wrong now, but I commend Senator ASHCROFT and all the sponsors of this measure for their willingness to make this investment and authorize these payments.

I have said that rather than move the eligibility dates back approximately between 14 and 19 years, we should consider removing them altogether. I do not want some to be penalized by the arbitrary selection of the eligibility date. In this regard I have urged an amendment to take the eligibility dates back to at least January 1978, in order to cover at least one, and possibly more, Vermont families who suffered the loss of a family member who was a public safety officer earlier that year. The family of Arnold Magoon, a Vermont game warden, should not be penalized again because he died on April 27 and not after May 1 or October 1 of 1978.

I said in February when the committee considered this measure that I would be working to speed its passage and to help it achieve its goal of making these assistance payments as comprehensive as possible. As soon as the majority got around to suggesting consideration of this matter on Wednesday, May 10, I cleared it for consideration so that we could proceed.

In addition, I look forward to enacting additional measures that protect and assist State and local law enforcement. In particular, I was extremely disappointed last year when an anonymous Republican objection prevented S. 521, my bill to improve the Bulletproof Vest Grant Partnership Act, from passing. This bill would allow the Attorney General to waive or reduce the matching fund requirement for assisting poor and rural law enforcement units to provide this life-saving equipment to officers and prevent injury and death. I cannot understand why anyone would want to oppose that effort.

This year, in addition, I have joined again with Senator CAMPBELL to introduce S. 2413 to improve our Bulletproof Vest Grant Partnership Act by reauthorizing the program for another 3 years, raising the annual appropriation to $50 million and guaranteeing to jurisdictions with populations less than 100,000 a fair share of these resources. Senator HATCH has joined us as a cosponsor of our measure.

I hope that the Judiciary Committee and the Senate will act on these measures without additional delay, as well.

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3147) was agreed to.

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time, and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, without any intervening action, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1638), as amended, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1638

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF RETROACTIVE ELIGIBILITY DATES FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1216(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–5(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''May 1, 1992'', and inserting ''January 1, 1978,'' ; and

(2) by striking ''October 1, 1997,'' and inserting ''January 1, 1978,''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect October 1, 1999.

APPOINTMENTS

FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER FOUNDATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, pursuant to Public Law 100–702, appoints John B. White, Jr. of South Carolina, to the board of the Federal Judicial Center Foundation, vice Richard M. Rosenbaum of New York.

OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and minority leader of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Public Law 104–1, announces the joint appointment of Susan S. Robfogel, of New York, as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2000

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the hour of 9:30 a.m., on Tuesday, May 16. I further ask consent that on Tuesday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then begin a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators speaking for up to 5 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska or his designee, 45 minutes; Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts, 35 minutes; and Senator DORGAN of North Dakota, 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I further ask consent that the Senate stand in recess from the hours of 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy conferences to meet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. BURNS. For the information of all Senators, the Senate will be in a period of morning business from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. tomorrow. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the military construction appropriations bill. Any amendments prior to 2:15 p.m. must be cleared by both bill managers. However, those Senators who have general statements on the bill are encouraged to come to the floor during tomorrow morning's session. Votes are possible throughout tomorrow's session, and Senators will be notified as those votes are scheduled.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous

consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, last Tuesday, the Senate suspended consideration of the education bill. I hope that our Republican friends have just temporarily suspended the bill, and not expelled it. We owe it to the nation's schools, students, parents, and communities to complete action on this priority legislation.

So far, we have considered only eight amendments to the bill over six different days.

When the bankruptcy bill was on the floor, our Republican colleagues did everything they could to satisfy the credit card companies. That bill was debated for 16 days, and 67 amendments were considered.

Obviously, when the credit card companies want a bill, our Republican friends put everything else aside to get it done. But when it comes to education, the voices of parents and children and schools and communities go unheard.

We should be debating education. It's a top priority for parents. It's a top priority for communities. It's a top priority for the country. And, it should be a top priority for Congress.

It is wrong for the Senate to leave the nation's schools with so much uncertainty about whether and when they will get urgently needed help to ensure better teachers, modern schools, smaller classes, and safe classrooms.

