point out very briefly that this amendment does not meet critical needs—no increase in the Head Start Program, and no increase in teacher training.

We just had the Carnegie Commission report a week ago that one of the principal deficiencies in our educational system is that we are not getting enough teachers that are well trained, nor are teachers getting enhanced training. We have tried to restore the administration's request in this area. The Republicans offer no additional funding for teacher training; no money for the TRIO Program, which is academic support for disadvantaged students; and no money for School to Work. These are crucial programs. Twenty years ago, if you graduated from high school you were making 65 or 70 percent of what a college graduate was making. That percentage has dropped to about 55 percent—the growing income gap that is taking place.

We tried with School to Work to move three out of four kids that do not go on to college into the private sector. It has been strongly supported by Republicans in a number of States.

Again, I refer to the distinguished Governor of Maine, the husband of our chair, who is one of the very innovative Governors in moving toward the School to Work Program, and other Republican Governors and Democratic Governors as well.

There is no money for summer jobs, even though about 40 percent of all the summer job programs have academic provisions. There were funds in terms of other education programs. I had hoped that we would take those increases and put them in for increases to the President's request here on the floor of the Senate, or in the continuing resolution. We would get a positive response—an overwhelming response—in favor of those measures.

Madam President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FUNDING EDUCATION

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Madam President, I am here to answer some of the statements made by the distinguished ranking member of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, Senator KENNEDY. Unfortunately, I did not hear all of the comments but some that I heard made by Senator KENNEDY regarding education need to be answered.

It just is not the case that education has been slashed by Republicans over the last 6 to 8 years, and I really find it very disappointing that somehow this keeps coming up. It is easy to make a statement saying education has been slashed and decimated by Republicans without any real understanding of the programs under discussion, what has been debated and what resolutions have been made because, actually, education budgets have continued to climb.

I think nearly all of us at least would acknowledge that money alone is not the answer to quality education. It certainly has been important for us to have a support system when we are asked to help with special education moneys, moneys for disadvantaged students, moneys for disabled students, for the student loan program. But money alone is not the answer.

We are now spending more than $25 billion in our budget for education, and there has to be some understanding of what it is all about. For one thing, we have dramatically increased money for Head Start programs, which are preschool programs for those young children who need most to have that assistance.

At the time we worked on the legislation to increase Head Start funding, we also incorporated changes in the program which were designed to enhance the quality of delivery of Head Start programs. Some States have outstanding Head Start programs. Other States have not pulled together the network that I think is necessary for quality preschool education. But that money has been increased.

As for student loans, I think it is exceptionally misleading to claim that the student loan program has been decimated. For one thing, all eligible students applying for a student loan receive a student loan. In 1993, the volume of student loans was $16.1 billion; 3 years later, it is $26.6 billion. Students are not being denied student loans.

The Pell grant program and the other grant and work-study programs have not been appropriated to the level that has been authorized, and that has always been a concern. But it is also a fact that funding for those programs has not been reduced. Whether it has grown to the level it should grow perhaps should be the question. I think it is very important for us to debate these issues in the context of understanding what is, and is not, occurring in education.

We have figures which show, as I pointed out earlier, that we are increasing, and have continued to increase every year, the budget for our education programs. Whether it should be increased more or less has been a subject of debate.

I particularly would like to address the student loan program because the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY, attacked the efforts to cut the student loan program. When we debated whether to have direct lending for student loans, the intent was to help if students wanted to get their student loan money immediately when they registered for postsecondary education. It did not in any way mean a student was going to pay less on their student loan, and in fact, it was through Republican initiatives in trying to reduce some of the bureaucracy and some of the requirements on the student loan that did produce what savings could be achieved for students.

Direct lending, as such, in no way changed the amount of funding that is available to students. This has been, I think, poorly understood. Somehow it has been portrayed as a choice between supposedly greedy banks or the Federal Government that would handle student loans. We missed completely, I think, the part of the debate regarding who should be responsible for cutting the checks for the student loan program, who can do it the best, and who should bear the responsibility for those loans and for payments that have not been collected.

I, myself, thought it was something we should go somewhat slowly on, so that we could understand the effects of the Federal Government totally handling the student loan program, or whether we should continue to let it also be an initiative in which the banks and the student lending guaranty agencies could be involved, believing they were going to be better able to collect on the loans than the Federal Government. I believe it is something we can and should continue to debate. But that program has not been decimated by efforts of Republicans to somehow cut student loans.

