Mr. ROBB addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be added as an original cosponsor to the resolution just introduced by the Senator from Florida.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. I wish to express my thanks and admiration to my colleague from Virginia.

EDUCATIONAL FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Vote on Amendment No. 36

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the vote will now occur on the Jeffords amendment No. 36. The question is on agreeing to the amendment. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 31 Leg.]

YEAS—100

Abraham	Feingold	Mack
Akaka	Feinstein	McCain
Allard	Fitzgerald	McConnell
Ashcroft	Frist	Mikulski
Baucus	Gorton	Moynihan
Bayh	Graham	Murkowski
Bennett	Gramm	Murray
Biden	Grams	Nickles
Bingaman	Grassley	Reed
Bond	Gregg	Reid
Boxer	Hagel	Robb
Breaux	Harkin	Roberts
Brownback	Hatch	Rockefeller
Bryan	Helms	Roth
Bunning	Hollings	Santorum
Burns	Hutchinson	Sarbanes
Byrd	Hutchison	Schumer
Campbell	Inhofe	Sessions
Chafee	Inouye	Shelby
Cleland	Jeffords	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Johnson	Smith (OR)
Collins	Kennedy	Snowe
Conrad	Kerrey	Specter
Coverdell	Kerry	Stevens
Craig	Kohl	Thomas
Crapo	Kyl	Thompson
Daschle	Landrieu	Thurmond
DeWine	Lautenberg	Torricelli
Dodd	Leahy	Voinovich
Domenici	Levin	Warner
Dorgan	Lieberman	Wellstone
Durbin	Lincoln	Wyden
Edwards	Lott	
Enzi	Lugar	

The amendment (No. 36) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 37 TO AMENDMENT NO. 35

(Purpose: To authorize additional appropriations to carry out part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT), for Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. GREGG, and Ms. COLLINS, proposes an amendment numbered 37 to amendment No. 35.

In Lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SEC. . AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

In addition to other funds authorized to be appropriated to carry out part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.), there are authorized to be appropriated $150,000,000 to carry out such part.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, in view of the status of the amendments at this point, in order for the Members working on this legislation to have a chance to discuss how we can proceed, 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. BROWNBACK. I ask that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. BROWNBACK pertaining to the introduction of S. 539 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. BROWNBACK. 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. KERRY. 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. KERRY. Mr. President, just to let the distinguished chairman and manager know, it is my understanding that the sponsor of the pending amendment does not wish at this time for it to be set aside. In lieu of remaining in a quorum call, Senator SMITH and I have decided not to, in fact, ask for a vote on our amendment, but we would like to proceed to at least talk about it for a period of time, and then obviously we will not introduce it, and we will not, therefore, have to withdraw it.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I have no problem as long as it is for debate only and it won't be offered. I have a request to limit Senators to 5 o'clock; apparently, there is something else that needs to be done at 5 o'clock.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am sure Senator SMITH and I will be able to finish by that time——

Mr. JEFFORDS. Fine, I have no objection.

Mr. KERRY. Depending on how things proceed.

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

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am not sure it is subject to an objection anyway, since I have the floor. I believe I am entitled to speak.

But that said, it may be that, depending on how things go with this bill overall, we may decide at an appropriate time that it is worth submitting the amendment, but I think we have to see what the flow is going to be with respect to this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, was the unanimous consent agreed to, to end the quorum call?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It was, and it would end this discussion and colloquy at 5 o'clock.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I yield such time as needed to my colleague, Senator SMITH of Oregon.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I thank Senator JEFFORDS for giving us this time, and my colleague, Senator KERRY, for his leadership on this issue. I also appreciate Senator KERRY's willingness to set aside some of the partisanship that divides us on this issue. There are too many good ideas that Republicans and Democrats share in common for us not to make significant progress on the issue that is on the minds of most parents, perhaps, more than any other—the education of their children.

