United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 144 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1998 No. 39

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Lord of history, we gain perspective on the perplexities of the present by remembering how Your power has been released in response to prayer in the past. Gratefully, we remember Your answers to prayers seeking Your strength in struggles and Your courage in crises. We remember those times when Your guidance brought consensus out of conflict and creative decisions out of discord.

Once again, we need Your divine intervention and inspiration. Watch over the Senators as they unite in seeking Your best for the future of our Nation. Give them strength to communicate their perception of truth with mutual respect and without rancor. We are of one voice in asking for Your blessing on this Senate as it exercises the essence of democracy in its vital debates. You have been our Guide over the years of United States Senate history, and we trust You to lead us forward today. Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, the distinguished Senator from New Mexico.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I announce that this morning the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 86, the budget resolution. Under a previous unanimous consent agreement, at 10 a.m. the Senate will resume consideration of the Sessions amendment, No. 2166, with 30 minutes of debate equally divided, with a vote occurring on or in relation to the amendment at approximately 10:30 a.m. Following that vote, the Senate will resume debate of the Murray amendment, No. 2165.

During today's session of the Senate, Members can anticipate debate on a number of amendments expected to be offered to the budget resolution. Any Members wishing to offer amendments should contact the managers with their intentions. Any Members, I repeat, wishing to offer amendments should contact the managers with their intentions.

In addition, the Senate may consider any executive or legislative business cleared for Senate action. Therefore, Members can anticipate a very busy day of floor action. As a reminder to all Senators, the first vote will occur at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Indiana, Senator COATS, wishes a few moments on the Sessions sense-of-the-Senate resolution. He cannot be here at 10 or later, which is the time prescribed for discussion on that resolution, so I ask consent it be in order for the distinguished Senator from Indiana to discuss this sense-of-the-Senate resolution that Senator SESSIONS offered before 10 o'clock, as he arrives on the Senate floor. I will yield time to him off our side of the bill at that point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEARS 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, AND 2003

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 86, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 86) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal years 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 and revising the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1998.

The Senate resumed consideration of the concurrent resolution.

Pending:

Murray amendment No. 2165, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to reduce class size by hiring 100,000 teachers.

Sessions/Enzi amendment No. 2166, to express the sense of Congress that the Federal Government should acknowledge the importance of at-home parents and should not discriminate against families who forego a second income in order for a mother or father to be at home with their children.

Gregg amendment No. 2167, to express the sense of the Senate that this resolution assumes that no immunity from liability will be provided to any manufacturer of a tobacco product.

Gregg/Conrad amendment No. 2168 (to amendment No. 2167), of a perfecting nature.

Kyl amendment No. 2169, to express the sense of the Congress regarding freedom of health care choice for medicare seniors.

Conrad (for Dodd) amendment No. 2173, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for child care improvements.

Conrad/Lautenberg/Bingaman/Reed amendment No. 2174, to ensure that the tobacco reserve fund in the resolution protects public health.

Conrad (for Moseley-Braun) amendment No. 2175, to express the sense of the Senate

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste

regarding elementary and secondary school modernization and construction.

Conrad (for Boxer) amendment No. 2176, to increase Function 500 discretionary budget authority and outlays to accommodate an initiative promoting after-school education and safety.

Brownback amendment No. 2177, to express the sense of the Senate regarding economic growth, Social Security, and Government efficiency.

Burns amendment No. 2178, to express the sense of the Senate regarding the use of agricultural trade programs to promote the export of United States agricultural commodities and products.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. shall be equally divided between the two managers.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum with the time to be equally charged.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2166

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I would like to take just a few moments, no more than 5 minutes, if that is acceptable, to speak about the pending amendment.

Mr. President, just a couple of weeks ago I was privileged to chair a congressional symposium on the question of child care and parenting held by the Subcommittee on Children and Families. The purpose was to examine many of the issues surrounding the whole question of child care and the needs of America's working families.

We tried to do what very few policymakers do these days. Instead of starting with an assumption that a certain program and place ought to just be expanded, we went back to the basics, back to fundamentals. We asked the questions: What do the experts think is best for children? What do families think is best for them? What do they think they need? Politics aside, special interests aside and, in the best of all worlds, if we were starting over, where would we start?

What we learned from that symposium, convening experts from all across the political spectrum, different philosophies represented, but experts in the field, including mothers who have spent a great deal of time raising their families and studying these issues is that families want more time with their children, not less time. They want Government to allow them to keep more of their hard-earned dollars so that they have more choices in terms of how they spend those dollars, rather than deciding here that we are just simply going to spend more money on new programs or new bureaucracies.

We learned that they want to rely less on child care, to have more flexible work hours, comptime and other profamily benefits that many Federal employees currently enjoy. We learned what children have is what Dr. Stanley Greenspan calls ''irreducible needs.'' He indicated the studies have shown there is a significant concern that our society ''has begun to advocate out-of-home care as the desired option rather than as a backup system for those who need it.''

According to experts like Jay Belsky of Penn State University, prolonged exposure to out-of-home care can have very serious results on long-term child development, because it impacts adversely on the way a child relates and bonds with his mother. It appears to have a negative impact on maternal sensitivity to the child, which is critical, as these experts have said, to child development.

These are facts, Dr. Belsky said, that are overwhelming and should not be dismissed. He said they—this early interaction and bonding between mother and child—are as profound as the effects of child care on cognitive and social development.

We have invested very heavily in the question of child care, but we ought to be wary of proposals which fail to address the needs and desires of a majority of American children and American families. So instead of choosing to promote a continuation of the current system, we ought to look at what these experts are telling us and at least try to find a way to balance what we do to provide incentives for parents who often, at considerable financial sacrifice, choose to stay home with their children, particularly in the early months and early years.

We need to talk about positive family-friendly policies, extended job leaves, part-time work, flextime, comptime, job sharing, telecommunicating and other corporate policies which allow families to have more time with children, not less time with children.

We ought to encourage ways in which we can increase parental involvement through tax fairness. Anybody who studies the Tax Code knows it is the families raising children that are most discriminated against in our Tax Code. We have often allowed more tax credits, as a former Representative used to say, for breeding racehorses than for raising children, because we penalize families that choose to stay home with their children by narrowly linking tax benefits to day care expenses. The dependent-care tax credit says that the more time you spend away from your children, the more time in out-of-home care, the greater the expense, the greater the credit.

The Sessions amendment, which I am here to advocate support for and vote for, is a good first step, hopefully the beginning of an extensive congressional recognition of the importance of at-home care.

We do need a strong, quality child care program for parents who work out of the home. We need to make sure that it is available to parents, but we also need to make sure that what is available to parents is maximum choices in terms of how they determine the best way to raise their children. They need to be treated equally, and the experts tell us that they need to be treated equally because ultimately this is the best for children. We recognize that not every working family can afford a stay-at-home parent, but we also recognize and need to understand that what the experts are telling us is that this is the preferred option, this is the option for which we ought to be providing incentives.

This sense-of-the-Senate amendment before us today is a way that we as a body can recognize that fact and we can endorse, so that in our debates about how we expand the Tax Code, in our debates about how we address work policies, in our process of determining what is best for children, we will focus on what is best for children and look at the balance that is necessary to address those families that want a parent to stay at home and take care of their children, primarily because that is what is best for children. If we are talking about cognitive development, if we are talking about social development, we are talking about uniting parents and children at the earliest stages of their lives.

There is no child care provider who can provide what a motivated mother and informed mother can provide for their child. There is no child care provider who can provide the love and nurturing necessary for the development of that child, and we need to have incentives built into our law that don't discriminate against but actually encourage and enhance that selection.

Mr. President, I am pleased to support the amendment of Senator SESSIONS that we will shortly be voting on and trust that it will receive an overwhelming bipartisan encouragement and affirmation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I say to Senator COATS, I was very hopeful that in spite of your schedule you would have time to speak here this morning. Your staff spoke to us about it. I am very pleased you did that.

Mr. COATS. I thank the Senator from New Mexico for providing the time.

Mr. DOMENICI. The reason I am is because I really believe when it comes to this issue, while there are many people involved and many people who work on the issue, I listened tentatively to the Senator's observations and his rationale, his common sense applied to it, and I think he articulated the very best American approach to this.

While we may not be able to get policy adopted that accomplishes that—it is always difficult—I compliment the

Senator from Indiana because, indeed, I think what he said today and what he said before is right for the country and right for our children and right for the American system of work, people working to get ahead and people who want to take care of their children instead of going to work for part of their lives. I really commend him for that.

Mr. COATS. I thank the Senator.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, even though it is 5 minutes of 10 and the order said we will start debating the Sessions amendment at 10, I ask unanimous consent that, since we already discussed it, we start the discussion now and it be equally divided over the next 30 minutes.

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

Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the Sessions amendment No. 2166, on which there shall be 30 minutes of debate equally divided.

Mr. DOMENICI. I note the presence of the sponsor of the amendment, Senator SESSIONS, on the floor.

Mr. ENZI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I am one of the cosponsors of the amendment. I yield myself 5 minutes for comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I want to make sure that he does speak, but time is controlled.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DOMENICI. The sponsor is on the floor, and he controls the time. Will Senator SESSIONS designate that to me for now to try to use our time?

Mr. SESSIONS. I will be pleased for Senator ENZI to have 5 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. All right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I am an original cosponsor of the Sessions sense-of-the-Congress amendment No. 2166. I firmly believe that the at-home parents who forgo a second income so that one parent can raise their children do deserve some formal recognition by their Federal Government. That is a tough decision for parents to make, but it is one that is being made every day, and it is making a difference to kids. All this sense-of-the-Congress amendment does is to give some extra emphasis to say to parents, if you are making this decision, consider it carefully, consider having one of the parents forgo their income and stay at home and make a better life for the kids. The purpose of it isn't to make anybody feel guilty. The purpose of it is simply to make sure that when we are building basic policy, that basic policy includes families and basic policy includes an emphasis on families, and basic policy makes it possible, in any way that we can do it, of keeping parents with their kids.

All forms of day care touch on one of our Nation's most important resources—our children. If Congress is serious about addressing day care, then we must do so in a fairminded way and not exclude at-home care from the debate. It is unfortunate that at-home care has not received its day in the spotlight. There are more families that fit this mold than I think many of us are aware.

We have an opportunity through this body to change that and should change it in any way we can. Conditions are difficult for two-income families. It is even harder for single working moms to raise children. Few would argue differently.

To be fair, however, we must not imply that families who choose to keep one parent at home with their children are not making any sacrifices. They are sacrificing, too. For years, the subtext of Federal family policy is that everyone should work and that the burden of accommodation should be on those parents who choose to stay at home to raise their children. But if the debate revolves around the quality of care our children receive, we must modify existing Federal policy and end this senseless discrimination.

If we are really concerned about the quality of care for our children, then single-income families should be formally recognized. America's tax burden has grown so large in many instances that a second parent has to work just to pay the family's tax burden.

A 1993 survey found that more than 50 percent of working women would stay at home if money were not an issue. These parents should not be discriminated against by their own Federal Government simply because they sacrifice greater financial gain for their children.

The financial penalty inherent in having one parent stay at home to raise their children is large indeed. I do not believe that a majority of single-income families pursue such an arrangement because they can easily afford it. They do it because they believe it is best for their kids. They do it as a conscious decision. It should not be the work of this body to second-guess their judgments and their values.

Parents who decide to forgo a second income so that one parent might be at home during their children's formative years incur quite an expense, as several Members of my own staff can attest. And I am proud of them for the sacrifices that they are making. But I do not think it is fair, when we talk about Federal policy, that we should build a special policy that discriminates against them. We should be encouraging that kind of behavior.