I think it is interesting that, in the first half of President Clinton's administration, when the Democrats controlled the Congress, actual spending for education programs fell on the average of $1 billion below the President's request. I do not intend to get into a tit for tat on educational spending, however. Being a member of a local school board at one time before I came to the Senate, and as chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee responsible for education funding, there is nothing that I care more about than being certain that we do have quality education in this country. That is something everyone is dedicated to. How much of that can be guaranteed by moneys we spend here in Washington is another matter. In some cases it is clearly something we need to do, particularly when we mandate certain requirements on schools. Then, we must be willing to be a participant in helping to pay for those mandates. That, I think, has been particularly true with initiatives such as the education for disabled students. We mandated the inclusion of those students in public schools, and I think we should be willing to help continue to fund the needs of that mandate.

But I suggest that, as we debate education today, most citizens in this country realize the success of excellence in education really depends on our local communities, our local school boards, and students and parents who will recognize the importance of quality education and are willing to invest the time and the resources to see that

we have it. I think there is no sadder indictment of education in general than the fact that some students are taking student loans when they graduate from high school but then have to take remedial reading when they get to college. We are doing a great disservice to the students in our Nation when they pile up an indebtedness of student loans but are not prepared to take advantage of the higher education they are receiving, whether it be in liberal arts or vocational-technical education.

We have to give those students—and it is not just we here in the Federal Government, but each and every one of us—the ability and the opportunity to achieve excellence in education. It should be the students themselves who will have the self-discipline to recognize the importance of that to them.

But right here in the Nation's Capitol we have not been able, with all the money that has gone into the District of Columbia, to hold up our heads with the primary and secondary schools that we have here in the District of Columbia. It is a shame that we have students who have to walk through metal detectors for fear of what might occur, a shooting in a high school. It is a shame that we have leaking roofs and crumbling infrastructure in our elementary schools. Every child in this country should be able to attend the elementary school in their neighborhood that has the highest quality of education to be offered.

But I would just suggest, and I am sure the Senator from Massachusetts believes the same as I do, that this is something that our Nation does care about. We have always been a country that cares about education. We have always been a country that hands off, as a legacy to the next generation, our belief in the importance of education. But it is totally wrong to say that we have decimated this opportunity for excellence in education because Republicans have slashed the education budget. That is not the case, Madam President, and that is not the answer to excellence and quality in education. We need to work together to the extent that we can to find those programs that can be of help. We have done that before and we should continue to do so.

It has been a big disappointment to me that the Democratic side of the aisle has not been supportive of efforts which we have undertaken, and which we passed unanimously, except for two votes, to initiate job training reform efforts and strong support for vocational education initiatives, which are an important component of our desires to achieve a working partnership between the Federal, State and local governments. That, I think, is one of the answers that we need to look to when we look at what the Federal responsibilities may be in assisting in education.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I made some comments earlier in a presentation about the record, about the resources of the Congress in the last several years. When I returned to my office, I saw my good friend and colleague, Senator KASSEBAUM, addressing the issue of education, and returned to hear her pearls of wisdom on this issue.

Senator KASSEBAUM's suggestion that education funding has been slashed over a 6-year period is simply mistaken. In every year since fiscal year 1990, education spending has increased. In fiscal years 1994 and 1995, education appropriations increased by $1.1 billion and $0.9 billion. It was not until the Republican takeover that Congress proposed to slash education spending.

There are just a few more points I want to add at this time. I tried earlier to point out what the Congress had actually done in allocating resources. The fact that you spend money does not necessarily mean you are going to end up with good education. That is a given. But it is a reflection of your priorities. And when we have a reduction in real terms, given the expanded student population, both in K–12 and higher education, cutting back in technology and other programs, that is a reflection of national priorities.

What basically we do as legislators, as the Senator from Kansas understands so well, is make choices. And we make choices about priorities. When we see, now, funding in education at about 1.3 percent of our national budget, I think most American families think it is considerably higher. That number is not concomitant with our commitment to the young people of this country. I think it is worthy of pointing that out.