While Senator KERRY and I will not be introducing our amendment today to this legislation, I think it is important that we take this opportunity to raise the issue of principal training and development.

After speaking with educators, parents, principals, and teachers in both Oregon and in Massachusetts, it became clear to Senator KERRY and I that our principals are too often not prepared to address the needs of our children. As Senator KERRY has said many times, we can't expect our schools to be well managed without good managers. It is time to provide our States and school districts with the resources to train our principals as managers.

Our proposal would provide States the needed resources for the development and training of excellent principals, and the retraining of current principals to improve the way they manage our schools. This competitive principals' challenges grant will allow States to develop programs that focus on providing principals with effective instructional skills and increased understanding of the effective use of educational technology and the ability to implement State content performance standards.

Throughout the debate on the Ed-Flex bill, we have heard a lot about the need for greater accountability. Our proposal does not expect the States to be accountable. Our proposal requires accountability. State educational agencies must specify how the Federal funds will be used for principal training programs, how the use of these funds will lead to improved student achievement and provide, through annual evaluation, evidence of such improvement having occurred.

Importantly, this proposal does not dictate to the States how to implement these programs. Rather, it gives States the opportunity, the resources, and the support to create programs that meet the needs of every school district, rural and urban.

Mr. President, as we continue to debate education reform in the Senate, I believe that we must include a component that reforms the way in which our

schools are managed. We have some excellent principals in our school districts in Oregon, in Massachusetts, and all over the country. We now have an opportunity to recruit excellent principals. They are the CEOs of our schools. We should ensure that every principal has the resources and training to be a successful manager.

Senator KERRY and I believe that our principals' challenges grant proposal is a strong step toward improving the quality of education in our public schools, and we look forward to working with our colleagues during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Again, I thank my colleague, Senator JEFFORDS, for allowing us time to speak on this issue and for his leadership on the Ed-Flex legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues, Senator JOHN KERRY and Senator GORDON SMITH, in the amendment to establish the Excellent Principals Challenge Grant program, which seeks to address the critical professional development needs of elementary and secondary school principals. Last month, during a meeting with the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), a major concern expressed by them was the lack of professional development programs for school principals. What the school principals of my State said was, just as with the teachers and students around them, they too must keep growing in order to continue to be effective leaders; and as individuals most responsible for implementing vision, direction, and focus for their schools, principals must be fortified with the best knowledge and skills required to effectively manage positive change, including being cognizant of the best ways in which to integrate technology into their schools so that it enhances learning in the classroom.

These are the views of the dedicated school principals of my State, including Jim Ballard, MASSP Executive Director, Sandy Feuerstein of Adams Elementary School in Livonia, Barbara Gadnes of Brighton Elementary School in Brighton, Jerry Dodd of Edsel Ford High School of Dearborn and Bob Cross of Troy Athens High School in Troy, Michigan.

This amendment would facilitate the professional development needs expressed by the principals of my State and principals nationwide. It would establish a competitive grant program to the States, to fund local school districts for implementation of professional development programs for K–12 school principals. Authorized funding would be $250 million for each of the years FY 2000–FY 2004. State and local school districts would be expected to contribute 25 percent of the total cost, with the exception of the poorest school districts that would be exempt from the match. In addition, a commission would be created to study existing principal development programs and report on the best practices to train principals nationwide. Activities would include developing management and business skills, knowledge of effective instructional skills and practices, and learning about educational technology, which has been a special focus of mine in Michigan where I've brought together colleges and universities and other entities in a partnership to move towards making Michigan's standards for teacher training in the use of technology the nation's best.

The expectations for our school principals are high. They are trusted to coordinate, assist and inspire teachers and students, while also monitoring their own personal growth. We must invest in our principals, who dedicate so much to investing in our children. This principal preparation program will allow principals to reach their full potential and at the same time, create public schools that are more organized, well-managed and modern. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, we are currently gridlocked over the most important issue in the country today. I don't think anybody in this Chamber would question that what the U.S. Senate and the Congress chooses to do with respect to education is going to have more to do with determining the long-term transformation that can take place socially and politically in the long run in this country.