It is quite clear that at-home care is beneficial to our Nation's kids. If this viable alternative is excluded from debate, then the message this body sends about the quality of care for America's children is shortsighted, at best. This amendment is geared to provide the recognition that at-home care and the parents who utilize it deserve some recognition.

This amendment is supported by Democrats and Republicans alike. That is how families are, and it should pass unanimously. I encourage all Members of the Senate to read this amendment, cosponsor it, and vote in favor of its passage.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise to associate myself with the comments of my friend from Wyoming and as a strong supporter of the Sessions amendment, a sense-of-the-Senate amendment, on the importance of at-home parents and the Government role in child care.

I am a proud cosponsor of this amendment and thank Senator SESSIONS, the Senator from Alabama, for his leadership in this area. The Clinton child care policy is always a direct or indirect subsidy to the marketplace day care industry. The President only seeks to help a small portion of working parents, ruling out those who wish to stay at home and take care of a child and those who do not want to use the marketplace day care.

Government policy ought not to discriminate against the best form of child care—where a child is taken care of by his or her parents or family. I believe that the Federal Government should subsidize the family, just as it subsidizes the workplace, giving money back to the family. The family can make the best choices in child care. At best, President Clinton's day care policy is only a subsidy of another workplace, the institutionalized day care industry.

Mr. President, I will soon be introducing legislation to change the Tax Code to put stay-at-home parents on at least an equal footing with two-income families. My legislation will increase the current $500 per child tax credit to $1,500 per child for children up to 6 years of age. This credit would replace the current dependent-care tax credit with real money that directly benefits families and restores equality and fairness in child care.

I think this is an important piece of legislation, Mr. President. And if, in fact, we go forward in this session of Congress and the President's idea comes forward—an idea that costs roughly $20 billion—then I suggest my bill ought to replace it. My bill ought to replace it because it does not discriminate between stay-at-home parents or those who choose to work. It affects each of them equally, because they all have children and needs with respect to those children.

Mr. President, I thank again Senator SESSIONS for bringing this important issue to the floor as part of the budget resolution. I urge every Senator to strongly support his amendment. I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Chair recognizes the Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am very proud of the excellent comments that have been made by a group of distinguished Senators today regarding this amendment. It is not an itty-bitty matter; it is a very serious matter. And it reflects a reevaluation by this body of the priorities we are placing on helping families raise children. It reflects a change in what we have been doing, because we have been, in fact, subsidizing one form of child care, a form of child care used by only a few American families, and have been taxing all the other American families to support that one form, which is institutional public day care essentially. And I do not believe that is good policy.

As Senator COATS mentioned earlier, mothers want, if they are given a choice, to be at home with their children, for the most part, during their formative years. We know that. Scientists and people also, who have studied this, have concluded that it is better for them to be at home, when they can. So we need to subsidize and support equally all forms of child care, if we do so, and we ought to do it in a way that allows parents the choices that they prefer.

All right. Let me just mention, first, the background on which we are operating. This is from the census report, the last census report. This is titled: ''Patterns of Child Rearing for Children Under Age 5.''

The mother is not employed; the care is by the mother in the home—almost 50 percent; 48 percent of mothers with children under age 5 raise them in their home. The President's proposal in current law provides no benefit for those families—zero—even though they may be giving up substantial income because the mother has been in the workplace before and chooses to stay at home because they believe, after prayerful thought and concern in the family, that this is the best way to raise their children. We ought to affirm that. We ought not to penalize that by taxing the decision to support this decision.

The mother is employed, and the child is in a group day care preschool program—16 percent. That is what we have been subsidizing. That is the group we have been subsidizing. You have the mother who is working, but the child is taken care of by a nonrelative, somebody in the home. Maybe it is a nanny who comes and stays in their home and takes care of the children because parents feel, where possible, they would like their children to grow up in their home and have the stability and the confidence that comes from that kind of environment. And 11 percent do that. They get no benefits under this proposal.

The mother is employed and the care is by a relative, an aunt, a mother, a grandmother or sister. They are taken care of. That is 13 percent. They have no benefit under the current law or the President's proposal.

The mother is employed—employed—and the care is by the father or the mother—12 percent.

For all of these, only this group gets compensation. That is not good policy. This Congress, this Government in America ought to adopt public policy that in fact encourages our highest and best choices. We ought to do that, and I think we can do that.

Now, to point out the unfairness of it, look at this chart. This is where a husband and a wife are employed, both of them employed, one may not be full time. Their average income is $57,000.

Where there is a dual-earner family, both husband and wife work and are employed full time, their average salary is $64,000.

But where you have a single earner, a husband is employed and the wife not employed, and the husband may not be employed full time—and many do not have full-time jobs; they cannot get them—their average income is $38,000.

Where the husband is employed and the wife is not employed, the husband is employed full time, the average income is $42,000.

You see the difference. We are subsidizing this choice. We are not subsidizing this choice where parents stay at home. That is not good public policy, and I think we need to change it.

I congratulate Senator SMITH, who just spoke, because he is asking us to consider what we are going to do to eliminate this imbalance. I think he has thought the matter through, and he has come up with some conclusions that he has put in legislation to which this body needs to give serious thought.

Of course, this resolution basically does not suggest a solution to the problem. It just says we are going to set a policy here to change the way we have been doing business. I think we ought to affirm parents who, after prayerful, careful, serious thought among themselves, conclude that it is best for their children to forgo a second income and stay at home. I think we ought to affirm that with public policy.

Finally—I know my time is about up—this is a matter of significance. I have been delighted to see Senators calling our office the last 2 days wanting to sign on as cosponsors of this amendment. While I was on the floor yesterday, three Senators asked me could they join as a cosponsor of this amendment. It has broad bipartisan support—Democrats and Republicans. I hope we have a unanimous vote on this issue.

But what I want to say is this: Do not sign on as a cosponsor, do not vote for this resolution, if you are not prepared to back it up by votes on the floor when we start setting tax policy and we start appropriating funds. If you are not prepared to support this philosophy, do not sign on because that is what erodes public confidence in America.

We talk a good game, but when the chips are down we often find reasons not to follow through on our commitments. I believe this is good public policy. I believe it is a resolution that sets the tone for this Congress. The House has passed a similar resolution, 419–0. I think that says something. I believe this body will be virtually unanimous, if not unanimous. After that, we are going to have to talk with Senator SMITH and other Members of this body to figure out a way to implement that policy.

It is a challenge to all the committees that are going to be dealing with these issues. They are going to have to reflect this view. I hope that they will. If they don't, we need to stand up and say we are not going to pass or support legislation that is not consistent with this resolution that treats all parents equally.

Mr. President, thank you for the time.

I thank my fellow Senators for their support for this resolution. I believe it is a great step forward in improving child care and development in America. Thank you, and I yield the floor.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I would like to applaud the Senator from Alabama for focusing attention on the important concerns of stay-at-home parents. I have said repeatedly, and continue to believe, that the best child care providers, particularly in the earliest months and years, are parents. Clearly, where both parents must work, we should try to help them provide the best possible care of their children. However, we should also help parents who make the difficult decision to forego a second income so that one parent can stay at home to care for a child.

That is the reason why I introduced legislation, S. 1610, the Child Care ACCESS Act, that will, for the first time, extend the Dependent Care Tax Credit to parents who stay at home to care for their young children. In fact, this piece of legislation, co-sponsored by 26 of my Democratic colleagues, does more for stay-at-home parents than any other proposal that has been introduced. Only this legislation would extend this important financial assistance to stay-at-home parents earning less than $30,000. For such families, the financial sacrifice of forgoing a second income is severe. They certainly deserve as much, if not more, support in staying home to care for their children as families earning more than $30,000.

Mr. President, if we are serious about helping parents who want to be home with their children, we should also promptly enact an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. I have introduced legislation which would extend the benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow an additional 13 million parents to stay at home for up to 12 weeks to care for a newborn or sick child without fear of job loss.

I think we would all agree that we must support all parents —mothers and

fathers—in the decisions they make, whether it is to work in the paid labor force, to stay home with their children, or do some of each. Indeed, many parents move in and out of the labor force at different points in their children's lives—depending on the ages and needs of their children and their financial situations. All families deserve our help in raising the next generation of Americans. We must invest in our future if that future is to hold promise for our children, for our families, and for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SESSIONS. With regard to the amendment we have been discussing this morning and the fact that families are choosing to give up a second income in order that they may have a parent stay home with their children in the early, formative years, I want to share a few thoughts with this body.

As I traveled my State last month and I discussed this issue, time and time again families would come up to me after my remarks and say, ''Thank you for saying that. We made that exact decision in our family. My wife had worked, and she decided she wanted to stay home with the children while they are young. It costs us a lot of money. We don't regret it. We are glad you have considered us raising children and you believe we ought to have a fair shake in that regard.''

My wife taught school for 4 years. When we had children, we made a decision she would cease teaching. I was able to have a decent income and take care of the family. We were not rich, but that was a decision we made, and we were very glad we did that. In fact, we probably would not have qualified for benefits under this program because this would be a program favoring lower income people.

Additionally, I wanted to share some numbers with the Members of this body. According to the most recently available data from the Census Bureau, a dramatically different picture is showing up than the one many would project. The facts show that although day care use did increase rapidly through the 1980's, the increase in the use of day care has come to a halt. The percentage of children under age 5 with employed mothers nearly doubled from the mid-1970's through 1998, but in subsequent years maternal employment remained fixed. In 1994, the last year recorded by the Census, the percentage of preschool children with employed mothers was still 52 percent, the same as it was in 1998.

My personal observations of the people I associate with, that my children have gone to school with, are that people are questioning the mentality that it is always best for both parents to work, and they are making different decisions. It is time for us to have Government policy that reflects that. I am very pleased with the bipartisan support this amendment is receiving. I think it reflects a serious reevaluation on behalf of this Congress on how to spend money in aid of children. I solicit the support of all Senators for this amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I want to clarify exactly where we are, what the schedule calls for.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is voting on Sessions amendment No. 2166 at 10:30. The remaining time is under the control of the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I am pleased to support the amendment that the distinguished Senator from Alabama offers, because I think we all share the view that if a parent can stay at home—mother can stay at home, typically—then that is the best way to go and there ought not to be any discrimination against that kind of a policy or program. But people are forced, because of the pressure on incomes, to often look for the second or even the third job in the household.

As we examine the programs that will promote the parents at home, I think we have to consider this amendment as an indication of where we all stand. The amendment, as I see it, simply affirms the view that families should not be punished for their child care choice. There is no better babysitter, no better caregiver, than the mother of the child. I don't think anyone will disagree with that.

Democrats are proud of our long record of helping families with a stay-at-home parent to make ends meet. When you got to a particular vintage, kind of like mine—advanced middle-age, I think we call it—it was typical, regardless of the difficulty that existed financially in the household; somehow or other it all came together.

My mother was widowed when she was 36. I had already enlisted in the Army. I had a little sister at home. Mom managed to take care of my sister, get a modest allotment from my military pay, and at the same time have a job. She made all those arrangements, and my sister was never neglected and grew up a happy, fulfilled person, as did my mother and I. But things are different now. We live in a pressure-cooker world where people just can't seem to get by unless there are multiple jobs in the household. For the middle-income family, it is not atypical.

So Democrats, maybe we kind of harken back to a different day and say those were the proper kinds of functions to be going on in the household. Things were modest, but people accepted their fate and tried to work their way out of it. In 1993, what we tried to do was to establish the opportunity for a family to take care of their kids. We secured an expansion of the earned-income tax credit, giving a refund to those people who just didn't make enough to care for their families. In 1996, we secured an increase in the minimum wage. Last year, we won the $500-per-child tax credit.

