

a \$7 tax break. That is what this debate comes down to.

I plead with the public, please let your Members know that at the very least you think these ideas ought to be raised for debate and discussion and we ought to have the right to decide in a democratic fashion whether or not their votes, representing your ideas, are going to be cast in favor of a tax break for a few or trying to do something with that \$1.6 billion that could affect the quality of public education in this country for years to come.

I urge you over this weekend, and I urge the media, to spend at least as much time between now and Monday venting this issue as we have on an issue that, frankly, has very little to do with the quality of life in this country. We need that kind of debate. We need the opportunity to cast some votes that offer real choices—real choices—about the educational priorities of this country.

CONNECTICUT'S NCAA TOURNAMENT WIN

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, on a happier note, I was up until about 12:30 this morning, along with some other people from the Nutmeg State. It was not Minnesota that we were facing on a wooden floor in Greensboro, NC, but it was a dogfight—Huskies versus Huskies, the University of Washington versus the University of Connecticut basketball team. I know none of these young people I see here today were up that late. They were studying very hard, if they were up that late.

The March Madness that we talked about last night watched Richard Hamilton, with zero time left on the clock, fade back and, over the outstretched arms of a 7-foot center from the University of Washington, hit a shot that was nothing but net.

I know I speak for all 3.5 million people in Connecticut when I say we are proud of our Connecticut Huskies and the job they did. If Senator HELMS and Senator FAIRCLOTH, my colleagues from North Carolina, were here, I would challenge them, because on Saturday we are going to beat that No. 1 team and go to the Final Four in San Antonio, TX.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I see the distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator. What is the business before the Senate, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is now in executive session. The pending business is the Resolution of Ratification to accompany the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 and the accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak out of order as in legislative session.

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

ON SPRING

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, a great poet of the last century, William Wordsworth, wrote a famous piece of poetry which schoolchildren ought to memorize. They used to memorize it. It begins:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

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For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Wordsworth surely wrote those lines thinking, of course, of spring and perhaps of March, for again this March, the crisp brown leaves of winter are scattering before the blustery winds, and the daffodils are dancing in the breeze. And like those bright heralds of spring, I come to the floor today to celebrate today's vernal equinox, that celestial marker of winter's end and the beginning of perhaps the most blessed season of the earth's awakening. The dark, cold days of winter may now be safely said to be behind us and we may all begin to think optimistically about shedding our somber coats of wool, our bulky cocoon of hats, gloves, and scarves.

This winter has had more than the usual share of dreary, wet days in the Washington area. Locales more accustomed to winter and to winter's sun-tans have borne the psychic weight of day after day after day of unrelenting rain, of 3 months of steady downpour, floods, and mudslides. The mountains of my own West Virginia shouldered aside cold winds that left her ancient hollows heaped with snow—white, cold snow—that otherwise might have fallen on Washington, sheltering us in warmer air that caused flooding rains instead. There is hardly a spot in the nation that has escaped some abnormal weather occurrence, be it flood, freeze, gale, or tornado. I am sure that everyone joins me in welcoming the fading of El Niño's influence over the global weather patterns, but it will be a while before things return to normal. In the Senate, we have begun the recovery from winter's chilly wrath with the consideration of an emergency supplemental appropriations bill that will help to repair the worst of the nation's weather-spawned disasters.

But just when we begin to doubt that the sun will ever replace automobile headlights as the main source of illumination on our commutes to and from work, the morning brightens to reveal long skeins of Canada geese again filling the sky with their sweet music as

they wing their way back northward. The robins, returned to our lawns again, search out worms in the warming earth, and the bluebirds busy themselves with nest building.

I asked the robin, as he sprang
From branch to branch and sweetly sang,
What made his breast so round and red;
Twas "looking at the sun," he said.

The forsythia joins the crocus and daffodils in painting watercolor washes of lavender and yellow across lawns and roadsides. Spring's pale buds are peeping out from under the somber skirts of winter, giving hope on every tree and bulb. The annual pageant of the cherry blossoms cannot be far behind.

Mr. President, I admit to being no great fan of winter. I had all of the snow—all of the snow that I ever cared for when I was a boy, walking through the hills and mountains and hollows of West Virginia. Neither I nor my little dog, Billy, truly enjoys making our round of the neighborhood in the cold and lonely evenings of winter. I do not like to travel on wet or icy roads, on days so gray that the dawn seems to fade seamlessly into dusk, when snow or sleet drives sideways into the windshield—no, I would rather be hibernating in a comfortable chair with a good book, thank you. Not the trash that one finds on the book stands at the airports, but a truly good book written by Emerson or Carlyle.

And the beauty of the winter landscape is for me too austere, all shades of gray, brown, white, and black, dull after the scarlet and bronze riot of the fall. Give me instead the cheerful chaos of spring, with its stained glass window of colors, its energy, and its great sense of purpose.

I asked the violets, sweet and blue,
Sparkling in the morning dew,
Whence came their colors, then so shy;
They answered, "looking to the sky";

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I asked the thrush, whose silvery note
Came like a song from angel's throat,
Why he sang in the twilight dim;
He answered, "looking up at Him."

So give me dew, instead of frost, on the grass in the morning, and thunderstorms instead of blizzards in the afternoons. And fill my evening sky with fireflies, not icy, twinkling stars. Let me feel the cool breeze from the West Virginia hills on my face while the sun warms my back, and let me listen to the cheerful cacophony of frogs while I spade up sweet garden soil in which I shall soon plant my tomatoes—my tomatoes—Big Boy or Better Boy or Beefsteak—whatever. I see our Presiding Officer, who comes from the hills and lakes of Minnesota, smiling. He, too, is thinking of spring.

Spring is a season for all the senses, a season savored all the more fully because it follows the season of greatest limits. Oh, give me the season so loved by poets, by Wordsworth.

Having begun with one great poet, perhaps it is only fitting that I close with another, whose life overlapped the