We hear countless references within almost every political speech today to the impact of globalization, the impact of technology, the changes that have taken place in the marketplace and, indeed, the extraordinary numbers of challenges that people face in the workplace today. It is almost axiomatic to say that if you are going to earn a decent living in the United States, or anywhere in the world today, you have to be able to manage information; you have to be able to develop your thinking skills.

We live in an information age. Most of the good service jobs and even good light manufacturing jobs, technology-oriented jobs, and certainly the kinds of jobs to which most people aspire at the upper levels of income are absolutely dependent on the maximization of that skill level.

The truth is, however, that in the United States of America today about two-thirds of our high school graduates are handed a diploma although they can read only at a basic reading level. A basic reading level, according to our testing standards, is not a proficient reading level; it is just that—it is basic.

One-third of the graduates of our high schools are at below basic reading level. It is extraordinary that 30 percent of all the students in our country who go to college begin college taking remedial courses to fix what they didn't do properly in high school—remedial writing, remedial math, remedial reading. And colleges are literally required to expend—some might argue, waste—a considerable portion of the collegiate experience bringing people up to the level that they should have been when a principal handed them a diploma—or the chairman of the school board, or whatever dignitary is there—handed them a diploma, and said, ''Congratulations. You are ready to go out into the world and earn conceivably a low-level income, or perhaps even minimum wage.''

I don't think most of my colleagues would argue with the notion that the public school system of this country is in distress. That is why we have such a tension on the floor and in our politics between vouchers and some of the priorities of those who approach reform differently. Most of the debate last year on the floor of the U.S. Senate was focused on either the voucher solution—which is in the end not a solution at all to the problem of fixing public schools—or it focused on construction money and technology money but barely enough on the issue of accountability: How do we guarantee that reforms are put into the schools that are really going to make a difference in how students learn and in how we will know that they are in fact learning?

So Republicans and Democrats talked past each other, each intent on their own sort of ideological goals, with the end result that the Congress did precious little to fix the schools, and another grade, if you will—the kids who went from the 11th to 12th, the kids who graduated from high school, the kids who went from middle school to high school, or elementary school to middle school—all were sort of pushed on in the same state of inadequacy that has characterized the school systems for too long.

I know my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle want good schools. I have also become convinced that one of the things which most restrains them from joining in some of the Democrat initiatives is the conviction they have that without accountability, without adequate change in the fundamental structure, without adequate capacity to really push the envelope of reform, they would be spending good money that would be chasing bad. I have to say in all candor I don't disagree with that—that in many school systems, if all we do is throw money at the problem, we are not going to be achieving what we want.

There is, however, something that has been happening in the United States for the last 10 years or more which we ought to take note of and respect. That is that the Governors of the States have been engaged in major reform efforts on their own. I think we in Congress ought to take more note of the legitimacy of the connection of the Governors and local governments to the same people who vote for us. They

are held accountable in the same way. The races for Governor across this country are, more often than not now, fought out over the issues of whether or not the incumbent or, in an open race, which candidate is going to provide the best educational opportunities to the kids of that particular State. Indeed, they are accountable in the same way that we are accountable for what we do.

I believe we in the U.S. Congress ought to be perhaps a little more sensitive to and respectful of that process of political accountability and perhaps be a little bit more willing to try to trust the Governors to embrace a certain broad set of reforms that we could in fact target or articulate through the legislative process without becoming sort of management specific, without becoming so intrusive that we tend to have taken the discretion away from them, or in fact asserted ourselves in ways that begin to become ideologically divisive rather than constructive in how we are trying to find reform.

There are many areas where we could do this. I think Senator SMITH and I have been trying together to frame a bipartisan approach to how we might in fact unleash a remarkable level of creative energy within the school systems of our country. I thank Senator SMITH for his willingness to reach out across the aisle and to also try to be thoughtful about what we could do that would most impact the schools of this country.

