

from the truth. That would be against the law. In fact, I think, as someone pointed out, in one of the Boston projects—102 of the 257 subcontractors were nonunion firms; 102 of the 257. So the notion that nonunion firms would be prohibited from being a part of these projects is unfounded.

As I noted earlier, in October of 1992, President Bush issued an Executive order which prohibited Federal agencies and Federal contractors from entering into these project labor agreements. So the outrage that is being expressed because an Executive order has been issued to reinstate them—as I said, I would be sympathetic if the outrage had been focused equally vociferously when President Bush banned these project labor agreements—as we now hear with this President's decision to issue or allow these project labor agreements to be used on Federal projects.

So, again on the Alexis Herman issue I hope she will go forward.

On these project labor agreements, I think it is important we utilize what has been a very effective tool for being able to complete very, very important public works projects. As I said earlier, these are not just used by the executive branch at the national level, they have been used by Governors all across the country.

L'AMBIANCE PLAZA

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, tomorrow, the 23d of April, will mark the 10th anniversary of a major tragedy in the State of Connecticut. It was April 23, 1987, that 28 workers in Bridgeport, CT, lost their lives at a place called L'Ambiance Plaza, a construction site. My colleague from Indiana may recall that it was the largest industrial accident we had ever had in the State of Connecticut. It occurred during the construction of an apartment building using a technique called lift-slab construction. You would actually construct the floors and then, by hydraulic lift, lift the floors up. Within a matter of seconds, these floors collapsed and took the lives of 28 of my constituents from Connecticut.

It was a dreadful day, one that people still talk about in our State. In fact, early next week there will be a memorial service, with the families and others who are still feeling the pain of the loss of their loved ones.

We ended up banning, in the State of Connecticut, lift-slab construction. There were Federal regulations put out on that construction as well. As a result of that accident, in fact, my colleague from Connecticut, Congressman CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, who represents that congressional district, he and I introduced legislation to create some new requirements to monitor health and safety on construction sites. That legislation would have created an office of construction safety. It would have created a 15-member advisory committee on construction safety.

I should back up and point out that of all trades, the construction trades suffer the most injuries and death. Even with a lot of improvements, it is highly dangerous work. So, even with the improvements that have been made in occupational safety and health, construction work, just by its nature, as one would well imagine, is very dangerous. What we were looking for was to create some specific emphasis and focus on the construction trades. So that bill required those two points and further required increased civil and criminal penalties when there were knowing violations of occupational safety and health standards, and it would require employers to develop specific procedures to ensure health and safety on building sites. The bill was never approved. We offered it and had hearings on it, but it was never approved.

If you, Mr. President, and my colleagues had seen L'Ambiance Plaza, the devastation there, I think most would have come to the same conclusion that I did, that we need to do a better job in monitoring these construction sites. I pointed out, it was the single largest construction tragedy in the State of Connecticut. The problem is that lift-slab construction had caused hundreds of injuries around the country, yet in most instances, on the specific site, the injury, although it was bad, had not resulted in a death, so reporting was not required.

So there was no warning ahead of time about the dangers of this type of construction. As a result of our efforts, you would have been required to report those incidents when they happened so the collective information would be gathered and better decisions could be made about this kind of construction.

So, next week we will again gather to commemorate the lives of the 28 men whose lives were lost on that date 10 years ago. Like all of my colleagues, I hope never to have to attend another such ceremony. My hope is still that we will do a better job in improving the enforcement and the penalties involved, because that seems to be the only way we get the kind of compliance that is necessary.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a subject about which I know the Presiding Officer has a great deal of interest, and that is the attention that has most recently been focused on the breakthroughs in our understanding of the human brain and in the early development of children. In fact, Newsweek just released a special edition: "From Birth to Three. What you need to know, how speech begins, a baby's brain, genes, emotions, what is normal, what is not." I commend Newsweek for dedicating a special issue to this subject matter. I think it is extremely worthwhile.

Time magazine earlier did an issue on education, which I think was ex-

tremely helpful to millions and millions of Americans. I encourage everyone in this country to read this edition, particularly young families. It is very valuable information for people to have. We are gathering new information, almost on a daily basis, about the remarkable events that occur in the earliest days of a child's development, about how important it is that we do everything we can to maximize parental understanding and to provide whatever support we can so these earliest days turn out to be productive days in the development of a child's life.

As we all know, last week the President and the First Lady hosted an important White House conference on this very topic, bringing together leading voices from around the country to discuss the early development of children and how we could better support that development. Scientists have now presented us with hard evidence of what many parents have long held true—have known, I think instinctively—that children whose lives are stimulated from birth by words, by affection, and by playful interactions with their parents and other devoted caregivers are far more likely to develop to their full intellectual and emotional potential than those who are not.

All that we already knew about giving children a good start in life still holds true. Genetics, nutrition, whether a mother drinks or smokes—all these factors still play a role in a child's development. Now we also know that the environment that we provide to children, starting at the moment of birth and into their earliest years, has an astonishing impact on their potential to learn and to grow.

I do not pretend to understand all of the scientific studies. In fact, just the language of it, the jargon of it, can be dazzling for those of us who are lay people in this area. But I am trying to gain a basic grasp of the facts. Scientists have now discovered, for instance, that the brain of a baby is wired to learn. Starting at the very first days, each time a parent holds, rocks, or talks to her child, connections are formed between the neurons of the child's brain. These connections, the building blocks of a child's cognitive and emotional development, grow exponentially in the earliest years.

Just consider this. By the time a child is 3 years old, that child's brain has formed 1,000 trillion synapses, or connections between brain cells. Just to give some idea of the magnitude of this, this evening if you have a starry night and you look up at the stars, you should know that 1,000 trillion synapses is more than all the stars in the Milky Way. So, as you gaze at the heavens tonight and you look at the Milky Way with all its stars, know that just in 36 months of a child's life there are more synapses and more connections formed than all those stars. That will give you some idea of what is occurring in these earliest days of a child's life.