Now, all of these initiatives put more money in the pockets of American workers, and I, as a Democrat, and those of us who are Democrats were happy to see that. This is not to suggest that many of our Republican friends were not happy, but it put a Democratic stamp on these programs. I am sure, again, many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle support it. These things have made a real difference. Also, the Family and Medical Leave Act, signed into law by President Clinton, has given parents the flexibility to take time off to care for a newborn or a sick child. When it comes to helping working moms, I think we are all on the same page.

Once again, I commend Senator SESSIONS for offering this amendment. I am pleased to support it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. I express my appreciation to the Senator from New Jersey for his support.

I add as original cosponsors of this legislation the names of Senators ROTH and KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who have asked to be cosponsors. I ask unanimous consent they be added as cosponsors.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I wonder, Senator LAUTENBERG, if I could offer three amendments now—not speaking to them, but allowing them to be read.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I have no objection to the Senator from Oregon offering his amendments, but we are on a 10:30 schedule and I think it is important we preserve that schedule.

I am happy to yield the floor to the Senator from Oregon.

AMENDMENT NO. 2179

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. SMITH] proposes an amendment numbered 2179.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert the following new section, and renumber the remaining sections accordingly:

SEC. . SENSE OF THE SENATE ON SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES.

(A) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that—

(1) financing for Social Security Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) is provided primarily by taxes levied on wages and net self-employment income. The level of these tax rates is set permanently in the law at the rate payable today;

(2) more than ninety-five percent of the work force—an estimated 148.2 million workers in 1998—is required to pay Social Security taxes;

(3) Social Security taxes are paid both by employees and employers and the self-employed on earnings up to a maximum amount of $68,400 in 1998, the amount increasing at the same rate as average earnings in the economy;

(4) the Social Security tax was first levied in 1937 at a rate of 1% on earnings up to $3,000 per year;

(5) the rate in 1998 has risen to 6.2 perecent—an increase of 620 percent, and a majority of American families pay more in Social Security taxes than income taxes;

(6) in his State of the Union message on January 27, 1998, President Clinton called on Congress to ''save Social Security first'' and to ''reserve one hundred percent of the surplus, that is any penny of the surplus, until we have taken all the necessary measures to strengthen the Social Security system for the twenty-first century.''

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the provisions of this resolution assume that when the Congress moves to work in a bipartisan way on specific legislation to reform the Social Security system, it will not consider increasing Social Security tax rates on American workers, beyond the permanent levels set in current law nor increase the maximum earnings subject to Social Security taxation beyond those prescribed by the wage indexing rules of current law.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Briefly, Mr. President, this amendment is a very simple sense of the Senate on Social Security that says that when we act to save Social Security, we will not be doing so by increasing Social Security taxes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2180

(Purpose: To clarify Federal law with respect to the use of marijuana)

Mr SMITH of Oregon. I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. SMITH] proposes an amendment numbered 2180.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. . GENERAL PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF MARIJUANA FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES.

It is the Sense of the Senate that the provisions of this resolution assume that no funds appropriated by Congress should be used to provide, procure, furnish, fund or support, or to compel any individual, institution or government entity to provide, procure, furnish, fund or support, any item, good, benefit, program or service, for the purpose of the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Briefly, Mr. President, this is a sense-of-the-Senate amendment on an issue that has become of great concern to me and to many in my State, the legalization of marijuana for medical use. I will speak to this later.

AMENDMENT NO. 2181

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate concerning increases in the prices of tobacco products)

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I send an additional amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. SMITH] proposes an amendment numbered 2181.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 53, strike lines 1 through 22 and insert the following:

SEC. 316. SENSE OF THE SENATE ON PRICE INCREASE ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that—

(1) the use of tobacco products by children and teenagers has become a public health epidemic and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 16,000,000 of our Nation's children today will become regular smokers;

(2) of the 16,000,000 children who become regular smokers, approximately one-third or 5,000,000 children will die of tobacco-related illness;

(3) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that tobacco use costs medicare approximately $10,000,000,000 per year, and the total economic cost of tobacco in health-related costs is more than $100,000,000,000 per year; and

(4) the public health community recognizes that by increasing the cost of tobacco products by $1.50 per pack, the rate of tobacco use among children and teenagers will be reduced.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the provisions of this resolution assume that, if comprehensive tobacco legislation requires an increase in the price of cigarettes, any such revenue should be used to restore solvency to the medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Briefly, this amendment is a sense of the Senate regarding the use of tobacco revenue to restore the solvency of the Medicare Program, an amendment similar to the one that Senator LAUTENBERG introduced in the Budget Committee.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2166

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment numbered 2166.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) would vote ''yea.''

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 49 Leg.]

YEAS—96

Abraham	Faircloth	Lott
Akaka	Feingold	Lugar
Allard	Feinstein	Mack
Ashcroft	Ford	McCain
Baucus	Frist	McConnell
Biden	Glenn	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Gorton	Moynihan
Bond	Graham	Murkowski
Boxer	Gramm	Murray
Breaux	Grams	Nickles
Brownback	Grassley	Reed
Bryan	Gregg	Reid
Bumpers	Hagel	Robb
Burns	Harkin	Roberts
Byrd	Helms	Rockefeller
Campbell	Hollings	Roth
Chafee	Hutchinson	Santorum
Cleland	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Coats	Inouye	Sessions
Cochran	Jeffords	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Smith (NH)
Conrad	Kempthorne	Smith (OR)
Coverdell	Kennedy	Snowe
Craig	Kerrey	Specter
D'Amato	Kerry	Stevens
Daschle	Kohl	Thomas
DeWine	Kyl	Thompson
Dodd	Landrieu	Thurmond
Domenici	Lautenberg	Torricelli
Dorgan	Leahy	Warner
Durbin	Levin	Wellstone
Enzi	Lieberman	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Bennett	Inhofe
Hatch	Mikulski

NOT VOTING—4

Bennett	Inhofe
Hatch	Mikulski

The amendment (No. 2166) was agreed to.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be temporarily set aside for up to 1 minute so that I may offer three amendments to be sequenced just as the Senator from Oregon did for his three amendments before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DOMENICI. Reserving the right to object. What was the request?

Mr. KENNEDY. It was to temporarily set aside, for 1 minute, the pending amendment so I may offer three amendments to be sequenced just as the Senator from Oregon did for his three amendments before the vote. I ask that they be sequenced in an order that would be satisfactory to the minority leader.

Mr. DOMENICI. I have no objection.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2183 THROUGH 2185, EN BLOC

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I send three amendments to the desk and ask for their immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY], for himself and Mrs. BOXER, proposes amendments numbered 2183 through 2185, en bloc.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

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

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2183

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate concerning the enactment of a patient's bill of rights)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. ___. SENSE OF THE SENATE CONCERNING A PATIENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) patients lack reliable information about health plans and the quality of care that health plans provide;

(2) experts agree that the quality of health care can be substantially improved, resulting in less illness and less premature death;

(3) some managed care plans have created obstacles for patients who need to see specialists on an ongoing basis and have required that women get permission from their primary care physician before seeing a gynecologist;

(4) a majority of consumers believe that health plans compromise their quality of care to save money;

(5) Federal preemption under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 prevents States from enforcing protections for the 125,000,000 workers and their families receiving health insurance through employment-based group health plans; and

(6) the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry has unanimously recommended a patient bill of rights to protect patients against abuses by health plan and health insurance issuers.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense Senate that the assumptions underlying this resolution provide for the enactment of legislation to establish a patient's bill of rights for participants in health plans, and that legislation should include—

(1) a guarantee of access to covered services, including needed emergency care, specialty care, obstetrical and gynecological care for women, and prescription drugs;

(2) provisions to ensure that the special needs of women are met, including protecting women against ''drive-through mastectomies'';

(3) provisions to ensure that the special needs of children are met, including access to pediatric specialists and centers of pediatric excellence;

(4) provisions to ensure that the special needs of individuals with disabilities and the chronically ill are met, including the possibility of standing referrals to specialists or the ability to have a specialist act as a primary care provider;

(5) a procedure to hold health plans accountable for their decisions and to provide for the appeal of a decision of a health plan to deny care to an independent, impartial reviewer;

(6) measures to protect the integrity of the physician-patient relationship, including a ban on ''gag clauses'' and a ban on improper incentive arrangements; and

(7) measures to provide greater information about health plans to patients and to improve the quality of care.

AMENDMENT NO. 2184

(Purpose: To increase Function 500 discretionary budget authority and outlays to support innovative education reform efforts in urban and rural school districts)

On page 16, line 9, increase the amount by $200,000,000.

On page 16, line 10, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 16, line 13, increase the amount by $318,000,000.

On page 16, line 14, increase the amount by $146,000,000.

On page 16, line 17, increase the amount by $386,000,000.

On page 16, line 18, increase the amount by $276,000,000.

On page 16, line 21, increase the amount by $359,000,000.

On page 16, line 22, increase the amount by $358,000,000.

On page 16, line 25, increase the amount by $272,000,000.

On page 17, line 1, increase the amount by $359,000,000.

On page 25, line 8, strike ''−$300,000,000'' and insert ''−$500,000,000.''

On page 25, line 9, strike ''−$1,900,000,000'' and insert ''−$1,910,000,000.''

On page 25, line 12, strike ''−$1,200,000,000'' and insert ''−$1,518,000,000.''

On page 25, line 13, strike ''−$4,600,000,000'' and insert ''−$4,746,000,000.''

On page 25, line 16, strike ''−$2,700,000,000'' and insert ''−$3,086,000,000.''

On page 25, line 17, strike ''−$3,000,000,000'' and insert ''−$3,276,000,000.''

On page 25, line 20, strike ''−$3,800,000,000'' and insert ''−$4,159,000,000.''

On page 25, line 21, strike ''−$7,000,000,000'' and insert ''−$7,358,000,000.''

On page 25, line 24, strike ''−$5,400,000,000'' and insert ''−$5,672,000,000.''

On page 25, line 25, strike ''−$5,000,000,000'' and insert ''−$5,359,000,000.''

AMENDMENT NO. 2185

(Purpose: Expressing the sense of Congress regarding additional budget authority for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION.

It is the sense of Congress that the functional totals in this concurrent resolution on the budget assume that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission should receive $279,000,000 in budget authority for fiscal year 1999.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask that the three amendments be sequenced after amendments to be offered by Senators HOLLINGS, LAUTENBERG and DASCHLE, and that they alternate with Republican amendments, in whatever form——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DOMENICI. Yes. I object. I thought your request was that you send them to the desk and that they be sequenced as the leadership is sequencing in a manner we consider to be fair.

Mr. KENNEDY. That is exactly what I am requesting.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Senator.

AMENDMENT NO. 2165

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Murray amendment No. 2165.

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are about to consider, I believe, one of the most important amendments that this body faces. It has to do with public education and the direction that this Congress, this Senate, this budget is going in that will affect the lives of thousands of students and their families and their neighborhoods and communities across this country.

Mr. President, I believe one of the main principles that this country was founded on was that of education, public education, the ability for every child in this country, no matter who they are, where they come from, what their financial background is, to have a strong education, an education that will allow them to learn how to read, how to write, how to participate in a democracy, and how to be a contributing citizen to our economy once they have reached the adult age.

Mr. President, I think it is very shocking that this budget which sits before us and the policies we are about to put in place say to students and their parents across this country that education is no longer a top priority in this country. I think that is a terrible message and one that we have to change with this budget today. Now is the time.

Mr. President, it is amazing to me that in the fiscal year 1998 budget, the entire budget—look at this chart—2 percent of our entire Federal budget goes to education. Yet, when you ask parents and families and people across this country whether or not we are spending enough on education, only 9 percent of this country think we are spending too much; only 26 percent think we are spending the right amount; and 58 percent of the people in this country believe we are spending too little on education. Mr. President, I could not agree more.