The fact of the matter is, if a child goes to school hungry in the morning, that child is not going to be able to learn, even if you spend money on books and teachers. If you go to a school, you will find that classrooms are in a deteriorating condition. Many of the classrooms in my own State are. A recent report by the General Accounting Office shows the deterioration of the physical structures. It is primarily a State and local responsibility. But some of the schools in my own city of Boston will reach a temperature in the wintertime that is sufficiently cold that many of the students will be affected by that cold. It will be difficult to teach. If you have inadequate books or inadequate training for teachers, students will not learn.

We know in many of the schools that we have in this country they are spending, by and large, probably double what is being expended in other schools, and we know they are getting, by and large, students who are graduating with high abilities. We know, really, what needs to be done.

There are shared responsibilities in attempting to do it, but I would think our challenge is how we will push the envelope in this area. How are we going to encourage the local communities to enhance and support additional help? How are we going to get the States to recognize this as the priority? If we here in the Congress of the United States are seen as constantly reducing our commitment in this area, that sends a very powerful message. It is a very powerful message.

I do take exception to what has happened in recent years, frankly, under Republican administrations, in higher education. Education in the 1960 election was one of the prime differences, that, I think, played a major role: Was the Federal Government going to become involved in scholarship help and assistance? One candidate said yes. The other candidate, effectively, said no.

And then it was set up for higher education that $3 out of every $4 invested by the Federal Government went into grants, not into loans. Now it is just the reverse: $3 out of the $4 are loans, not grants. Yet reviews have demonstrated, time and again, that the Federal Treasury profited $8 for every dollar invested in education grants through the GI bill.

Investments in education pay off, and that has been the lesson. Maybe there are some programs that should be changed. To move back from that ongoing and continuing commitment is a reflection of different priorities, and that is essentially what I think is the point being made.

The fact of the matter is, a week ago when we saw the significant cuts made by the Senate Republicans and then a week later they come back and add $2.2 billion, I doubt very much that somehow the Republican leadership suddenly discovered increasing value in education.

A final point I want to make is about questions of higher education and the indebtedness of students. One of the very important aspects of the Direct Loan Program is not only in the facility of lower interest rates and the facility of students to deal with those, but also tuition contingency repayments, which said that if you are a student and you graduate, you might have $10,000 or $15,000 of loans obligated; if you want to be a teacher or you want to be a social worker or you want to be a police officer or you want to be a child care worker or you want to be a teacher's aide, then what it is going to mean, in terms of your repayment, is a percent of your income—just a percent —for a period of time.

That says to the young people, OK, maybe we haven't gotten it quite right at the Federal level in terms of the ratio of direct loans to grants, but I tell you what we are going to do. Even if you have to borrow, we will make it affordable so you only have to pay it at 5 percent or 7 percent.

That is an enormous, enormous advantage to students. I don't think you could find a handful of students in this country who would turn their backs on that particular opportunity. That was part of our Direct Loan Program. We stood out here on the floor of the U.S. Senate and said, ''Let the colleges make their own decision whether they

want the Direct Loan Program or the Guaranteed Loan Program. Let the colleges, let the students.''

What is more democratic than that? What is more local empowerment than that? What gets more power from the Federal Government back to the States and the colleges than that particular proposal? You would think that was a proposal that would carry. Absolutely not. We were closed down. Virtually unanimous support in opposition to that by our Republican friends.

So I hope as we come into these last days that parents, students, business leaders, and young people who are not going on to college—those who are concerned about the future of this country—really study this record well.

Any time Senator KASSEBAUM speaks about education, there is a great deal for us to learn from her comments. I always do. Although I missed her remarks earlier, I look forward to reading them in the RECORD.

But I do think there is a pretty central difference in the record of the two political parties on the priority of education. The President has stated that education, Medicare, and environmental issues are his priorities, and it was only after there were significant cuts in those that the Government was shut down. I think the American people remember that.

We speak today about one aspect of those priorities, and it is education. I think the American people place a very high priority on it. They place a great responsibility on all of us to try and make whatever we allocate more effective in enhancing student achievement and accomplishments in schools and colleges across this country.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, if I can comment for a moment. We can probably go on all afternoon talking about education, but I am sure there are those who would like to get back to the pipeline bill.

We can have dueling charts. I don't think that helps us at this juncture. The Senator from Massachusetts raised many of the same priorities in education that I did. We worry about crumbling infrastructure, we worry about the quality of education, we worry about being able to attract the best and the brightest teachers into teaching. All of these things are a part of the educational debate.