Mr. President, there are a number of different experiments happening in different schools in America. Private schools have engaged in certain reforms. So, generally speaking, an awful lot of private schools have had an easier road to go down for a lot of reasons that are inherent in the nature of private schools. The nature of their student population, the ways in which they are able to manage, the sort of streamlined accountability that exists within a private school—there are a whole series of reasons. But there are things we can learn from private schools. There are things we can learn from parochial schools.

I often hear people say, ''Gee, go to any parochial school and look at the level of discipline you have,'' or, ''Go to a parochial school and you will find people teaching for less than you see them teaching in public schools, and they teach as effectively or perhaps more effectively in some cases.''

The question is legitimately asked: How is it that in a parochial school you have this broad mix and diversity of student population sometimes found in the inner-city and you are able to do better than you are in a public school?

There are some reasons for that, incidentally. There is a certain kind of creaming that takes place, inadvertently perhaps sometimes, even consciously, or just by virtue of economics, by virtue of even the small fee that people are required to pay, or the simple fact that to get to a parochial school, you need a parent involved in your life who is both sensitive enough and caring enough to get you there, to take you there, to make the decision to pull you out of the other school.

For too many kids who are stuck in our school system, their parents, regrettably, are not that involved. They don't have those kinds of choices in front of them. They aren't aware of them. They do not know how to effect them. There are a whole lot of reasons you wind up with disparities between the schools. But the truth is that there are practices within a parochial school which could serve as a model for what we might try to adopt or try to implement in public schools.

There are obviously charter schools. Charter schools are the reaction to what is happening in the public school system. Charter schools have grown because people are increasingly despairing of whether or not they will be able to achieve the changes they want in their public school. So charter schools come along, and all of a sudden people say, ''Oh, boy, we can escape from the albatross of bureaucracy. We can get out from under the sort of school board politics. We can finally put our kids in a classroom that doesn't have 28 or 33 kids. We are going to get the magic 12 to 18 or something.'' So people say, ''I am going to go for this opportunity,'' and so all of a sudden the charter school increases in popularity. It is a reaction to the failure of the public school system.

But here is the most important thing of all. All across this country, in community after community after community, there are great public schools. There are public schools that work brilliantly. They are not failing; they are on the rise. And what they say to us is that if we pay enough attention to this and work hard enough at trying to fix the things that are broken, you can make a public school great.

No one in this country should doubt that. Because most of the generation that went ahead of us, and the generation before that—generations that are being extolled in book after book now: Tom Brokaw's ''The Greatest Generation'' or other books that are out—all of those generations, the vast majority of them, came out of public schools, public schools that faced a different set of problems than the public schools of today, and those public schools were able to respond.

The bottom line is, and I will repeat this again and again and again, there are not enough private schools, there will never be enough charter schools fast enough, and there are not enough vouchers to save an entire generation of young people when 90 percent of the kids in America go to school in public schools. So the real challenge to the U.S. Senate is not to get locked up in a debate about vouchers and not to get locked up in a debate about some targeted narrow area of reform. The real challenge to the U.S. Senate is, can we come together around a broad set of reforms that will empower the States and local communities to be able to embrace the best practices of any of the schools that work, a public school that can look to any other school and draw on those practices and put them into place? And the bottom line truth is we are not going to do that without a major increase in resources.

I was delighted to see that the Senator from New Mexico, Senator DOMENICI, recently embraced the notion that we should put somewhere in the vicinity of $40 billion into education over the next 5 years, and put it back in the States, liberating the States to be able to embrace real reform. I believe that is a minimum figure, but it is a figure that Senator SMITH and I and others have talked about over the last year or so. That is the raw, essential ingredient necessary to guarantee the kind of broad-based massive reform effort that will help to guarantee the kind of education structure that we want.