Two percent of our budget is not enough. It is not enough funds for our children, and it is the wrong message in this country, where we believe that democracy will survive if every one of our children has the access they need to a quality education—be it public or private. But in particular, in terms of what we spend here in the Nation's Capital for students across this country, it is far too little.

The amendment that we now have before us simply establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund for class size improvement, especially in the early grades. It was used as an offset for any available mandatory savings or revenues, with the exception of tobacco revenues. What this amendment does is put in place a placeholder, if you will, in the budget so when this Congress begins to listen to parents and students and families and teachers and communities across this country, we will have a placeholder in the budget that we can at our discretion put available funds into to make sure that we address the issue of class size.

I know that class size reduction makes a difference. Every parent in this country knows that, every teacher knows that, businesses know that, and communities know that. And throughout this morning's debate, I will talk about what parents say, what students say, and what teachers say, because I believe if we begin to fundamentally address the issue of class size and the

tremendous loads in our classrooms today, we will begin to address the critical need of education and make a tremendous difference for our country in the future.

Mr. President, at this time, I will yield such time as he may need to Senator WELLSTONE to speak on behalf of this amendment, and then I will go into detail about my amendment and what I want to do in this budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair. First of all, let me thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership. Senator MURRAY has an unusual background. She comes to the U.S. Senate having been a teacher.

Mr. President, if I might ask the Senator, what level did she teach? I believe it was elementary school or preschool.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I taught at the community college level, parent education, and I taught preschool, 4- and 5-year-olds.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, my colleague from Washington really brings to this debate her own life experience, both at the higher education level, training other men and women to be teachers, and also herself having taught really at the critical age, in the very early years of a child's education. We don't have that many Senators with this background. I think all of us are lucky that the State of Washington has sent Senator MURRAY here to the U.S. Senate. Quite often when we get into these discussions, they are very abstract and very theoretical and all about strategy. But Senator MURRAY has really lived this debate. She brings, I think, a special expertise and a special passion. I wish more Senators, as we get into this debate, could draw from the same kind of background.

Mr. President, I did not teach at the elementary school level or early childhood development; I was a college teacher. But in the last 7 years I tried my very best to be in schools around the country, but in the main in Minnesota. I think I have been in a school probably about every 2 weeks. What I try to do is turn these assemblies or classes—and there can be anywhere from 100 or 200 to 1,000 students and teachers and support staff in town meetings like all of us have in our States. I say to the students, look, it is kind of like everybody is talking about you but very few people are talking to you or with you. Give me your best wisdom as to what would make for the best education reform. What makes for a good education from your point of view? I say to my colleague from Washington, by coming to the floor with this amendment, she is right on target. Students talk about smaller class size everywhere I go.

Now, I personally think—and my colleague from Washington mentioned this—that especially at the elementary school level, small class sizes really make a huge difference. I think actually as you look at from K through 12—actually, I argue, after that, in colleges and universities as well—smaller class sizes make a huge difference. With a smaller class size, we have an opportunity to get to know our teachers, they say, to have more rapport with teachers. Our teachers can give us more special attention. We have an opportunity to have teachers that can fire our imagination, teachers that are really free to teach. And teachers say it as well.

So let me just be clear with colleagues. I remember when I first came here—and I haven't changed my view at all, I say to my colleague from Washington—I was debating with a good friend, Senator HATCH from Utah. I said to the Senator from Utah, ''I just feel that this debate is ahead of the story.'' When you can come to the floor, or any Senator can come to the floor, and say we have made the commitment to public education—we made the commitment to smaller class size; we made the commitment to making sure that children, by kindergarten, come ready to learn; made the commitment by way of equity financing to schools in districts where people don't have all the financial resources, don't have the good facilities and the textbooks, the buildings are in disrepair; we made the commitment to summer institutes for teachers to meet other teachers and get renewed and fired up about teaching—we have made all those commitments, and it still isn't working, then I say let's consider something else.

But we have an amendment on the floor that Senator MURRAY has now introduced, based upon her own life's work, upon what people in communities around the country tell us is important for their children, tell us what is important to them—that is to get some additional Federal resources back at the school district level to reduce class sizes, so all of our children have an opportunity to do well in school, all of our children have an opportunity to reach their full potential. No one amendment, no one expenditure of money accomplishes this goal.

I say to my colleague from Washington that I thank her for being out here on the floor with this amendment, because this is a concrete step that can make a very positive difference in the improvement of the lives of children in our country.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator from Washington. I speak in strong favor of her amendment. The resolution offers a deficit-neutral reserve fund for class size improvement. Specifically, it states that if funds become available, budget levels may be adjusted for legislation to improve, or in effect lower, class size for students, especially in the earliest grades.

I thank the Senator from Washington, Senator MURRAY, for being the leader on this issue of class size for public schools. She and I share the same commitment to public education and believe strongly that the Federal Government has a limited but very important role in supporting public education.

Today's resolution, Mr. President, is very important because it demonstrates a commitment by the U.S. Senate to dedicate available Federal funds to reduce class size in the earliest grades.

Parents, teachers and school administrators are increasingly aware of the very positive impact smaller class size can have on student achievement. It is about time that the Senate goes on record in support of smaller classes for our public school children in the earliest grades.

The positive impact of smaller classes came to my attention in my State of Wisconsin, and that is because Wisconsin, as is often the case in public education, has been a leader on this issue. In 1995, the Wisconsin State Legislature created the successful pilot program called the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education program, known as the SAGE program.

Wisconsin's SAGE program has demonstrated again and again what we really know instinctively: Students in smaller classes benefit from more attention from teachers, and teachers with fewer students will have more time and energy to devote to their jobs.

A December 1997 study found that the first-graders participating in the Wisconsin SAGE program scored higher on standardized tests than other students in comparison schools.

It is my hope that the SAGE program and this budget resolution offered by the Senator from Washington reinforce what should be good common sense. If you have smaller classes, children will get more attention from teachers, and it stands to reason that more attention will translate into greater learning.

In supporting this resolution, Mr. President, I want to clearly state that I believe there is a great national purpose in trying to reduce class sizes for children in the earliest grades. However, I do not support a national mandate for smaller classes. Instead, I support smaller classes as a national goal that would be primarily controlled by the local government and local school boards and the administrators.

Additionally, I want to be sure that any distribution formula for the funds that would become available to reduce class size should give credit to States, like my State of Wisconsin, which have already invested substantial resources in this effort.

Finally, I want to again stress the importance of this resolution being deficit neutral. The Senator from Washington has been sensitive to that. The resolution is deficit neutral. The days of deficit spending and borrowing from Social Security have to be over.

To conclude, Mr. President, I think this resolution takes a very positive step toward helping school districts reduce class size as a part of an overall effort to improve education and ensure that our children have the best chance to excel and reach their full potential. Let me finally thank the Senator from Washington again. I have heard her speak both publicly and privately on this issue of class size. She speaks with experience, but she also speaks with great feeling and eloquence on this subject. She knows what she is talking about, and she is a great force in the Senate and in the Congress on this issue.

I thank the Chair.

Mrs. MURRAY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues from Minnesota and Wisconsin for their support of this issue, for their understanding of this issue, for their backing and their commitment to making sure that we set as a priority in this country the issue of education and, most critically, the issue of class size across this country.

Mr. President, I came to the Senate 5 years ago. And I was frustrated when I came, and I felt that leaders in Washington, DC, were not really dealing with the issues that I talked about and I worried about at home at my kitchen table every night 2,500 miles away in the State of Washington.

I have to say that over the past 5 years we have begun to make progress and talk about the real issues that everyday families talk about at their kitchen tables every night. Certainly we have finally balanced the budget and stopped deficit spending, something that families worry about. But, more importantly, we have faced issues such as family medical leave that allows parents to take time off from their jobs to take care of a sick child. We have put 100,000 police officers on the streets because many families across this country at their kitchen tables worry about the safety of their families on a daily basis. We have addressed some of those critical issues and much more.

But today on the floor of the Senate, I can say with certainty that this Congress, under this proposed budget, is badly missing the mark when it comes to addressing the most important concern that every parent faces today and every family talks about at their kitchen table at night. Families ask: Will my child get a good education? Will my child get the attention they deserve? Will they be safe? Will they be taught the skills they need to get a job in tomorrow's economy? Those are the kitchen table conversations that worry every single family in this country.

Mr. President, I can tell you today I feel absolutely confident that I can speak to this issue with a lot of background and understanding. I came to the Senate with a daughter who was in 7th grade and a son who was in 10th grade. They both have spent their entire K–12 years in public education. I am a product of public education.

Today my daughter is a senior in high school, and she is my best adviser about what is happening in our public education system. And what they say to me—what my daughter and my son say to me—is, it is difficult to learn the skills that they need when they are in crowded classrooms. They do not get the attention they need in math or science or English, and they tell me that there is what they call ''hall rage'' in our classrooms because of crowded classrooms with a lot of kids in our classrooms. It tends to generate a lot of frustration and rage among our children, and safety is a concern.

Mr. President, as Senator WELLSTONE said, I come here as an educator. I am a former community college instructor. I taught parent education, and I also taught preschool. I had in my class twenty-four 4- and 5-year-olds. I know what a difference it makes when you reduce the number of children that are in a classroom.

When I had 18 children in my classroom, I could take the individual time that I needed to work with these young children to help them get a grasp on the alphabet, to begin to learn to spell their names, to understand the world around them, to sit down in groups with other children and learn how to ''get along'' —a skill too many kids do not have today. I know what happened the next year when I had 24 children in my class—much less individual attention; it became no longer teaching, it became crowd control.

I know as a teacher that reducing class size, particularly in the young grades, will make a difference for children across this country.

I also come here with experience being a school board member. I have managed budgets at the school district level. I know how tough those decisions are. I know how difficult it is to meet the demands that everyday school districts have. As a school board director in a suburban district, I was frustrated with the lack of funding that we got. We were frustrated with the lack of priority that education had at the Federal level, and we were constantly frustrated that we could not do the right thing.

I can tell you, as a schoolboard member who has managed thousands of dollars in education funding at the local level, this amendment, this goal, this direction for our country, is badly needed.

I also come here as a former State senator. I served on the budget-writing committee in my State senate. I know what a priority education is for our States, and I know how difficult it is for them to address this issue. My State of Washington has the fourth worst class size in the Nation.

If my State and other States across this country were told that this was a national priority and one that they would not just be told is a priority they have to do, but one that they got a jump-start with from the Federal level, it would make it easier for them and a priority for them to do what we are asking them to do and what they know they need to do.

I come here today as a budget writer in the U.S. Senate. I have served on the national budget-writing committee for 5 years. I have worked diligently to reduce the deficit and to make sure that we put our priorities in place. That is why, when I look at the budget that is on the floor today, I say the priorities are not in the right place. My amendment simply puts aside a reserve fund so that when this Congress begins to do what parents are asking them to do across this country, and to make this a national priority, we have in place a deficit-neutral account that we can begin to put funds in so that we can address this absolutely critical issue.

I have told you what my personal experience is. You have heard from several of my colleagues. But most importantly, studies back up what I have just told you. A 1989 study of the Tennessee STAR Program, which compared the performance of students in grades K through 3 in small and regular-sized classes, found that students in small classes—13 to 17 students—significantly outperformed other students in math and reading every year at all grade levels across geographic areas.

Mr. President, I have heard a number of my colleagues come to the floor and worry and fret over the fact that students are not graduating from high school with the skills they need to get into the job market. Class size makes a difference in their ability to get these skills. The studies show it. The follow-up study of the STAR Program in 1995 found that students in small classes in grades K through 3 continued to outperform their peers at least through grade 8 with achievement advantages, especially large for minority students. Class size reduction makes a difference. How long are we going to ignore these studies on the floor of the Senate? How long are we going to say no, not here?

