CONGRATULATING A.B. COMBS LEADERSHIP MAGNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School, in Raleigh, NC, for being recognized as the top magnet school in the country. On May 16, 2014, A.B. Combs was awarded the prestigious Dr. Ronald P. Simpson School of Merit Excellence Award, which recognizes one school for innovative programming, academic achievement, and promoting diversity. A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School prides themselves on their leadership model program, which is based on Dr. Steven Covey's book ''The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.'' It seeks to educate the whole child, not just academically but socially, emotionally, and culturally.

A.B. Combs has set the standard for magnet schools. Annually, they host an international leadership day, where educators from around the world come to learn from their success. Magnet schools such as A.B. Combs provide parents with expanded options for their child's education—options that will ensure students aren't confined to schools that might not be serving their individual needs. For that reason, I am proud of the success A.B. Combs has achieved as recognized by this award. Congratulations to the staff, parents, students, and the community at A.B. Combs for this award. It is well deserved.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MOYNIHAN REPORT

• Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Hoover Institution.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MOYNIHAN REPORT

I first met Pat Moynihan four years after he released his explosive report on the circumstances of African-American families in the middle of the civil rights era. I was 28 years old then, and by a stroke of providence, had found myself sitting at a desk in the West Wing of the White House next to Bryce Harlow, President Nixon's first senior staff appointment. My job was answering Mr. Harlow's mail, returning his phone calls, and absorbing his wisdom. It was a perfect PhD in politics and government for a young man.

Downstairs were two real PhD's. At one end of the Hall, Gen. Alexander Haig performed the same sort of services for Henry Kissinger. At the other end was Professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan. By another stroke of Providence, President Nixon had attracted these Harvard professors to the West Wing where they joined one of the most talented and intellectually diverse teams of White House advisers of any first term President of the United States.

I have always thought, by the way, that if the president had paid more attention to his wiser, more broad gauged advisors in the White House—Harlow, Arthur Burns, Kissinger, Moynihan, and cabinet officials George Schultz and Mel Laird—instead of the advance men who guarded access to the Oval Office that there never would have been a Watergate affair.

The White House then was brimming with talent. Jim Keogh, the former editor of TIME, shepherded a quartet of young speechwriters: Bill Safire, Pat Buchanan, Lee Heubner, Ray Price. Liddy Hanford—now Elizabeth Dole—worked in the consumer affairs office.

And Pat himself brought with him from Harvard four of his brightest students: Checker Finn, later the nation's foremost education gadfly; the Rhodes Scholar John Price; Chris DeMuth, later head of American Enterprise Institute; and Dick Blumenthal, now my colleague in the United States Senate.

Steve Hess, Pat's Deputy in 1969, has detailed in his new book, ''The Professor and the President'', how fascinated Nixon was with Moynihan who ''advised the President on what books to read, to whom he should award the Presidential Medal of Freedom and how not to redecorate the Oval Office.'' Moynihan persuaded Nixon to recommend the Family Assistance Plan, a negative income tax that was the forerunner of today's Earned Income Tax Credit.

Looking back 50 years, that the author of such a controversial report could have been hired at all by a president of the United States and then that later this author could have been elected to the U.S. Senate three times from New York suggests the wiliness and courage of this professor with the cheerful soul of an Irish immigrant. Let's just say Pat followed the advice of his favorite character, Tammany Hall boss George Washington Plunkitt, ''I seen my opportunities, and I took 'em.''

Today, 50 years after it was written, the trend Moynihan was detailing—the rise of households led by single mothers—has grown more dramatic and cuts across all racial groups. Today more than four in 10 children in the U.S. are born outside of marriage.

In 2013, the average income for households with married couples was more than double that of households led by women with no spouse present.

Today's panelists will discuss the implications of the Moynihan Report released 50 years ago as well as the proper policy responses. In my remarks, I will be less ambitious. I will focus on what this trend means for the school—the most important secular institution designed to help children reach our country's goal for them—that every child, as much as possible, have the opportunity to begin at the same starting line.

And in case you want to step out for coffee at this point, I can jump straight to my conclusion: the school can't come close to doing it all. And neither can the government. If we want our children to be at the same starting line, there must be a revival of interest in these children and their parents from traditional sources: the religious institutions, families, and communities.

To begin with, what is a school supposed to do anyway? Professor James Coleman is often quoted as having said that the purpose of the school is to help parents do what parents don't do as well. So what have our schools traditionally done that parents did not do as well?

In 1988, I attended a conference in Rochester at which the president of Notre Dame asked, ''What is the rationale for a public school?''—schools which 90 percent of our children attend. Albert Shanker offered this answer: ''A public school is for the purpose of teaching immigrant children reading, writing and arithmetic and what it means to be an American with the hope they'll go home and teach their parents.''

