

that this is being done in a non-partisan, bipartisan way, and I agree completely. I believe that is the way it is being done. It should be a national priority to do all we can to help the children meet these high standards.

Under the existing proposal, that would be done voluntarily. The States would make a judgment, local communities would make a judgment. I think we ought to retain the current system and try to adjust it if it needs to be adjusted rather than to effectively stop it in its tracks. Therefore, I oppose the Ashcroft amendment.

Mr. ASHCROFT. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator has 1 minute 46 seconds remaining.

Mr. ASHCROFT. I find it novel that individuals would allege that there are no tests to tell us how we are doing now, but then they can tell us how far behind we are. The truth of the matter is, there are lots of privately generated, academically appropriate tests. There are no politically proper tests that come from Government. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Stanford Inventories are there. That is the reason we know where we are and parents can find that out.

The leadership is clear on this. I have talked to Senator LOTT and his staff. He is going to be strong for this. Representative GOODLING has led an overwhelming vote of 242-174 in this direction in the House of Representatives. Senator COVERDELL, who is leading this matter on this bill is a part of this effort. It is an important effort. There are lots of national tests. It is said that this would be a voluntary test. Here is what President Clinton said about the voluntary nature of the test: "I want to create a climate in which no one can say no."

So much for Federal voluntary programs. ". . . a climate in which no one can say no."

Incidentally, that was made in remarks to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature in Lansing, MI, on March 10, 1997. We don't need politically imposed, politically correct things in education. We need academically appropriate, strong things that local communities trust and can mandate and enforce. We don't need direction from Washington, DC. I think we have a clear opportunity here to reinforce local control of schools, parental involvement in the education of their students. I am delighted that the occupant of the Chair has said we should take additional time here to make sure we don't do something that is inappropriate.

I urge this body to vote in favor of this second-degree amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time yielded to the proponents of the amendment has expired. The Senator from Massachusetts has 54 seconds remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, there is no question that there are tests that

are out there, but quite clearly the hearings demonstrated they would not provide the kind of information that the parents across this country that this kind of initiative would provide. It seems to me that we want to challenge the young people of this country, setting the high standards for the Nation's children and giving the parents the opportunity and responsibility to know how their children are doing and then taking action at the local level on how they are going to deal with it. That was the principle that was accepted by the Senate and the strong bipartisan vote last year. Let's continue with that and give that a try before effectively stopping it in its tracks.

I yield the remainder of the time. The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, just an update here. It appears that on our side we have one amendment that has been set aside for some resolution. On the other side, it appears that there are four amendments that are yet to be considered. We, of course, would encourage any Senator that has amendments to come forward. The aircraft that has taken a delegation to the funeral of a former Member of the Senate from North Carolina was scheduled to land, and voting was to begin at approximately 3 o'clock. It has been confirmed that the aircraft will probably be a little late. So this will alert the Members of the Senate that the stacked voting will probably more likely occur around 3:45 this afternoon.

Mr. KENNEDY. If the Senator will yield. I will be glad to inquire on our side of those who desire to speak or offer an amendment and request their presence so that we can move along and not in any way hold this process up.

I will do that. I see our friend, the good Senator from Wisconsin. Maybe he could be entitled to speak for some time. I will inquire from our colleagues on our side about Senators who still have amendments so that we can move this process along.

Mr. COVERDELL. I appreciate that consideration from the Senator from Massachusetts. We will do the same.

I ask the Senator from Wisconsin about how much time he will need.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I will ask for 15 minutes in morning business.

Mr. COVERDELL. On another subject?

Mr. FEINGOLD. On a different subject.

Mr. COVERDELL. I have no objection.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for fifteen minutes.

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

The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. FEINGOLD pertaining to the introduction of S. 1966 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. GRAMS. I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

EARTH DAY 1998

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today, across our country, Americans are commemorating Earth Day, a day that is vitally important to all who serve in this chamber.

As my colleagues know, Earth Day was first observed on April 22, 1970. Its purpose was—and remains—to make people across the country and internationally reflect on the splendor of our world, an opportunity to get people to think about the earth's many gifts we often take for granted. Earth Day is a day for us to sit in the grass, take a walk, listen to the birds, and observe wildlife. Earth Day is a day for all of us to reflect on our dependence on our natural resources and recognize the care with which we must respect and use our natural resources, recycling and replenishing them where possible.

The New York Times, on the original Earth Day, ran a story which in part read,

Conservatives were for it. Liberals were for it. Democrats, Republicans and independents were for it. So were the ins, the outs, the Executives and Legislative branches of government.

The goals of Earth Day 1970 were goals upon which all of us agree. They're goals still shared across our country, regardless of age, gender, race, economic status, or religious background.

They're shared by this Senator, as well. I consider myself a conservationist and an environmentalist. I think everyone who serves in the Senate does. No one among us is willing to accept the proposition that our children or grandchildren will ever have to endure dirty water or filthy skies. Our children deserve to live in a world that affords them the same, or better, environmental opportunities their parents enjoy today.

Mr. President, I believe today, on Earth Day 1998, we must speak of our responsibilities—our responsibilities to the Earth, to one another, and to our nation. It is clearly our responsibility to protect our earth and ensure its health. Congress has a duty to see to it that we are cautious and conscientious stewards of our natural resources. Since the late 1960s, Congress has met this challenge by enacting what has amounted to a "war on pollution." By

engaging in this battle, Congress and an increasingly large federal bureaucracy have been successful in centralizing power, expanding regulations, saddling taxpayers with more debt, and leaving states and localities without the power to meet local environmental challenges with local environmental solutions. Local governments have the best ability to improve the environment—and the most incentive to protect their people as well.