Other State and local studies have since found that students in smaller classes outperform their peers in reading and math, they perform as well or better than students in magnet or voucher schools, and that gains are especially significant among African American males. The studies back up what my experience shows, and the studies back up what every single Senator and Congressman says that they have as a goal today, which is to improve math and science and reading skills across this country.

But we do not just have to listen to what the studies say; we should listen to what parents say. When any parent is sitting there the afternoon that their child comes home from their very first day of school in September, there are two questions that every single parent in every household across this country asks their child on that first

day of school when they come home. They say: ''Who is your teacher? How many students are in your classroom?'' Who is your teacher? Universal questions in every home across this country. Why? Because parents know that who that teacher is and the quality of that teacher is critical to their child's learning for the next entire 9 months:

''How many children are in your classroom?'' Every single parent intuitively knows that their child will get a better education the smaller the class size. And I can tell you, when that student answers, ''35 children, 40 children,'' that parent feels, ''This is not going to be a great year.'' Parents know that the skills their child needs to succeed will be better learned in a smaller class size. And that is why they ask on the first day of school, ''How many students are in your classroom?''

Parents today are also concerned about children's safety. No surprise. And I can tell you as a teacher, and I know that every parent knows, that if a teacher has the ability to listen to their children, to work with their children, to prepare their children, and to really get to know those young people in their classrooms, their safety will be much, much better. And discipline will be much less of a problem, because that teacher has time to work with those tough kids that are in their classes today.

But, we have heard what parents say. We know what the studies say. What are teachers saying? I have taken some time over the last few weeks to ask teachers what they said about class size. These are the people, the professionals that are in our classrooms every day with our young people.

Here is what some teachers have said to me: This ''is the most important improvement we can make. A working condition that in many ways is [far] more important [to me] than salary. If teachers feel like they are making progress, other complaints seem minimal. If teachers feel behind, at a loss, and overwhelmed by large classes, any other problems loom large.''

''It's not only important for classroom management, but also for time spent evaluating each student's work, and time for individual attention with each student.''

One teacher told me: ''The difference between teaching a class of 31 high school students and teaching 28 is the difference between lion-taming and teaching.''

Mr. President, students and teachers and parents know that class size reduction makes a difference.

I also have a young group of students that I work with in my home State. They are called my Student Advisory Youth Involvement Team. I go to them on a regular basis, and I tell them, as young people under the age of 18, that their voice is important here in the Nation's Capital and their priorities are important as well. And I ask them how they feel about different issues that are coming before the Senate.

I took some time to talk to some of those young students over the past several weeks about class size and what is happening in their schools and what could make a difference. Christopher Shim, who is a 17-year-old from Mercer High School, said, ''In elementary school, I actually felt I was pretty lucky. I was able to get personal time with the teacher, even though we had 30–35 students in my elementary classrooms.'' He continued, ''In high school, I have 40 people in my calculus class. This means any time I have a question, there are 10 people in line.''

Mr. President, we stand out here on the floor of the Senate and we talk about how important it is for our young people to get math and science skills, and yet here is a student who says when he needs help with a question in calculus, there are 10 people consistently in line. Smaller class sizes make a difference.

I had another student who said to me, ''In [my] high school civics class, there is only one teacher teaching two classes of 40 students each. It's harder to get through the curriculum and get answers to your questions.''

Mr. President, consistently students gave me comments. And I will be reading more of them throughout the debate. But one after the other, what these young people—who are in the classrooms today, where the stress is on them to get the good grades, to go on to college, to get a good job—what they told me consistently was that they felt that reducing class size was important.

Are we going to listen to parents? Are we going to listen to teachers? Are we going to listen to the young people themselves? Are we going to listen to the thousands of families across our communities today who know this makes a difference, who say to their child when they come home, ''How many kids are in your classroom?'' because they know? Are we going to listen to the studies? Are we going to say it is the right thing to do to make this a national priority? Or today on the floor of the Senate, are we going to say no? Are we going to say that 2 percent is enough? Are we going to say that education is no longer a priority of this Government?

I have heard too many people say, ''Leave it to the local school boards. Leave it to the States. It should not be a national priority.'' I could not disagree more. We cannot pass the buck any longer. Making sure that every one of our children gets a good education is a priority for every adult in this country, whether they are a parent, a community leader, a State leader, or a national leader. It is our responsibility to set the priorities within this budget. My amendment allows us to do that as the debate progresses across the rest of this year.

Mr. President, as you know, I feel strongly about this, and I know there are a number of my colleagues who are here today who support this as well.

I yield to the Democratic ranking member at this time for a statement.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I will try not to take more than 5 minutes, but I appreciate having 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I rise in support of the Murray amendment because it very simply focuses on a problem that is of critical importance. It establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund to help reduce class sizes. I have to commend the Senator from Washington because her focus on children extends to the whole range, from nutrition, health, education, and child care. She is right, in my view, to bring this amendment up before the Senate, and now before the American people.

What she is saying is young people need more attention from their teachers and thus the class size reduction is a perfect avenue toward getting them more attention. The capacity for the child to learn increases when class sizes are smaller.

Once again, I commend our friend and colleague from Washington. She is one among several of our colleagues who call education focus of their agenda. The reserve fund would allow the Congress to help the States and local educational agencies recruit, train, and hire the 100,000 additional teachers by the year 2005. These teachers would reduce class sizes in grades 1 to 3 to an average of 18 students per classroom. Mr. President, this is a very important initiative and deserves our support.

I will now speak for a moment about a personal experience. I grew up in what is now one of America's poorest cities, an industrial city, in New Jersey. The city is called Paterson, NJ. I was born there. I and a couple of my business associates decided to try to help out because of our good fortune and our interest in what was taking place within that old favorite city of ours. We provided a program for extending free tuition—we paid for it—for students who, from the sixth grade, our targeted grade, went on to pass their high school requirements and we would pay for their education in college. I thought it was a pretty significant inducement. We had academic counselors that worked with these students. Then-Vice President Quayle was very kind, spending 45 minutes with these youngsters. It was a real treat for them. We took them on various trips and tried to help them along.

I am ashamed to say, pained to say, really, that the program did not do a lot of good. We are reexamining why. The principal thing that jumped out at us was that the sixth grade was too late to start, too late to make a difference with these youngsters.

When examined it further, we look to the earliest grades, grades 1, 2, and 3. We found that those early learning experiences matter most. So I think that this amendment helps us to concentrate on putting our resources where they will do the most good. It is

critical to get the kids off on a good start at that tender age. That is why President Clinton proposed this major national effort to limit class sizes in the early grades. That is why the proposal enjoys such strong support among the American people.

Unfortunately, the budget now before the Senate rejects this proposal. Frankly, I believe it is one of the major shortcomings of the resolution. Senator MURRAY offered this amendment in the Budget Committee's markup, but it was defeated on a straight party line. I hope today's vote will be different. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and, once again, commend the distinguished Senator from Washington for her leadership on this issue. Since coming to the Senate, she has been an outspoken advocate for education, for our children in all aspects. I know she speaks not just for America's parents, grandparents, but families all across our country in urging this Nation to make education our top priority.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY Mr. President, the Republican budget is anti-education It sets up too many roadblocks to a brighter future for the nation's children We should be doing more, not less, to improve the nation's public schools.

The budget should reflect our true national priorities The American people give top priority to education, and Congress should too But, the Republican education budget goes against what the American people want by cutting education funding.

Republicans say that they are pro-education But, there is a massive disparity between their rhetoric and the reality of their budget Our Republican colleagues say that they support education and children But their current tax proposal and their current budget proposal make it very clear that they are no friends of public education

If Republicans were friends of public schools, they would not divert $1.6 billion of scarce resources to private schools.

They would not cut education by $400 million next year, and prohibit funding for any new programs.

They would not ignore the pressing need to repair our crumbling schools—to train more teachers, to reduce class sizes, to provide more after-school programs to keep children off the streets, away from drugs and guns, and out of trouble.

They would not propose tax breaks that benefit wealthy families who send their children to private schools.

There are many good ideas to improve education that deserve support We need to increase our investment in public schools We need to raise academic standards We need to modernize school buildings We need to reduce class size We need to support more teachers and better training for current teachers We need to expand after-school programs.

Students deserve modern schools with world-class teachers But too many students in too many schools in too many communities across the country fail to achieve that standard The latest international survey of math and science achievement confirms the urgent need to raise standards of performance for schools, teachers, and students alike It is shameful that America's twelfth graders ranked among the lowest of the 22 nations participating in this international survey of math and science.

Schools across the nation face serious problems of overcrowding Antiquated facilities are suffering from physical decay, and are not equipped to handle the needs of modern education.

Across the country, 14 million children in a third of the nation's schools are learning in substandard buildings Half the schools have at least one unsatisfactory environmental condition It will take over $100 billion to repair existing facilities nationwide.

America's children are learning in overcrowded classrooms This year, K–12 enrollment reached an all-time high, and it will continue to grow over the next 7 years Communities will need to build 6,000 new public schools to maintain current class size Due to overcrowding, schools are using trailers for classrooms and teaching students in hallways, closets, and bathrooms Overcrowded classrooms undermine discipline and decrease student morale.

In Springfield, Massachusetts, student enrollment has increased by over 1,500 students, or 6 percent, in the last two years, forcing teachers to hold classes in storage rooms, large closets and basements.

In addition, too many schools are already understaffed During the next decade, rising student enrollments and massive teacher retirements mean that the nation will need to hire 2 million new teachers Between 1995 and 1997, student enrollment in Massachusetts rose by 28,000 students, causing a shortage of 1,600 teachers—without including teacher retirements.

The teacher shortage has forced many school districts to hire uncertified teachers, and ask certified teachers to teach outside their area of expertise Each year, more than 50,000 under-prepared teachers enter the classroom One in four new teachers does not fully meet state certification requirements Twelve percent of new teachers have had no teacher training at all Students in inner-city schools have only a 50% chance of being taught by a qualified science or math teacher In Massachusetts, 30% of teachers in high-poverty schools do not even have a minor degree in their field.

Incredibly, the Republican budget ignores these pressing needs The Republican plan cuts funding for education It refuses to provide key new investments to improve public education If their anti-education plan is passed, schools and students will get even less help next year than they are getting this year, just when they need help the most.

The Republican budget cuts discretionary funding by $1.6 billion below the President's budget It cuts funding for education and Head Start by $1 billion below the level needed to maintain current services In fact, it cuts education and Head Start funding by $400 million below last year And to make matters worse, the Republican budget prohibits funding for new education programs.

It denies 3.7 million students the opportunity to benefit from smaller class sizes.

It denies 900,000 disadvantaged students the extra help they need to improve their reading and math skills.

It denies 400,000 students the opportunity to attend after-school programs.

It denies 6,500 middle schools serving 5 million students extra help to ensure that they are safe and drug free.

It denies 1 million students in failing schools the opportunity to benefit from innovative reforms.

It denies 3.9 million needy college students an increase in their Pell grants.

The Republican anti-education budget does nothing to help recruit and train qualified teachers.

It does nothing to improve failing schools by creating Education Opportunity Zones.

It does nothing to help disadvantaged students attend college and graduate from college.

It does nothing to increase funding for Title I to improve students' math and reading skills.

It does nothing to increase funding for Pell grants.

The challenge in education is clear. We must do all we can to improve teaching and learning for all students across the nation.

That's why I strongly support the amendment by Senator MURRAY to reduce class size in grades K–3 across the country. A necessary foundation for success in school is a qualified teacher in every classroom, to make sure that young children receive the individual attention they need. That's why it is so important that we help bring 100,000 new qualified teachers into the public schools and reduce class size in the elementary grades.