No one should doubt if you want a tax cut in America in the long run, invest in children today. If you want to stop the extraordinary increases in spending in the criminal justice system or for chronic unemployment or for drug abuse or for other problems that come out of our juvenile justice system, or a host of other areas, the best thing we could do is guarantee that kids are not running around the streets in the afternoon or going home to empty homes and apartments after school and getting into trouble, or not doing their homework. I don't know what happened to the fundamental notion of raising children: children need structure, and structure in the earliest stages can be provided in schools or in community centers when parents are working until late hours of the evening and are less available to take care of their kids than they were in the past.

Within that context of reform, there are a number of things that could be done. They range from attracting stronger teachers by loan repayment programs or by incentives to draw the higher tiers of SAT scores into teaching for a period of time. There are a number of ways in which we could provide incentives to college graduates who come out of school with $50,000-plus of loans and who need desperately to earn a decent base income to raise a family and to get ahead. We could help supplement that capacity of school districts, particularly in low-tax-base areas where they do not have the ability to do this on their own; we could help them get the best teachers, which is what we want. We could also help school districts deal with the problem of technology. We could also help provide the capacity for ongoing professional education or mentoring. We could help schools keep their doors open into the evenings. We could help turn schools into real centers of community learning for parent and child—alike, into the evening hours.

But one of the most important things we could do—Senator SMITH and I were

going to offer an amendment to the Ed-Flex bill on this—one of the most important things we could do is help deal with the problem of principals. In every blue-ribbon school that I have ever gone into, I have found that the first ingredient that hits you about why that school earned the blue-ribbon award, or why it is a singularly strong school within the public school system, is you will find a principal with extraordinary capacity. I could cite schools in Massachusetts—the Saltonstall School up in the North Shore, or the Jacob Hiatt School in Worcester, or the Timilty Middle School in Roxbury. In all of the schools where I found great learning going on and great enthusiasm, I found, without exception, it was a direct result of an extraordinary principal who was helping to drive the energy of that school.

I think every one of us knows the great impact that a principal makes on a school—principals who are real leaders; principals who can build the vital relationships between teachers, parents, students and the community; principals who are trained and talented enough, when it comes to leadership and when it comes to management, to understand all the nuances of modern education and all the ways they can implement good practices within their school. Without a principal doing that, it is not going to happen.

Here is the reality. As we talk about providing more flexibility in public education, which is what Ed-Flex does, and as we talk about turning over more control on the local level, we are really talking about providing greater responsibility to the 65,000 or so principals in our public schools.

I would like to just point to this chart. This is how we approach the issue of training principals in America today. The fact is that less than half of the school districts in the United States have formal or on-the-job training or mentoring programs for new principals. That comes at a time when we have a greater need for new principals than we had, just as we have a need for new teachers.

In the next 10 years, we need to hire 2 million new teachers. Mr. President, 60 percent of those new teachers have to be hired in the next 5 years. If we don't have an effective principal who is managing a school effectively and searching for those best teachers, we are not going to fulfill this extraordinary opportunity with the hiring that we ought to have, and we are not going to wind up implementing the reforms in the way we ought.

Let me just quote the executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He said:

> Schools are going without principals, retired principals are being called back to full-time work, and districts have to go to great lengths to recruit qualified candidates.

I believe that this is the unheralded crisis of our education system, the quality of our principals and their capacity to be able to lead and effect reform. It is remarkable that we currently provide so little assistance to the people we trust to do the most important job of education reform. I do not believe we can leave it to chance, that every single principal has received the training or the skills needed to be the kind of dynamic leader that education reform requires.

As the National Association of Secondary School Principals said in their letter supporting this amendment:

> As the individuals most responsible for implementing vision, direction, and focus for their schools, these leaders must be fortified with the best sources of knowledge and skills required to effectively manage positive change.