But obviously in today's world, Shanker's vision of the school does not come close to doing all the things that many parents are not able to do for their children. In a Washington Post story earlier this year, Sonya Romero-Smith, a veteran teacher at Lew Wallace Elementary School in Albuquerque, said this: ''When they first come in my door in the morning, the first thing I do is an inventory of immediate needs: Did you eat? Are you clean? A big part of my job is making them feel safe.''

The article was reporting that, for the first time in at least 50 years, more than half of public school students are eligible for the federal program that provides free or reduced-price school lunches. That means that their family's income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty line, or below about $44,000 for a family of four. Many of them, of course, are far poorer than that.

Romero-Smith said she helps her students clean up with bathroom wipes and toothbrushes, and stocks a drawer with clean socks, underwear, pants and shoes. The job of teacher has expanded to ''counselor, therapist, doctor, parent, attorney,'' she said.

If parents are unable to meet the needs of these children, should the school try to meet those needs? If the school does not, who does?

Part of understanding the answer to that question may come from a study last year that was not unlike the Moynihan report in that the news it delivered was uncomfortable but important. This study came from the Equality of Opportunity Project, made up of economists from Harvard and Berkeley, who looked at intergenerational mobility across areas of the U.S.—how likely a child from a low-income family is to make more money as an adult than their parents did.

The researchers determined that we are, in fact, a collection of societies—some of us live in '''lands of opportunity' with high rates of [upward] mobility across generations,'' and others in places where few children raised in low-income homes escape poverty.

The researchers looked at the anonymous tax records of millions of Americans born between 1980 and 1982, measuring their income in 2011–2012, when they were roughly 30 years old. They found five key variables that seemed to explain why some places had more upward mobility than others:

The first was segregation: Areas that are more residentially segregated by race and income have lower levels of upward mobility. The second was income inequality. The third was the quality of the K–12 school system, as measured by factors like test scores and dropout rates. The fourth was social capital—rates of civic and religious involvement.

The fifth was the strongest correlation—they found that the strongest predictor of upward mobility is family structure, such as the fraction of single parents in the area. ''Parents'' marital status does not matter purely through its effects at the individual level. Children of married parents also have higher rates of upward mobility if they live in communities with fewer single parents,'' the researchers write. Put another way, if our goal is to help every child begin at the same starting line, many children raised in single parent families have a harder time getting there.

The Equality of Opportunity Project also did a second study. This one found that economic mobility has not changed much over time and is lower in the U.S. than in most developed countries.

They write: ''For example, the probability that a child reaches the top fifth of the income distribution given parents in the bottom fifth of the income distribution is 8.4%

for children born in 1971, compared with 9.0% for those born in 1986.'' In other words, your chances of moving up the economic ladder depend a lot upon who your parents are, how much money they make—and whether or not they're married.

These are not easy conclusions to reach or easy discussions to have.

But the evidence of these long odds is strong enough that our 100,000 public schools—as well as our private schools—should do all they reasonably can to help today's American children—and their parents—to succeed.

School policies can help low-income, single-parent families get their children to the same starting line as children from better off families.

Here are 8 ideas:

1. More parental choice of schools: The most obvious and important step the federal government can take to improve the education of children is to give their parents a choice of schools.

First, we know that one of the best ways to lift a child out of poverty is to give them a good education.

Second, we know that many low-income parents are seeking these opportunities for their children and will work to get their children into better schools if they are able.

A single mom who is busy working two jobs may have a harder time getting to a parent-teacher conference, but we see in the D.C. voucher program and elsewhere that some of the fiercest advocates for school choice are single parents of children enrolled in the program.

Researchers at the American Enterprise Institute conducted a series of focus-group sessions and personal interviews with low-income urban families enrolled in the D.C. voucher program. They found that ''parents report that they want to be respected as advocates of their child's education and will fight hard to keep their child's private-school choice program if that program's future is threatened.''

A 2007 study published in Education Next found that ''parents in high-poverty schools strongly value a teacher's ability to raise student achievement and appear indifferent to student satisfaction.'' It was parents in schools serving better-off families who seemed to place less weight on academics when requesting a particular teacher for their child.

2. More charter schools: One promising way to provide more low-income parents with school choice is by creating more charter schools. In fact, one of the most exciting developments in American education in the past two decades has been the emergence of a growing number of charter schools that have demonstrated remarkable success educating disadvantaged children. The success of these schools is attributable to many factors, from close attention to student behavior and discipline to the flexibility their leaders have to put together an excellent teaching staff. But one thing that many of them have in common is that they have expanded the amount of time students spend in school, usually with longer school days.

Low-income parents, many of them single-parents, are rushing to enroll their children in these schools. I suspect that one reason is school schedules that make it easier for parents to make ends meet while knowing that their children are well cared for.

3. Different school schedules: It shouldn't be just charters that experiment with different schedules. School schedules that follow traditional work schedules—year-round, 7 am to 6 pm—would make it easier for parents to keep full-time jobs and still have the ability to be there with their child before and after school to make sure they've had breakfast in the morning, or make sure they've done their homework in the evening.

