

My amendment builds on the bipartisan success of last year's agreement. It is based on local control and flexibility, and it focuses on improving teacher quality, which is so important. Local school districts will make all the decisions about hiring and training their new teachers. Any school district that has already reduced class size in those early grades to 18 or fewer students will be able to use the funds to either further reduce class size in the early grades or to reduce class size in other grades or carry out activities to help improve teacher quality.

My amendment will also provide accountability and ensure that schools communicate with parents which is so essential today. These funds are supplementary, and they cannot replace current spending on teachers or teachers' salaries. School districts will be required to send a report card in easily understood language to their local community including information about how achievement has improved as a result of reducing class size, and they won't have to fill out any new forms. Reducing red tape and improving local decisionmaking in education programs is a bipartisan effort, and both Ed-Flex and my class size reduction amendment accomplish both.

Last year's bipartisan agreement that we reached included my legislation to provide \$1.2 billion as a downpayment on the goal of hiring 100,000 new teachers, and it did it without requiring any new reports or any new forms. Governors and legislators across this country are now responding to our budget agreement last year and addressing this at their local levels. Local school districts are putting together their budgets right now as we speak and teachers are writing their lesson plans for next year with the expectation that we will deliver on the promise that we made to them last year. They are all counting on us. We must take this opportunity to now fulfill our commitment to reduce class size.

Mr. President, smaller classes mean a better education for children. Studies have shown it. Teachers know it. Parents know it. And they know it from experience. I have seen it with my own eyes. Controlling a room of 30 children is not teaching. It's crowd control. We need to return to teaching.

Just yesterday, I heard from Christi Rennebohn-Franz, who is a first and second grade teacher in Pullman, WA, and she wrote and told me that "without small class sizes, we cannot reach all children and give them the time that they deserve. If you have too many students in your class, you go home every day knowing that you came up short giving them the attention they need."

Another teacher from Fircrest, WA, wrote to me to say that "since I teach at an at-risk school, lower class size means that I can more effectively work with students on a variety of problems they bring to my classroom every day."

Mr. President, I am looking forward to working with Senators from both sides of the aisle to ensure that we meet our promise to these teachers and all the other parents and students across America to reduce class size and truly make a difference in the education of our children and our country's future.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I checked with the Republican cloakroom. I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended a half an hour.

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

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as the Senator from Nevada said earlier, many of us have theories on education as parents who watched our kids go through school and met with teachers and administrators. The Senator from Washington has spent enough time in classrooms to teach all of us, and I think her suggestions are very valuable suggestions.

What I have found as I have traveled around my state, and I think other Senators have as well, is that the basics of what they need in education and a helping hand can make such a difference.

When we talked about after school programs in school district after school district, they said, Senator, can you help us with transporting the kids safely from a school to an after school program and back home again?

A practical concern that stops them from doing things that are so important. And I think there are ways we can help here. Yesterday, we passed an important bill about military salaries. We decided to put \$11 billion more in the bill than the President's budget requested, and many of us raised questions about where that figure came from, why there had been no hearings on it. And they said, of course, we want to help the military. We all do. But it really raises the question, if we were to come up with \$11- or \$12-billion today for education for after-school programs, I am afraid there would be a firestorm of opposition. People would say, wait a minute, you didn't have a hearing; it's too much of an undertaking by the Federal Government. I really hope that we can get this priority right.

People across America identify education as the No. 1 concern. I think it's because of their personal experience and also the realization that opportunity in this country comes with achievement, achievement in school is really I guess the best way to get started on a good life in America and many other places.

I am happy today to join with the Senator from Washington to discuss

this. Isn't it interesting, President Clinton's suggested 100,000 more teachers to reduce classroom size. My Republican Governor in Illinois, in the State of the State message, George Ryan, suggested 10,000 new teachers for our State. The reaction from local school districts? "Where are we going to put them? We need classrooms. You can't just give us more teachers and expect smaller classroom sizes without new classrooms."

That is why the President's proposal to help school districts modernize their schools, expand their schools, build new schools is really a timely suggestion. The GAO report a few years ago said that we need 6,000 new schools in America by the year 2006. One-third of all schools in America, serving 14 million kids, need extensive repair and replacement. So I think we understand that the President's proposal for teachers and classrooms is the only sensible way to have class room size reduction in a way that will be handled effectively.

Mrs. MURRAY. Will the Senator from Illinois yield on that point.

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Senator from Illinois brought up an extremely important point, and that is that hiring new teachers is one part, hiring well trained teachers is the second part, and providing classrooms for them clearly is a critical part. That is one of the reasons why in my amendment we make sure that it is very flexible language, so that local school districts that do have a school construction, a very real school construction crunch can use those dollars in a very flexible way so the teachers can work jointly in classrooms, that it isn't just one teacher per classroom, that we can do some local ways of providing extra one-on-one help with youngsters who need it the most.

We also must address the school construction problem. It is a real challenge to crumbling schools that exist across our country where our kids are in unsafe classrooms, where they are crowded simply because there is no space to put them. It is an area we have to address, and I am delighted the Senator from Illinois recognizes that.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Washington. I have noted this on the Senate floor before, but it struck me that at the turn of the last century one of the most amazing things that happened in America was that between the years 1890 and 1920 we built in America on average one new high school every day. We started our new century with a dedication to public education. We Democratized education unlike any country in the world. And we said, whether you are rich or poor, you are going to have a chance to go to high school.