If we want flexibility to have the kind of impact that I think everybody in the Senate wants, then we have to guarantee as best we can that we help the local communities be able to provide qualified principals in each school who can apply that freedom we are giving them to the work of raising student achievement. That is why GORDON SMITH and I want to introduce a title of our legislation, the Excellent Principals Challenge Act, as an amendment to the Ed-Flex bill, as a way of investing in the school leadership that we need.

The amendment that we contemplate would provide grants to the States to provide funds to our local school districts for ongoing education and training for our principals, to empower them to learn all the best management and business skills the private sector has to offer, and to gain a knowledge of the most effective teaching practices in the country. So even if the principals themselves have not been teachers, as many of them have not been within decades, they can work with the teachers on their staff to help kids learn and to really give our principals the knowledge they need about education technology so they can put to use the new modern instruments of teaching that are now coming to the classroom.

We also need them to be able to seek out and build the collaboratives and the partnerships with business and with the high-tech community to graduate students who are genuinely ready for the information age.

Our amendment would also commission a report on the best practices of the best principals in the country, create a sharing of best practices so that we really start documenting what works best, not in theory, but the reality of what happens in our classrooms, so that Governors and school board leaders and principals in the years to come can bring good ideas to scale in every principal's office in this country.

These are really some of the most important investments that we can make, if we are going to trust that the reforms we want so desperately are going to be implemented in our schools. There are many people of talent who we should encourage to become principals of schools; people who have left the public sector, people who have left the military at a young age, but who have great leadership skills and leadership development. There are many other examples across this country—CEOs who have retired at an early age because they have been very successful with their companies. They have great management skills, great leadership skills. We should be reaching out to these people all across this country to ask them to come in and be part of the job of helping to save our schools.

At an investment that we offer of simply $100 million a year, including a 25-percent matching grant required from States and local school districts, exempting our poor districts, we believe this investment will leverage the local energies so badly needed in order to invigorate new school leadership and make reform work across the country.

I come from an Ed-Flex State. Based on what we have learned in Massachusetts, it is clear that we should increase the flexibility we give to our schools. I have also been willing to recognize, and I have learned that it is not just the flexibility that brings us reform. In fact, if you give flexibility, but do not have strong leadership in place, or you do not have the kind of capacity to put best practices in place from other school systems in the country, then you will not have reform, and flexibility itself will be given a bad name. You cannot bring about these kinds of comprehensive efforts without terrific leadership, and that leadership should come from, must come from principals within each school. It is the first and most important commitment.

As the National Association of Secondary School Principals wrote in their letter of support, this amendment addresses the critical professional development needs of principals as they seek to improve learning for all students.

I hope when the time comes, whether it is on this bill or conceivably in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, colleagues will join together in embracing not just the effort to provide a better avenue for stronger principals to come into the school system, but will embrace a set of reforms that will truly liberate our schools so that good thinking and common sense can take over from bureaucracy. I think we need a major overhaul of the current structure, but I think if the U.S. Congress were willing to hold out to our schools the most significant incentive grant proposal we have ever provided, we would see the most dramatic change at the fastest rate that we could ever contemplate. Whether it is the hiring of new, stronger teachers, whether it is the lowering of classroom size, whether it is providing the capacity for classrooms that do not currently exist, whether it is raising the capacity of our principals, or even implementing the standards we know we need to measure student performance or even

teacher performance, these things are the sine qua non of any kind of legitimate education reform.

It is time for the U.S. Senate to embrace real reform, not another set of Band-Aids, not a simple little trinket here and a simple little trinket there that satisfies one political party or another or one constituency or another. A broad-based reform ought to be something that we can all understand.

I hope we can cross the aisle and build the kind of coalition of bipartisanship that will make this the year of genuine education reform in the country. We have talked about it for too long. We have lost too many kids to the lack of our capacity to build that coalition. Now is the time to make it happen.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I think there is something that is going to happen at 5:00. I am going to talk for a while and wait and see if the leaders can resolve the little stalemate we have going on on the floor right now.