I think where we differ, and differ significantly, is whether the Federal Government is the answer to all of those questions, and I suggest not. I believe most Americans realize that is so. Federal dollars in education are less than 10 percent of the education dollars spent in this country. Local and State governments spend, I think, about $508 billion in education. I happen to believe that it still should be a question of local and State authority on education.

The Federal Government can provide support, but if we start to rely more and more on Federal dollars coming from here in Washington and believe that solves the problem, then I suggest, Mr. President, that we are in trouble. That is where we differ: Who bears the main responsibility for the funding of our educational system?

I suggest it has worked well, and it will continue and should work best, at the local level. I think that is where there is a fundamental difference.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEMPTHORNE). The Senator from Texas is recognized.

ACCOUNTABLE PIPELINE SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I would like to make a few remarks about the pipeline bill, because I think this is a very important bill for the future and safety of our country. This is a bill that has been worked on for quite a long time. It is a bipartisan bill.

I am very pleased that we have a safety pipeline program, we have a funding source. We are reauthorizing the Federal Pipeline Safety Program. I think everyone has worked in good faith. In fact, the bill is sponsored by Senator LOTT, cosponsored by Senators PRESSLER, STEVENS, HUTCHISON, BURNS, SHELBY, COCHRAN, FRIST, INHOFE, BREAUX, FORD, EXON, INOUYE, JOHNSTON, and HEFLIN. I think all of us want to make sure that the pipelines that are running through the ground in our country are as safe as they can possibly be.

Of course, we have user fees that pay for the safety inspections and the Office of Pipeline Safety. I think this bill also adds some simple and flexible risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses to some of these new regulations. So I think we are going to be taking a giant step in the right direction with this bill.

It does authorize the Office of Pipeline Safety funding through the year 2000 so that we will know that the source is good and that it is at a reasonable level. It is about what our budget resolution is today, and I think that we have made a great improvement.

So I am very pleased to support this bill as the new chairman of the subcommittee from which this bill came.

I think we have a good, bipartisan compromise that is going to move pipeline safety very, very much into the forefront of our consciousness as we continue to put down more pipeline and take more energy to the people of this country.

Mr. President, I think Senator LAUTENBERG, who has also worked very hard on this bill, has remarks to make. Is that correct?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Yes. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator from Texas. I know that she has an interest in safety with our pipelines. Obviously, coming from a State like she does, there is a great deal of interest in providing the resource, the gas, that travels through these pipelines because it is an efficient and cost-effective way of taking care of our energy needs.

I want to also extend my accommodation to the majority leader, Senator LOTT, for his work on this bill, as well as the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Commerce Committee, Senator PRESSLER and Senator HOLLINGS, and the other Senators who have worked hard and who have contributed to this legislation.

The bill before us enhances our existing pipeline safety program in a number of ways. For example, it would promote one-call programs to ensure that those who dig in the ground can easily find out where the pipelines are located—not only find out, but must know where the pipelines are located.

The bill would also increase funding for pipeline safety programs and make other improvements. At the same time, I do have some concerns about certain provisions in the legislation which could limit the regulators' abilities to adequately manage the program.

Frankly, it does not go all the way that I would like it to go, but it certainly is an improvement on the status quo and should improve pipeline safety significantly.

Mr. President, I have a special interest in this bill—I am sure many in this room are aware of it—because an explosion took place in my State a couple of years ago, and our experience with it was one that will stay permanently etched in the memories of people in New Jersey.

What happened there was almost inexplicable because, though the damage, the physical damage, was extensive, fortunately it was limited to one death. There could have been many more. That one death was as a result of someone's physical disability who had come in to be in touch with friends who lived in the neighborhood. It was terrible. That was 2½ years ago.

That rupture in a gas pipeline led to a terrible explosion in Edison, NJ. The blast created an enormous fireball that could be seen for miles around. It leveled eight apartment buildings and left a gaping hole in the ground. It reminded me, very frankly, Mr. President, of some of my wartime experiences when bombed-out areas were left with buildings flattened and holes, craters, in the ground. That is what this looked like.

The explosion and the fire injured more than 100 people and brought on, as I said, the death of one person, a fatal heart attack of a 32-year-old woman who had come to visit friends who were in the area. And 150 families