That wasn't a Federal mandate. That sprung up from local communities that said, if we are going to build a community in Washington or Illinois, and it is going to be a real community, we are

going to have a real high school, we are going to hire teachers, and we will have all the kids go to school.

Look at the benefits we have reaped as a nation because of that kind of forward thinking, that kind of vision that said in 20th century America will be different, our commitment to education will be different. And look what we have seen as a result of it. We have gone from the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk to a space program; we have gone from Henry Ford's tin lizys* moving across that assembly line to the point where we have the most modern computer chip factories in the world here in the United States.

I don't think it is a coincidence. I think what happened here is the fact that we dedicated ourselves to improving our work force and elevating the intelligence and training and skills of Americans. And look at the benefits we reaped. We had an American century in the 20th century. Will we have an American century in the 21st? If we take a view that it is a hands-off subject and we can't talk about that in Washington and the people at the local level can't raise the money we are missing another opportunity.

But to bring in talented teachers to have smaller classroom sizes, to have more modern classrooms, has to be an investment of the 21st century to continue what has become the American way of doing things. I want to salute not only Senator MURRAY and Senator REID by those who have joined us in supporting the President's program. I think it is a program that is balanced, a program that takes a portion of this surplus, a surplus we worked hard to put together, and says we are going to put that portion into education. It's an investment that will pay off in generations to come. At this point I don't know that any other Senators are seeking time on the issue of education, and, Mr. President, I would reserve the remainder of my time or yield perhaps to the Senator from Florida if he would like to speak on another subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Colton Campbell, Mr. Bryan Giddings, Ms. Lisa Page, and Ms. Marilyn Lewis of my staff be afforded the privilege of the floor during the duration of my remarks.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. GRAHAM pertaining to the introduction of S. 483 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GRAHAM. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KERREY. 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. KERREY. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business and Senators are permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. KERREY. I ask unanimous consent to speak for such time as necessary to get through this stack of paper.

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

A NEW GOVERNMENT IN IRAQ

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, on the heels of passing a much-needed pay and benefits increase for the men and women who give up their freedom to serve us in our armed services, I want to direct my colleagues' attention to one longstanding military mission these men and women have been assigned. That is the mission of containing the threat of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Mr. President, I do this for a couple of reasons. First is that I have argued for a stronger military operation in Iraq. Indeed, I have argued to change the objective from containment to replacement. And oftentimes people come back and say, well, if we do that, we will risk lives.

I would like to describe to my colleagues—in fact, we have a military operation going on today, have had since 1991; and this military operation is costing us dearly both in lives and in money.

Mr. President, last Tuesday I had the opportunity to give a speech to the cadets at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs and they asked me to speak on patriotism, for which I was only too anxious to oblige.

I talked to them about something that I think is causing the decline in enrollment—in addition to the inadequate pay and retirement benefits—and that is that Americans are less willing to volunteer for service in our Armed Forces as a consequence, in my judgment, of our not doing enough to tell them—especially our younger citizens—the stories of heroism which are being written every single day by the brave men and women who wear the uniform of one of our services. Instead of role models of people who have given themselves to a higher cause, Mr. President, unfortunately our young people are being told an increasing number of stories, especially on television, of self-gratification and indulgency. It is no wonder as a consequence that a patriotic decision to serve seems like a nonmainstream choice.

Before I gave my speech at the Academy, the superintendent warned me I needed to remember how young my audience was. "Half your audience," he

said, "wasn't even 10 years of age when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990." Mr. President, I must tell you that gave me some pause because that seemed like yesterday that happened, but, in fact, a great deal of time has expired since then.

For me, the statement was more than just a reminder to be careful what language I used when talking to these young people, but also a wakeup call not to take for granted the military mission that we have in place in Iraq today. It is a dangerous military operation. It is a military operation that costs us a great deal of money, and I hazard a guess that most of us who have looked at the objective of containing Saddam Hussein would say that the mission is dangerously close to unraveling.

This military strategy began in August 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. In response to this active aggression, the United States, under President Bush's leadership, assembled and led an international coalition of forces against Iraq. It was a costly war, both in terms of our financial commitment but also in terms of the human cost to the more than 540,000 men and women in our military forces deployed to the Persian Gulf. Sixty billion dollars was spent prosecuting the war, but this does not compare to the price paid by 389 American families who lost loved ones in Operation Desert Storm.

At the end of the war, most Americans assumed our military commitment to Iraq would come to an end. After all, the war had been fought. We had been victorious. Saddam Hussein had sued for peace. It was time to bring home the troops. But almost from the beginning, Saddam Hussein refused to abide by the terms of the cease-fire agreements his government had signed. From violating the no-fly zones to obstructing the work of weapons inspectors to provoking troop deployments, Iraq's continual challenges and our policy of containment forced us to maintain a very strong military presence in the region. With each crisis generated by the Iraqi regime, the United States and our allies responded to the deployment of more troops and at times with the use of military force. While it is difficult to quantify the monetary cost of the numerous redeployments and military confrontations that have taken place with Iraq over the last 8 years, it is even more difficult to quantify the effect these deployments have had on our troops. How many families have had to be separated for months at a time? What has been the cost in morale for troops deployed to the Desert?

We must also examine the broader costs of our military strategy in Iraq. The continual need for large numbers of American troops in Saudi Arabia has created a strong sense of resentment throughout the Arab world, and it has also increased the danger of terrorist acts against Americans.

Again, I have urged a different military strategy with a different objective