Title I is a very important program in Nebraska. It serves somewhere between 37,000 and 38,000 students, but costs us about $800 per student per year. We have about 80 schools that have schoolwide Title I programs and about 350 that are in the targeted program.

One of the concerns I have in general with education is, we typically are fighting with peanuts. I do not mean to say that $8 billion is peanuts, but relative to the cost of some of our larger programs we rarely debate around here, Title I is still a relatively low-cost program.

By that I mean, one of my issues since I have come here to the U.S. Senate has been to try to alert both the people of Nebraska, as well as the people in the Senate, that we have a tremendous problem with our growing mandatory programs: Social Security, Medicare, the long-term portion of Medicaid. I must say I am not very pleased with the progress of that debate this year. We are fighting ourselves with a significant amount of constraint in discretionary spending. There is a big debate going on right now whether we ought to lift the budget caps that are currently imposed to $574 billion for this year for budget outlays. One of the reasons there is pressure on that is these mandatory programs continue to take a larger and larger share of the total budget.

For all the talk about Medicare in the last few years, you would have thought we cut it. During the 1997 balanced budget agreement, I know many people were concerned that we were cutting Medicare. Medicare continues to go up about $20 billion per year over the next 10 years. We have to decide, it seems to me, if we are going to maintain laws that place a minimal amount of restriction on business, that keep kind of an entrepreneurial spirit alive and well in the United States of America. I am in favor of cutting some of the regulations we have on business today. We do not impose a great deal of restriction on what people are required to do with their employees.

We have minimum wage laws, but, beyond that, we do not require health insurance and we do not require pensions like many other nations do. If we are going to do that, it seems to me we are going to have to reexamine the fundamental laws we have governing our so-called safety net. That is going to lead us, it seems to me, both to change the structure of our Social Security system as well as to change the structure of our health care system.

Unfortunately, what happens is, we get terrified about the time an election shows up, and we get concerned about whether or not changing eligibility age or some other adjustments in the cost of these programs will enable us to survive an election. As a consequence, we rarely take any action.

Indeed, I must say the President's budget, though it is attractive in many ways, has a couple of significant flaws that make this problem even worse, in my view at least. The biggest flaw is that the President requires us to take the surplus and exchange publicly held debt and transfer it over to, in one place, the Medicare trust fund, the other, the Social Security trust fund—nearly 65 percent I believe the total number is. What this is going to do is give people who are eligible either for an old-age benefit or health care benefit out in the future a larger and larger claim than they have even now on our taxes.

I say that preliminarily, because I examined the Title I program considerably in my State and I see it is doing a great deal of good. It is not just being used for low-income people, although free and reduced-price lunch guidelines mean schools that have incomes of $31,000 for a family of four would qualify. Mr. President, $31,000 is typically Mom and Dad—at least in my community—both out there working like mad, trying to make ends meet. It is not what people would think of when they think of traditional ''poor'' folks. In this case, we have more poverty on a percentage basis in rural Nebraska than we do in urban Nebraska, and, as a consequence, these Title I funds are enormously important. They are like a lifeline. There are 37,000 students being served by it. That is about 17,000 short of the total who are eligible. We have another 17,000 schoolchildren out there who are eligible, by Federal guidelines, to be assisted.

As you examine what is being done by these schools, how they are using these basic grants and the concentration grants, you can begin to get an idea not only of the problems that are being faced but the need that is there and the good that gets done if we are able to provide these Title I funds.

Under the Ed-Flex bill, which I like a lot, we are granting the States some additional flexibility which will be enormously helpful in my State, especially in the rural areas. I have been using this piece of legislation as an opportunity to work with the Department of Education to get them to help Nebraska—in fact, get a waiver to help us develop our Title I plan, using the standards and assessment of the local districts. The State would approve those local plans, but it is not quite a State plan.

We have been having difficulty getting that waiver, and I thank the Department of Education for helping us accomplish this goal. Secretary Riley has been enormously helpful in that regard. It gives us another window into the problems we are facing right now of children of lower-income working families.