Research has shown that students attending small classes in the early grades make more rapid progress than students in larger classes. The benefits are greatest for low-achieving, minority, and low-income children. Smaller classes also enable teachers to identify and work effectively with students who have learning disabilities, and reduce the need for special education in later grades.

A national study of 10,000 fourth graders in 203 school districts across the country and 10,000 eighth graders in 182 school districts across the country found that students in small classes performed better than students in large classes for both grade levels.

Gains were larger for fourth graders than eighth graders. Gains were largest

of all for inner-city students in small classes—they were likely to advance 75 percent more quickly than students in large classes.

Another significant analysis called Project STAR studied 7,000 students in grades K to 3 in 80 schools in Tennessee. Again, students in small classes performed better than students in large classes in each grade from kindergarten through third grade. And the gains were larger for minority students.

We also know that overcrowded classrooms undermine discipline and decrease student morale.

Many states and communities are considering proposals to reduce class size. But you can't reduce class size without the ability to hire additional qualified teachers to fill the additional classrooms. The federal government should lend a helping hand.

This year, California Governor Wilson proposed to spend $1.5 billion to reduce fourth-grade classes to 20 students or less, after having reduced class sizes for students in grades K–3 last year.

In Pennsylvania, a recent report by the bipartisan legislative commission on urban school restructuring recommended capping class sizes in kindergarten through grade 3 in urban districts at 20 students per teacher.

In Wisconsin, the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education program is helping to reduce class size in grades K–3 in low-income communities.

In Flint, Michigan, efforts over the last three years to reduce class size in grades K–3 have led to a 44% increase in reading scores and an 18% increase in math scores.

Congress can do more to encourage all of these state and local efforts across the country. We can help lead the way in reducing class size. I urge my colleagues to support Senator MURRAY's amendment and to increase our investment in education. The nation's children deserve our support.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to support Senator MURRAY's amendment today to create a reserve fund for adding 100,000 public school teachers and to reduce class sizes in the early grades to 18 students per classroom.

CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS ARE OVERWHELMED

I come from the State that has some of the largest class sizes in the Nation in our public schools. In 1994, California's schools averaged about 30 students per class, the highest in the country. In 1995–1996, when the average pupil teacher ratio for all grades, elementary and secondary in the Nation was 17.3 students per teacher, in California, it was 24.0.

In the 1993–1994 school year, in elementary schools, California had 29.4 students per class while the U.S. average was 24.1. For secondary schools in 1993–1994, the average California classroom had 29.7 students while the average U.S. classroom had 23.6 students, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics.

When one computes total teaching staff per pupil, again, California's number are substantially higher than national rates, says NCES. In 1995–1996, California's pupil-teacher ratio was 24.0, compared to the U.S. average of 17.3 pupils per teacher. The 1997 estimate likewise has California exceeding national rates: California, 22.7 students per teacher; U.S. 17.0 students per teacher.

Today, many classes have 40 or more students per teacher. Our students and teachers are crammed into every available closet, cafeteria and temporary building available. At John Muir Elementary School in San Bruno, one class spent much of the year on the stage of the school's multipurpose room as it waited for portable rooms to arrive. Los Angeles Unified School District has 560,000 seats for 681,000 students.

To add to the problem, California will have a school enrollment rate between 1997 and 2007 of 15.7 percent, triple the national rate of 4.1 percent. We will have the largest enrollment increase of all states during the next ten years. By 2007, our enrollment will have increased by 35.3 percent. To put it another way, California needs to build seven new classrooms a day at 25 students per class just to keep up with the surge in student enrollment.

The California Department of Education says that we need to add about 327 schools over the next three years, just to keep pace with the projected growth. But these phenomenal construction rates will only maintain current use. They do not begin to relieve overcrowding, our current large class sizes.

Fortunately, California has embarked on an effort to reduce class size, providing state funds to local school districts to hire more teachers for grades K through 3. The goal is to cut class sizes from 28.6 students to no more than 20 students in grades K through 3. California is spending $2.5 billion over two years to cut class size and the annual cost of this reform will be about $1.5 billion. California has created at least 17,000 new classes and over half of the State's 1.9 million eligible students are now in classes of 20 or fewer students. A similar federal effort, like President Clinton's initiative and Senator MURRAY's amendment, can complement California's effort.

SMALLER CLASSES IMPROVE LEARNING

Studies show that student achievement improves when class sizes are reduced.

California's education reforms relied on a Tennessee study called Project STAR, in which 6,500 kindergartners were put in 330 classes of different sizes. The students stayed in small classes for four years and then returned to larger ones in the fourth grade. The test scores and behavior of students in the small classes were better than those of children in the larger classes. A similar 1997 study by Rand found that smaller classes benefit students from low-income families the most.

Sandy Sutton, a teacher in Los Angeles's Hancock Park Elementary School, used to have 32 students in her second grade class. In the fall of 1997, she had 20. She says she can spend more time on individualized reading instruction with each student. She can now more readily draw out shy children and more easily identify slow readers early in the school year.

The November 25, 1997, Sacramento Bee reported that when teachers in the San Juan Unified School Districts started spending more time with students, test scores rose and discipline problems and suspensions dropped. A San Juan teacher, Ralphene Lee, said, ''This is the most wonderful thing that has happened in education in my lifetime.''

Other teachers say that students in smaller classes pay better attention, ask more questions and have fewer discipline problems.

A San Diego initiative to bring down class sizes found that smaller classes mean better classroom management; more individual instruction; more contact with parents; more time for team teaching; more diverse instructional methods; and a higher morale.

Smaller classes make a difference.

SMALLER CLASSES REQUIRE GOOD TEACHERS

Class sizes cannot be reduced without hiring more teachers. And these teachers must be trained and credentialed teachers.

California has 21,000 teachers on emergency credentials. Unfortunately, in California nearly 22,000 of the 240,000 public school teachers in California are not fully credentialed or have not passed a basic skills test. Half of California's math and science teachers did not minor in those subjects in college, yet they are teaching. The October 13, 1997, U.S. New and World Report reported that in Los Angeles, ''new teachers have included Nordstrom clerks, a former clown, and several chiropractors.''

California will need up to 300,000 new teachers in the next decade because of our escalating enrollment. A 1996 analysis by Policy Analysis for California Education found that my state could only expect about 9,000 new credentialed teachers per year in current trends continue.

Without good teachers, no plan, however visionary or revolutionary, can improve student learning. But sadly, a November 1997 report card by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future ranked California near the bottom of states in the quality of our public school teaching force because we have some of the highest proportions of uncertified or undertrained teachers, particularly in math and science. The Commission defined ''well-qualified'' as a teacher with full certification and a major in their assigned field. By this measure, only 65 percent of the state's teachers meet the standard. Nationally, that figure is

72 percent. In California, 46 percent of high school math teaches did not minor in math. The national average is 28 percent.

CONCLUSION

There is hardly a more worthy endeavor than strengthening our schools' ability to better educate our children. The Murray amendment before us today can make an important contribution in partnership with state and local efforts by providing extra resources to reduce class sizes and hire more teachers.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield such time as she may consume to the Senator from Illinois.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Just to put in context what this debate is and is not about in regard to Senator MURRAY's amendment, and there will, of course, be other amendments on education seeking to bring this issue to the attention of the American people, and hopefully to give us an opportunity to actually legislate.

The issue here starts from the fact that as we went into the budget negotiations, the Republican majority cut $1.6 billion from the President's request for elementary and secondary education. Unfortunately, this has become not only a partisan debate among and between the parties here in the Senate but it really is a debate that, in my opinion, is kind of like trying to find out who to blame for the fact that elementary and secondary education is not receiving the kind of support nationally it ought to receive.

My mother used to have an expression, ''When you point a finger at somebody, you have three pointing back at yourself.'' I think nothing describes this debate around education as much as that expression. The fact is that there is an awful lot of finger-pointing going on in regard to education—whose responsibility it is, whose fault it is, who should do what, instead of a sense that the real answer here lies in our ability as a nation to come together, to work together, to cooperate, to collaborate, to form partnerships to address an issue that is in our national interests.

There is no question that education is a core value for our country. It correlates with opportunity, opportunity not just for individuals but for America as a whole. That notion of opportunity, I think, goes to the heart of what it is about to be an American. Frankly, the rungs of opportunity are crafted in the classroom. Public education has made this the greatest country in the world, and if we don't engage in this together to work out the challenges to public education, we will see that American dream erode in our lifetime. I do not think that is something any American parent wants to see. I think that every parent, every citizen, wants to see us engage, regarding this issue, in ways that serve the public interests and in ways that do justice and honor to our generation's stewardship of this great country. That is the core issue, I think, in all of this debate and in what it is we are debating with regard to Senator MURRAY's amendment, as well as others.

First, I will for a moment sketch out in terms of the dollar value of an education, first to individuals. There is no question; studies have shown us that high school graduates earn 46 percent more every year than those who do not graduate, that college graduates earn 155 percent more every year than those who do not complete high school, and over the course of a lifetime the most educated Americans will earn five times as much as the least educated Americans. So education correlates directly to an individual's well-being. In fact, it correlates to almost every indicia of economic and social well-being. Educational attainment can be tied directly to income, to health, to the likelihood of being on welfare, to the likelihood of being incarcerated, and even to the likelihood of an individual voting and participating in our democracy.

Education, however, is more than a tool just to lift people out of poverty or to give them a better standard of living. It is the engine that will drive America's economy into the 21st century. In a Wall Street Journal survey last year of leading U.S. economists, 43 percent of them said that the single most important thing we can do to increase our long-term economic growth would be to invest more in education, research, and development. Nothing else came close to the indicia of what will help our economy do well. One economist said, ''One of the few things that economists will agree upon is the fact that economic growth is very strongly dependent on our own abilities.''

In a recent study by the Manufacturing Institute, the conclusion was reached that increasing the education level of workers by 1 year raises the productivity level in manufacturing by 8.5 percent. So making certain that we invest in education is something that we ought to do not just for the children who will be benefited but for our country and for the economy as a whole.

There are those who say that is fine, that is all well and good, but in any event it is not our job to do. In fact, this $1.6 billion cut, as Senator MURRAY pointed out, means we will spend in this budget, this 1998 budget, a full 2 percent on education; 2 percent is the Federal contribution out of this budget to education. That is so because a number of people argue that it is not the Federal Government's job to be involved with financially supporting elementary and secondary education. They point the finger and say it is somebody else's job.

Let's take a look at who else's job it might be. Some of our colleagues say the economy is doing so well, the States should do it, that the States are now in a position to supplement what they spend on education because they have surpluses accumulating in their economy. Well, the truth is that even if the States were to stretch out, to use all of their surplus, that would not be enough money to provide the support to rebuild crumbling schools, to reduce class size, to give teachers the tools they need, to give children what they need to actually be able to get the kind of world-class economy that I believe we have to provide for every American child.

All but two of the States had at least some surplus at the end of fiscal year 1997, ranging from a $3.2 billion surplus in Alaska to a $32 million surplus in Alabama. My own State of Illinois ended 1997 with an $806 million surplus. Of course, the sum total of all the States' surpluses at the end of fiscal year 1997 was $28.2 billion.

In addition—and this is not on the class size debate but efforts with regard to rebuilding the schools—the General Accounting Office tells us that just to bring the schools in this country up to code we have to spend $112 billion. Well, you don't have to have a whole lot of education to do the math on that one. If all the surpluses taken together are $28.2 billion, that doesn't begin to even address the issue of funding $112 billion worth of need just to get the facilities up to code. So if you are talking again about reducing class size, as well as fixing crumbling schools and the other things that the schools will need, the $28 billion surpluses of the States will not do it.

Assuming that every State were to maintain its past effort, and in addition spend every penny of its surplus on schools, they would still be left with a huge amount of needs, $153 billion worth of needs in terms of school construction, and again the costs of reducing class size.