Democrats are ready to debate and address these issues now, and finish Senate consideration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. But, we have no assurance from the Republican majority that we will be able to do so.

Clearly, there are strong disagreements about how to address the issue of education reform. But, we should all agree to make it a top priority for final action.

Republicans have made block grants the centerpiece of their education proposal. But, block grants are the wrong approach. They undermine the targeting of scarce resources to the highest education priorities. They eliminate critical accountability provisions that ensure better results for all children. The block grant approach abandons the national commitment to help the nation's children obtain a good education through proven effective reforms of public schools.

The lack of commitment by our Republican colleagues to genuine education reform is also clear in the recent actions by the Senate and House Appropriations Committee.

Both bills eliminate critical funding for reducing class size and improving teacher quality. Instead, they put some of those funds into the title VI block grant.

Both bills do nothing to guarantee communities help for modernizing their school buildings.

Both bills eliminate critical funding for helping states to increase accountability for results and turn around schools that aren't getting results.

At the same time that they expand support for block grants and eliminate support for greater accountability, Republicans are cutting funds to communities to improve education. Under the President's budget request, communities would have received a total of $4.05 billion in the coming fiscal year to reduce class size, modernize school buildings, and improve teacher quality. The Republican bill block grants these programs and cuts total funding by $2 billion below the President's request in the House and $500 million below the President's request in the Senate.

Under the Republican block grant scheme, communities get less aid and parents get no guarantee that their children's classes will be smaller, that their teachers will be better qualified, or that their schools will be safe and modern.

Block grants are the wrong direction for education and the wrong direction for the nation. They do nothing to encourage change in public schools.

In the Republican ESEA bill, states are not held accountable for educational results until after 5 years. By that time, many students will have lost five years of potential gains in student achievement.

Block grants also leave the door open for needless waste and abuse. They provide no focus on proven effective strategies to help schools. Senator DEWINE, in urging increased accountability, pointed out the poor history of states and local school districts in spending Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities funds. He characterized those dollars as being ''raided'' for pet projects or to support ineffective methods.

Under block grants, school districts and schools can use scarce public tax dollars to support fads and gimmicks, with no basis in research or proven practice. They can even use the funds to support the football team, buy computer games, or buy new office furniture, if they decide that these uses serve so-called ''educational purposes.''

In short, block grants provide no assurance that federal education funds will be used where they're needed most—to improve instruction and teacher quality, strengthen curriculum, reduce class size, provide after-school learning opportunities, or support other proven strategies for helping all students reach high standards.

The Republican block grant also undermines local control, because it concentrates educational decision-making at the state level. By authorizing the state to decide whether it will enter into a performance agreement, the Republican bill gives the state ultimate authority to determine the parameters of the agreement, including which schools and which school districts will receive funds, and how funds may be spent. Far from giving local districts flexibility, as the policies and waiver provisions under current law do, the Republican block grants will increase the power of governors over local education policy at the expense of local districts, local school officials, and parents.

The American people want a strong partnership that includes the important involvement of parents, local school boards, local community authorities, States, and the Federal Government. We are not looking to take over education. We are saying that educating the nation's children is a top national priority, and Congress ought to be a strong partner in efforts to improve education.

The Republican proposal says there will only be one member in the education partnership, and that will be the State. It won't be the local community or parents, because they give all of the funds to the States. Then the States make the judgment about how it is going to go down to the local level.

Parents want a guarantee that, with scarce resources, we are going to have accountability for results and for getting national priorities. They know and we know small class sizes work. We guarantee there will be a well-qualified teacher in every classroom.

We guarantee more afterschool programs, which are absolutely essential to help and assist children and enhance their academic achievement and accomplishment.

We guarantee strong accountability provisions.

We guarantee resources for technology in schools so we can eliminate the digital divide, as Senator MIKULSKI speaks to with great knowledge, awareness, and, correctness.

But all of those efforts I have just mentioned are at risk with the proposal of the Republicans to just provide a blank check to the States and let the States work out what they might.

The Republican block grant approach abdicates our responsibility to do all we can to improve the current federal efforts. All that the GOP approach does is hand off the many current problems to states and local communities to solve.

Block grants are particularly harmful, because they abdicate our responsibility to help those most in need, such