4. Flexible workplace schedules: I intend to try putting in statute authorization for employers to negotiate schedule and overtime with employees, so they know they have the full support of federal law in enabling employees to find arrangements that suit their needs. This would help working parents have the flexibility to attend parent-teacher conferences.

5. Work-site day care: Years ago in my private life, I helped start a company with Bob Keeshan of Captain Kangaroo, and my wife and a couple of others that later merged with Bright Horizons and became the largest work-site daycare provider in the country. We recognized that the number of mothers of young children working outside the home had created a need, and we helped corporations provide worksite daycare centers that were safe and good for those moms and dads as well.

6. Work-site schools: A few dozen large U.S. corporations have partnered with their local school districts to open public schools in their corporate facilities. It's a similar idea to work-site day care—it provides working parents with choice, as well as makes it easier for them to be involved with their children's care and education.

Federal policy ought to enable and at least not discourage states and local school districts and businesses from these kinds of arrangements. Policymakers can support states and school districts to take these steps to enable low-income families to get their children the education they deserve.

7. Better Teaching, Better schools: Over the long run, improving schools so that they serve students well regardless of their circumstances may have a direct effect on the challenges of single parenthood.

For example, the Harvard economist Raj Chetty has done studies showing that a good teacher improves earnings and, for girls, reduces teenage pregnancy. A study at Promise Academy in the Harlem Children's Zone found that girls attending that school, a high-performing charter school, were 12.1 percentage points less likely to have a child as a teenager.

Results like these show how great teachers and schools can put their students on track to college and, eventually, the kinds of jobs that enable them to move out of the cycle of poverty.

8. Wraparound services: Professor Coleman's suggestion was that if parents don't do it, schools should—in which case we should look at a whole range of services schools ought to be providing. This takes us far afield from the traditional role of the school described by Albert Shanker.

There are today many social programs that are not school-based—many funded by the federal government, other by the states—that are designed to support families that need help.

For example, welfare programs, child-care vouchers, Earned-Income Tax Credit, the housing allowance. The total amount spent by the federal government on these kinds of safety net programs was $398 billion in 2013, or about 12 percent of the total federal budget.

Some suggest that these services should be ''wrapped around'' the school—that the school should become the dominant institution through which children whose families are unable to provide basic supports receive them. I am not so sure. There is a limit to what the school can do and, for that matter, what the government can do.

If the challenges single parents face are so great, at the very least the government can make sure it ''does no harm'' and does nothing to discourage marriage. Yet there is strong evidence that that is precisely what the government does.

In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last year, Robert Doar of American Enterprise Institute said that our ''policies aimed at assisting low- and moderate-income households with children often penalize marriage.

Doar said that ''A single parent with two children who earns $15,000 enjoys an [Earned Income Tax Credit] benefit of about $4100. The credit decreases by 21.06 cents for every dollar a married couple earns above $15040. . . . [I]f the single parent marries someone earning $10,000, for a combined income of $25,000, [the tax credit] benefit will drop to about $2,200. The couple faces a marriage tax penalty of . . . $1,900.''

He continued: ''Similar penalties are embedded in Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, housing assistance, and child care—all of which apply to low-and moderate-income Americans. Efforts to mitigate marriage penalties have largely taken the form of tax cuts directed toward married couples. But . . . 81 percent of that relief flowed to couples earning above $75,000.''

Doar suggests that a ''host of reforms could alleviate this burden'' including: ''implementing a maximum marginal tax rate for low-income families would tamp marriage-induced hikes in rates. Providing a subsidy on individual earnings—not combined earnings (like the EITC)—would enable a low-wage American to marry someone with a child, but do so without sacrificing significant income or transfer payments. And mandatory individual filing, as done in Canada, Australia, Italy and Japan, would either require or allow low-income individuals to avoid income tax penalties.''

Perhaps the wisest advice comes from AEI fellow W. Bradford Wilcox, who says this: ''Government's role when it comes to strengthening marriage and family life is necessarily limited. Any successful twenty-first century effort to renew the fortunes of marriage in America will depend more on civic institutions, businesses, and ordinary Americans than upon federal and state efforts to strengthen family life.''

What would Pat Moynihan say today?

Well, surely it would be creative, entertaining, insightful and probably controversial. And since those on today's panels are among those who knew him best and know this subject the best, we'll let them answer that question.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. KENNETH DOBBINS

● Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Dr. Kenneth W. Dobbins on the occasion of his retirement. Dr. Dobbins has served as the president of Southeast Missouri State University for more than 15 years. The people of Missouri are grateful for Dr. Dobbins' contributions and commitment to Southeast Missouri State University and the Redhawk community.

Dr. Dobbins became the seventeenth president of Southeast Missouri State University in 1999 after serving as the university's vice president of finance and administration and executive vice president. Prior to his time with Southeast Missouri State University, he held several positions in the higher education administration at Kent State University in Ohio.

Growing up in Ohio, he earned his bachelor of science degree in accounting from the University of Akron in