Then there are those who say, OK, it is not just the State's job. In any event, it is not just the State's job to do this. It is really a matter of each community weighing in and fixing up their schools. That translates into an argument that the full costs of education or the bulk of the cost of education ought to come out of the property taxes.

I don't know if you noticed, but the property tax is a singularly inelastic tax—without doubt, the worst place to try to fund a school system. And what we have seen over time is that the property tax has been inadequate to fund education. In fact, it has given rise to what Jonathan Kozol referred to as ''Savage Inequalities.'' That is to say, in the communities where the demographics support an easily tapped property tax, where there are nuclear power plants or shopping centers, those communities can afford to support their schools with relatively little effort from individual taxpayers, whereas other school districts where there are a number of retirees or poor people have a harder time supporting their schools. So relying on the property tax alone, or largely relying on the property taxes, is one of the reasons why we

have such a patchwork in terms of the quality of schools in this country. There is no coherence. There is no systematic support for education from the local property tax. So we have a situation where the local property tax is stretched beyond what it can bear in terms of providing for education. The States are doing an inadequate job in support of education, and this budget gives us all of a 2 percent Federal contribution to that challenge. Small wonder, Mr. President, that the United States is beginning to lose ground worldwide in education.

Just a couple weeks ago we had a report on the performance of students in this country on math and science exams. It should have been a wake-up call to everybody when we found that the U.S. students, in some categories—in physics—came in dead last, dead last. We came in below Slovenia on mathematics. We are doing poorly on all of these indicia of international measurements of competency in the schools.

Given this patchwork quilt, given the results of the finger-pointing, small wonder that our kids are not doing as well as they should or that they could. Let me make a point about that. I think the point has to be made that our children, American kids, are just as capable as kids anywhere in the world of learning, if they are given an opportunity.

They are as capable of doing as much as any other community on this planet, if given the opportunity. The direction that we take, the decisions we make in this Senate will in large part determine what direction we take to get there, to get to the point of giving them an opportunity. Will we support a partnership in which we come together at the Federal, the State, and the local level? Or will we take the position that everybody have at it and do the best job you can, wherever you are, and make educational opportunity an accident of geography and an accident of someone's situation in life, whether their parents were born wealthy. I don't believe we can afford to waste a single mind, to waste a single child's talent. We have a responsibility as Americans to come together as parents and stop this finger pointing, stop this blame game and put this argument aside and recognize that it is in our national security interest that we give every child the ability to be educated to the maximum extent of his or her ability.

Mr. President, I commend Senator MURRAY for her activity on the Budget Committee in this regard, for her advocacy for children. She has been an advocate across the board on a variety of issues. I submit that there is no issue on which advocacy can be more important than the direction we take in education in this country.

I believe the bottom-line question here is whether or not we are prepared to face the fact that we cannot go it alone, we cannot point fingers, and we cannot allow for a child's educational opportunities to depend on the accident of where they were born. We have a responsibility to come together as Americans to make certain that all levels of government contribute to the maximum extent we can so that local governments, parents, communities, people at the local level can provide the children who live there with the best possible opportunity.

We can do better than 2 percent. I submit that we ought to restore the $1.6 billion the President proposed, restore that to the budget and have a debate on how we send that out to the States. We ought to be able to send it to the States and the school districts without a whole lot of strings or bureaucracy. Nobody is hiring $1.6 billion worth of new bureaucrats. We are talking about sending money directly to benefit the schools. I believe we have not only an opportunity to do that, but an obligation to do it. The opportunity is with us because we have a balanced budget. After decades of wallowing in red ink, we have a budget surplus—or at least we are on a glidepath from deficit territory. It seems to me, if we are going to look at the priorities of this country, no priority comes higher than providing for education, no priority comes higher than providing States and local communities with the support they need to give our children a chance.

Therefore, I commend Senator MURRAY.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Illinois for putting in perspective what we are talking about today. The students in my classroom weren't Republican, Democrat, or Independent. They didn't say, oh, this is a local issue; oh, this is a State issue, those Federal people should not be involved. They looked around in their classroom and said: How many kids are in here with me? Do I get time with my teacher; do I get personal attention?

As my colleague from Illinois notes, there is no silver bullet to making education better across this country. But we have to put our efforts in places where we know they make a difference. My colleague from Illinois has addressed tirelessly the issue of crumbling schools across the country. And the issue of safety and the ability to learn, and the issue of class size, again, where school buildings simply can't expand, where our children are in unsafe situations. If together we address the crumbling schools, and class size, and if we train our teachers with the skills they need to teach effectively in our classrooms today and tomorrow, we will turn public education around.

I know my colleague from Illinois has heard as much as I have from all those politicians and leaders who are saying public education has failed. I don't believe public education has failed. I believe we have failed public education. We have a responsibility to turn it around right now, today, in the Senate. I thank my colleague from Illinois. I yield to her.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I wanted to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from Washington. Every politician who runs for office runs on an education platform. I don't know a Governor in this country who hasn't run on an education platform. I don't know a Senator in this country who hasn't run on an education platform. Somewhere out there, there is probably a coroner and a dogcatcher who will run on an education platform. And yet education doesn't have the financial support at any level that it needs to have. That should be evident in how we are coming in on these international tests and exams. The response that I see from all too many of my colleagues is to say, as the Senator so eloquently put it, public education has failed, let's run away from it. The old runaway response is not a response, because we can't afford to triage, to waste a single child.

Again, I commend my colleague for requiring some of us to put our money where our mouths are, that we really support education and begin to vote for education and fund education and to put real meat on the bone of our commitment to public education.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank my colleague. I absolutely agree. I believe we are at a fundamental crossroads in this country, where we are going to decide now, today, whether we are going to go down a narrow path of just letting a few kids succeed in education across this country, with vouchers, block grants, and eliminating the Federal role altogether; or we can collectively say, no, not in my country, not in my home, not in my community, not in my State.

In this country, where we believe that public education is critical for every student, we want to go down the road that makes a difference. By making sure our crumbling schools are fixed, making sure that there are teachers who are well-trained, and making sure there is a number of students in a classroom that allows them to learn those math skills and English skills they so desperately need in today's and tomorrow's economy. I look forward to working with my colleague to make sure we go down the right road and not the wrong road. We will find out today what the Senate says.

I yield 5 minutes to my colleague from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank my colleague for yielding me this time. Senator MOSELEY-BRAUN had to leave the floor, but her leadership on the crumbling schools initiative has just been incredible. She is the one who called our attention to the fact that if our kids are going to learn, they have to have decent schoolbuildings. I was saying the other day we want our kids to learn about gravity by reading about it in

the science book, not by having the ceiling falling on them while sitting in the classroom.

I say to my colleague, Senator PATTY MURRAY, how much I have enjoyed serving with her in the Senate and, beyond that, serving with her on the Budget Committee, because the two of us believe very strongly, as do a number of Democratic colleagues. If everybody is saying children are our priority, education is a priority, and everyone is saying this is so important, then it's time they voted with us and did something about it.

When my colleague offered her amendment on children in the committee, suddenly our Republican colleagues were not there. I am hoping they are having second thoughts and that when we get to the vote on her amendment, they will come here and support it. We need bipartisanship on this issue.

Now, I think it's interesting, as we look back on the Federal role in education, to recognize the President who, in my opinion, did more for the Federal role in education than anyone else, in terms of winning public approval for it, and that was President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Senator MURRAY is a little younger than I am, and I think about that now and then, but I well remember when the Russians launched the Sputnik and the Americans sat back and said: How could this be? We were the ones who had the educated work force. We were the ones who had the new technology. How could it be that they could get ahead of us in this way? Dwight Eisenhower came forward, a Republican President with broad bipartisan support, and said the following: ''The education of our children is just as important to our national security as the size of our military budget.'' He pushed for the National Defense Education Act.

I say to my colleague, we are following in those footsteps with a series of amendments we will be offering—Senator MURRAY on class size, Senator MOSELEY-BRAUN on crumbling schools, myself on after school, and Senator DODD on child care. We are following in the footsteps of a Republican President, who recognized in the 1950s that we have to do something about education.

Now, in terms of my colleague's amendment, I am very proud to support it. I want to say a thank you not only to her, which I have done, but to our President, because our President shared with us his vision of 100,000 new teachers in schools, and everybody sat back and said that is a goal we ought to attain. At least the vast majority of the American people—and we will find out if it is a majority of this body—said yes. This is the same President who had the goal of putting 100,000 police on the street. If you put 100,000 police on the street, which I have strongly supported—what happened in California is that we have a 20 percent reduction in crime because we have community police. If you listen to those community police, let me tell you what they will say. I have had many townhall meetings throughout my State. They say to me: ''Senator, we have to prevent a lot of these problems before they start.'' Yes, we can help. But the fact is, once a child gets into the juvenile justice system, sometimes we can't turn them around. So we do need to give our children something to say yes to. And law enforcement looks at these measures—in my State at least—with great support.

I have an after-school bill that I will be offering. We know that, in California, when we give the kids something to say yes to in after-school programs—we give mentoring, tutoring, help with homework, and we bring in business and they learn on computers—their performance has gone up 75 percent in Sacramento's START program and in L.A.'s BEST. There has been a 75 percent increase in performance. Now, we can't expect that for every child, but this is the experience that we are having.

I submit to my colleague that when you put a child in a smaller class where that child doesn't get lost in the shuffle, where that child gets the individual attention from the teachers, from the teacher's aide, it makes an enormous difference. I sometimes think a lot of our kids' problems are overlooked because the teachers cannot possibly, if they have a class of 40 children, pick up every nuance and problem a child is having in learning or in their social behavior. That issue has come to the floor lately.

I say to my friend in closing that, in California, in a bipartisan way, the Governor, the superintendent of public instruction, from different parties, all agreed that we should lower class sizes in the lower grades. We do not have the official studies because this is a new program. But the reports that are coming back are extraordinary. The stories we are hearing from the children, from the parents, from the teachers, from the principal, from our Governor, who is a Republican, from our superintendent of public instruction, who is a Democrat, all of what we are hearing is positive. It's not really rocket science to figure out that, if you can spend more time with each child, you are going to have a better result.

So, again, I say to my colleague how much I enjoy working with her. She has put children first from the moment she came on to the Senate floor. It has been a breath of fresh air for all of us. I really look forward to helping her with this amendment. If we do not succeed today, if the other side puts up procedural hurdles and tells us you need 60 votes, I hope you will keep bringing this issue back again and again and again—for one reason: The parents want it, the children need it, and America supports it.

I thank my colleague and I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2 minutes remaining.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank my colleague for her tremendous leadership on this issue. There is nobody from the other side on the floor here. If they can find the chairman, we would like to find out what their intent is on this vote.

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

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I have concurred with the minority regarding an agenda from now until some time after 4 o'clock this afternoon. And I would like to propose it by way of a consent decree which I understand is satisfactory to the other side.

I ask unanimous consent that the following be the sequence of amendments debated between now and 4 p.m. today, and that a vote occur on or in relation to the Murray amendment at 2:20 p.m., with the time prior to 2:20—5 minutes—to be equally divided between Senator MURRAY and Senator DOMENICI or his designee. I further ask unanimous consent that the Gregg amendment No. 2167, and the Dodd amendment No. 2173—that votes occur on or in relation to the remaining above listed amendments beginning at 4 p.m., with 2 minutes of debate between each vote for an explanation, and with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the votes at 4 p.m.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DOMENICI. I apologize to the Senate for the lack of business in the last few moments. We had some amendments that we had to clarify with sponsors. So let me continue and make sure we are clear on the unanimous consent that I have proposed. Let me start over since none of it had been granted.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following be the sequence of amendments debated between now and 4 p.m. today, and that a vote occur on or in relation to the Murray amendment at 2:20 p.m. with the time prior to 2:20 being equally divided between Senator MURRAY and Senator DOMENICI or his designee; that regarding the Gregg amendment, No. 2168, and the Dodd amendment, No. 2173, votes occur on or in relation to those amendments beginning at 4 p.m., with 2 minutes of debate between each vote for explanations, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the vote at 4 p.m.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Parliamentary inquiry. Are we scheduled to go in recess at 12:30?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, we will recess for the caucus luncheons at 12:30.