To be sure, this war on pollution has had its successes. The Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act have improved our environment in countless ways. This Congress, and many before it, have spent billions upon billions of dollars in environmental protection plans, conservation plans, superfund clean-ups, endangered species act protections, wetlands protections, and wildlife refuges just to name a few. Our urban landscapes are no longer polluted by the thick, black smoke of industrial smokestacks. Our lakes and rivers are no longer the dumping ground for toxic sludge. We're recycling newspapers, glass, and plastics in record numbers—this, in fact, is a priority in many Senate offices, including my own. Through efforts such as the Conservation Reserve Program, Congress is working in partnership with the American people to ensure our generation leaves behind a cleaner Earth than the one we inherited.

Over the past few years, however, issues of environmental concern have moved away from the consensus required of prudent public policy making and increasingly toward the margins. Americans have enabled this shift because even though we've become more environmentally aware, in many cases we've failed to become more environmentally educated, resulting in extremes on both sides of many issues. This past year, a 14-year old student in Idaho used a simple experiment to prove this observation.

In a story reported across the country, young Nathan Zohner entered a project in a local science fair warning people of the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide, or DHMO. He described DHMO as a substance potent enough to prompt sweating and vomiting, cause severe burns in its gaseous state, or even kill if accidentally inhaled. Further, he claimed, DHMO contributes to erosion, decreases the effectiveness of automobile brakes, and can be found in acid rain and cancerous tumors.

Nathan then asked roughly 50 people to sign a petition demanding strict control or a complete banning of the chemical. Not surprisingly, 43 said yes, while five would not sign and two were neutral. What's surprising to many who hear of this story is that dihydrogen monoxide is merely water—a substance, Mr. President, we all know is completely safe when handled and consumed properly.

Sadly, it took the efforts of a 14-year-old boy to point out the drastic lengths to which our society has taken the

rhetoric of environmental protection. Americans today fear everything from drinking water to beef—and are spurred on by leaders who are often masters of fiction, whipping up doomsday scenarios prompted by our supposedly careless treatment of Mother Earth.

Mr. President, Nathan Zohner's experiment only scratched the surface of the insanity of over-zealous regulation. Regulations today cost Americans over \$700 billion each year. That amounts to almost \$7,000 per household. Let me repeat that—regulations in our country cost every American household nearly \$7,000 per year.

That is outrageous and it ultimately has nothing to do with protecting the earth or being good stewards. It is the result of a centralized federal bureaucracy which must not only justify its existence, but expand its purpose and scope in order to feed its insatiable appetite for power.

Let's review the process. Congress enacts legislation and the President signs it into law. Simple enough, but what happens next?

Well, Executive Agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency interpret what Congress meant and go on a rampage of issuing and enforcing regulations that often fly in the face of Congressional intent. In Congress, we protest that we didn't mean for that to happen, but rarely, if ever, are we able to reverse the process or rescind the regulation. We fail in our most basic role of oversight. And far too many times Congressional intent is thrown aside by these growing federal bureaucracies and their own desires are then enforced.

American businesses, workers, farmers, states, and localities are then forced to comply with the goals of the EPA's regulations and ordered to achieve those goals at the direction of the EPA as well. Too often, those being regulated aren't allowed to find unique and innovative means of compliance.

They aren't allowed to tap into the same American ingenuity which, for the span of our nation's history, has provided workable solutions to achievable goals.

They are approached by the federal government as adversaries, not as partners—and are therefore given a one-size-fits-all dictate by a government that most often either doesn't care or doesn't know any better. And millions of dollars are spent to do \$10 worth of good.

We all come to the floor and regularly recite polls and studies and intricate, numerical details. We often forget that real people and real jobs and real families mean a whole lot more than just the numbers behind the latest study. But one thing is certain: Americans do not expect that they should have to choose between environmental protections and their jobs or standard of living. When we do both, we can ensure a healthy environment and a strong economy and strong economic growth.

According to a Wirthlin Worldwide Study conducted last August, only 11% of Americans consider themselves active environmentalists while 57% are sympathetic to environmental concerns. The same study found that 70% of Americans believe they should not have to choose between environmental quality and economic growth.

Clearly, Americans want their leaders to work pro-actively towards a clean and healthy environment, but not to the extreme and certainly not at the cost of their safety, their jobs, or their individual freedoms.

Mr. President, I suggest that on Earth Day we pledge to come together to improve our environment and strengthen our natural resources. I also suggest that we recognize both our failures and successes of the past.

We must recognize that today, compliance with regulations is the rule—and that blatant attempts to pollute and circumvent regulations are the exception. With this in mind, I believe we must renew our nation's commitment to pragmatism.

Government, on all levels, must do its part as watchdog while empowering those being regulated to develop unique and innovative means of compliance.

At the same time, we must promote ideas that create public/private partnerships and encourage companies and individuals to take voluntary steps to protect our natural resources. Through education and awareness, we'll be able to approach environmental issues in a way that fosters compromises and ensures public policy is pursued in the best interests of all.

It is time, Mr. President, that we commit ourselves to achieving real results through environmental initiatives. We must make sure that Superfund dollars go to clean-up, not to lawyers. We must actually restore endangered species and remove them from protections, rather than cordon off large areas of our Nation with little or no results. We must base our decisions on clear science with stated goals and flexible solutions. We must give our job creators more flexibility in meeting national standards as a means of eliminating the pervasive "command and control" approach that has infected so many Federal programs. And finally, the Federal Government needs to promote a better partnership between all levels of government, job-providers, environmental interest groups, and the taxpayers.

With this in mind I believe that on this Earth Day we must collect the extremist rhetoric found on both sides of the environmental debate and flush it down the toilet—remember to flush twice, though, if it's a new, EPA-mandated low-flow toilet, or it might not be gone for good.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. The Senator from Georgia.