Mr. DOMENICI. Let me say we now have a starting list of about 12 amendments. When we start at 2:15, I will make sure everybody knows what they are. We are asking that we sequence them in some way so we know where we are going. Frankly, I think either we are going to have to be relieved of some time on the resolution or we are going to stay in tonight and use some time because we really have to finish this this week.

Mr. President, let me use the remaining time that I have, with Senator MURRAY having half of the 5 minutes, to debate her amendment prior to the vote.

First, let me say I understand the sincerity and the genuine concern that the distinguished Senator who proposes this amendment has expressed here on the floor, and that she genuinely and generally expresses with reference to education. But I think it is very interesting; we all want to educate our children, but it seems that we are having a little trouble with math, mathematics, adding and subtracting, right here on the floor of the Senate.

I have read and reread the amendment of the distinguished Senator, and I cannot find any way that it truly means anything with reference to classroom size. A reserve fund is set up and there is nothing in it, zero. There are no dollars, there are no taxes, there are no statements that we should cut certain programs. As a matter of fact, this amendment says at sometime in the future we sure hope Congress will find a way to cut spending someplace, perhaps cut a mandatory program, that is an entitlement, someplace; or perhaps increase taxes sometime. Then it says: Put those in this reserve fund, this box, and we will spend it for reducing classroom sizes.

That is very interesting. If somebody thinks he or she is going to tell the American people that Senators who vote against this measure voted against a reduction in classroom size, then just take it from me, we will put an ad right up under that that says, ''The program had no money in it, no way to pay for it, did not have enough courage to say what program you would cut or which taxes you would raise. It just said, I am for—and I want—and I hope—and I wish—and it would be great if we have—a reserve fund someday, if we use it for classroom size reduction.''

That is essentially the amendment. It is out of order under the Budget Act and under the processes, and we will raise that point. The vote will be on whether or not it is out of order, for I assume the distinguished Senator will move to waive it. But I cannot find it.

Normally, you set up a reserve fund and you say, We are going to put taxes in this reserve fund or receipts from someplace, or we say, We are going to cut certain entitlement programs and use that money for some program, project or activity. What has happened here is the following: No one yet on that side of the aisle who wants to spend more money than required in this budget resolution has found a way to cut any program to pay for it—not yet. I have been looking. There are already a series that I have looked at. None cut any program to pay for a higher priority program.

Second, none say, even though we insist on keeping a balanced budget, and they do also, these amendments—they don't want to break that balanced budget era we have—nonetheless, the amendments go right back to the era when we had programs for which we did not know how to pay. I defy anyone to tell me how we are going to pay for this program if we ever did it.

Frankly, that is a statement of where we are. The same is going to be true for the amendment of my good friend, Senator DODD, on child care. They found a way to set up a reserve fund with nothing in it and they say, ''When something happens, then we will pay for this wonderful program for the American people.'' I use that word in its fairest sense. Some people think these programs ought to be paid for by the Federal Government. I do not.

I just want you to look at one chart. Everybody can look at it here. The business of classroom size in the United States is the business of the sovereign States of America, and they know there is a problem. Mr. President, they are spending more and more money in the school districts across America to reduce class size than on almost anything else they are doing, and they are doing a wonderful job of it. This simple chart up here says from 1960 to 1996 classroom sizes have been reduced 51 percent, from 25.8 to 17.6. That is the green line. That is because the red line shows how many more teachers have been added. Not because we are paying for them at the national level, but because our States are paying for them and the school boards are paying for them. In New York, where the cities pay for it, they are paying for it.

Now we are going to come along in an amendment and try to tell the American people if you don't vote for this, you are against education, which amendment has no way of paying for the teachers. These States cannot do that. You know that green line did not come about because somebody set up a reserve fund and said if we ever find that we raise taxes, we can put the taxes in that reserve fund—''if''—or we can cut some other program and put that in there—''if.'' You know that green line would not have come down one bit if that is what States said. That is what we are saying here today.

The truth of the matter is the teacher ratio is coming down and it is coming down dramatically. Frankly, I am not very impressed with Senator after Senator from whatever side of the aisle coming down here and essentially saying, ''Education is not going well in America and we know how to fix it up here in Washington. What we ought to do is have a new program, a new mandate.'' But this one is even worse than that, because it suggests we ought to do that, and there is no money to do it, which is a very interesting phenomenon—if you can help education without putting any money into a program but saying you wish it would happen.

The truth of the matter is that the National Center for Educational Statistics, commonly known as NCES, projects that trend is going to continue and, I might say, continue without anybody ever having thought the Federal Government would start paying for reducing classroom size. They estimate, in their publication, that by the year 2006 there will be as many as 3 million K–12 public school teachers, an additional 16 percent over the 1996 number. This same organization, highly renowned, says that the pupil-teacher ratios will continue to decline and they will continue to drop as low as 15.4 in the year 2006, an 11 percent decrease from 1996. And, Mr. President and fellow Senators, let me repeat: They did not expect that the Federal Government would get involved in telling these schools how they can reduce class size.

Let me also suggest this is an interesting reserve fund in another way, because it proposes to fund a program that is unknown. The President suggests that there be this program. And, incidentally, for those who wondered how he paid for it—for he paid for it—he paid for it out of the cigarette tax, the settlement. But the budget office said you can't do that, because in doing that you break the budget. But he did plan to pay for it. Let me suggest that NCES projects these without ever contemplating that the United States of America would get involved in paying for pupil-teacher ratio reductions.

Where is the program? The White House has not sent up their program, but let me tell you there is a formula about. For Senators who might think this amendment is determinative of something—I don't believe it is determinative of anything, but let's assume you really think it might be—then I suggest you might not like the proposal if it was to be carried out, because, since 20 States have invested additional funds in targeted efforts to reduce class size, that means that under the formula they are not even given credit for that. They are penalized, for more money goes to States that have not done that. You know if we get a bill, if ever—and I don't think it will ever happen that we get a bill on the floor of the Senate that attempts to get the U.S. Government into determining class sizes—you know that the formula is not going to work. But there is no bill, no substance. Nobody has

written the flesh on the bones that will tell us what kind of program this is.

Senator MURRAY does not know how much or how it is paid for. The President's plan actually estimates $12 billion over 7 years —$12 billion. If that is the plan, I wonder why the sponsors —and there are more than one—don't look through the budget and find $12 billion to spend. I wonder why they don't say maybe we are going to increase taxes to pay for it. Is the era of balanced budgets gone? Are we going to come up with a program we don't know how to pay for and try to let somebody think it is a real, vital, operative set of words called a ''reserve fund'' that will get anything done about classroom size?

Frankly, I am very grateful that to this point in our history we have not asked the Federal Government to do this kind of thing. I am very grateful because, as a matter of fact, everything they get into of this type ends up with more bureaucracy, more redtape, more mandates on the States than do most programs that truly produce beneficial results.

But I am also thankful we are not in it because the States and school districts see the problem. They do not come up to the floor of the Senate when the problem is getting solved. They start solving it. They didn't start solving this problem when we were already down to about 16.8, they started solving it when it was 25. So it is obvious to me that there is a reason for this amendment being subject to a point of order. That point of order should be sustained.

I am not going to second-degree amendments which should fall by a point of order, because I believe that is what we should do to them: One by one, every one that is subject to that, like this one is, we ought to quickly not waive the budget process and not waive the rules of the Senate and say the program just doesn't fit. Having said that, I will have 2½ minutes later. Let me conclude.

Mr. President, I do want to say to the distinguished Senator, Senator MURRAY, I, too, was a schoolteacher—not with the great prowess and experience that she had, but I taught one of those subjects we are all worried about, mathematics. I taught that. I didn't take political science; I took chemistry and math. I don't know how that prepared me to be a Senator, but I did teach algebra and arithmetic. Frankly, it is hard work. Frankly, believe it or not, I believe I taught every single child in my class who knew how to add and subtract—I believe I taught them algebra.

Frankly—God forbid—I have to tell you, I had 44 students in each class. I am not suggesting we do that. I am delighted to see this green line. In fact, for some of our children—and our States are on to this, too—with great disabilities, we are going to have to do better than this. And they are, they are. They are doing better than this.

Let me just close by suggesting that if this program which is encapsulated in these reserve language words is as important as my good friend contends, then it would seem to me we ought to find some other program in the U.S. Government's litany of programs—which is still around 2,600 and growing—we ought to find some programs we could terminate or cut to pay for it. As a matter of fact, the entitlement programs of America, while somewhat under control, are a burgeoning part of the American budget. Essentially, if you want a real reserve fund, you ought to be able to find something in this enormous number of billions of dollars of entitlement programs that is a little less important than the program the distinguished Senator says is so important.

Frankly, I do not in any way contend that we know that classroom size is the answer to every issue. I don't want to get into a debate on that. We will just accept the Senator's language and words about how important it is. But there is a growing dispute, nonetheless, between competent schools of academics and education, as to whether the current problem in the American schools is as much related to classroom size as one of the other groups says. There is one group of experts who say it is not as important as some other things.

The reason I say that is because that is exactly the kind of thing we should not be resolving up here. It is right at the State legislatures, it is right in the offices of superintendents and boards of education, and it is not right in Washington with another Washington-based program.

I see that the time for recessing has arrived. I will be asking Senators to concur with me that this amendment should fall because it is subject to a point of order under our rules, and in this case the rules make great sense, for to vote on a program like this as if it did something, as if there was real money in it, as if there was a way to find real money—our processes are pretty good when they say that kind of amendment, for whatever reason, is subject to a point of order in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask for 5 minutes off the budget time on the Democratic side.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Time is up. I understand there is an order to go into recess.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, we were to be in recess at 12:30.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask for the regular order. I will be glad to give her some additional time when the amendment comes up again. I think we are supposed to go into recess right now.

RECESS UNTIL 2:15 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:31 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:14 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEARS 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, AND 2003

The Senate continued with the consideration of the concurrent resolution.

AMENDMENT NO. 2165

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous agreement, there are 5 minutes of debate equally divided on the amendment that is pending.

Who yields time?

Mrs. MURRAY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, the amendment that we will vote on shortly simply puts in place a deficit-neutral reserve fund for class-size improvement, especially in the early grades. And, it would use as an offset anything we designate over the coming year in available mandatory savings or revenues, except for tobacco revenues.

I know that the chairman is going to say that this reserve fund has no money and it has not set up any specific policy on class size reduction. He is absolutely right. It is exactly what he has done in his budget with the tobacco reserve fund and with the tax cut fund. I have learned from him that if we want priorities within our budget, this is the way we go about it.

Education is a priority. As I pointed out this morning, 2 percent of our budget goes to education. At a time when parents and families and communities and States are struggling with this issue. Parents say to us that they want their children's class sizes reduced. I have talked to parents, I have talked to students, teachers, principals. Down the road, they say, this is going to make an important difference in our children's education.

I think the most important thing to remember is what every parent says to their child when they come home on the first day of school. They ask two questions: Who is your teacher? and how many students are in your classroom? because they know that the best qualified teacher, the best trained teacher will make a difference for their child, and they know that the number of students who are in that classroom will make a difference in their child's ability to learn and be productive and get the skills they need to grow up and get a job and be a positive member of our economy and society in the future.

Budgets are not just about today. Yes, we have a balanced budget before