Understand that the world has changed considerably. I graduated from high school in 1961, just shortly before the ice started to recede back up into the North. In 1961, three-fourths of my graduating class went right into the workforce. There were good jobs available in 1961 that supported a family at the Havelock shops for Burlington Northern, at Goodyear, at Western Electric, the new AT&T plant that just opened up in Omaha. They were good jobs. The rule was, you went out and got a job. That job supported your family. You did a little time in the service. You came back from the service. The job was there, and you worked at it for the rest of your life.

Mr. President, a third of our high school graduates who are going straight into the workforce today find a much different situation. I support free trade. I want our laws to provide us with free trade opportunities. But that puts a tremendous amount of pressure on these young people to compete in a global economy in a way that I was not required to do when I graduated in 1961.

I would like to keep the restrictions on business to a minimum so that we can grow our economy and allow entrepreneurs and the energy of the entrepreneur community to create new jobs and wealth in America. But if we are going to have both of those things, it seems to me what we have to do is be very diligent in the first place about being willing to tackle these mandatory programs where a larger and larger share of our budget is going, but we are also going to have to be willing to invest in these young people and give this lifeline to the State and local educators who are trying to make Title I a program that does, in fact, give our young people the reading skills, the math skills, and the other skills they are going to need when they graduate from high school.

I am very much troubled about that one-third of the class who are now going right from high school into the workforce with the kind of skills that they have, given what the marketplace is asking them to have in order to get the kind of job they are going to need to support their families.

Title I is one of the bills that has been mentioned repeatedly here on the floor of the Senate, especially by people who are concerned about the impact of this Ed-Flex bill—I believe Ed-Flex is going to enable us to make Title I an even better program than it is right now. Now Title I is one of those programs that has a name on it, a number on it—I know when I talk to educators, I sometimes have to get a translator to tell me what exactly they are talking about—but it also has people behind it.

When you see the impact of Title I, at least in my communities, it is a program that not only deserves to be supported, Mr. President, but, in my judgment, when we reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we need to find a way to put more money into Title I.

We made significant reform in 1994 requiring standards to be developed, requiring assessments to be developed. We made it a much better program. But in my State there are 17,000 eligible kids whom we cannot serve simply because we don't have enough money to get the job done.

There are few programs right now in education—in fact, there is none in education— that I believe does more in my State to help our children acquire the skills they are going to need when they graduate and go into the workforce to earn the kind of living they will need to support a family and to achieve the American dream.

I see the distinguished chairman has walked back on the floor. I am prepared to yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS. The Senator has until 5.

Mr. KERREY. I cannot possibly talk for another 20 minutes, so I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to state where we are and what we hope to accomplish the rest of the day.

Unfortunately, we have broken down in the sense of being able to efficiently and effectively consider amendments on the Ed-Flex bill.

I remind everyone, the Ed-Flex bill is a very limited bill which is supposed to assist States to manage their educational systems better by having a waiver capacity in title I particularly.

Just to give some examples of what we run into on that bill, at this point the State of Vermont has found with Ed-Flex—we are one of the six States that has Ed-Flex—to be at a great advantage in making modifications without the necessity of a waiver, and those modifications can be made within the State.

What this does is allow, in certain circumstances where we have specific percentages set forth which must be reached or you cannot do certain things—.5 percent is an important one with respect to poverty. Thus, communities that have slightly less than .5—say in our case like .48—it is just impossible for you to do anything even with the next-door school which has .5. And there is no reason why those schools should be treated differently. You have to have waiver authority for that outside of the State.

So this bill just makes it so much better for Governors to be able to administer and to be able to take advantage of Federal programs within their States. Thus, it really isn't creating for us any problem at all. That is all we are talking about.

I want to keep reminding people that this bill is something which the Governors, every single Governor wants, and I think everyone here in the Senate should.

I understand Senator MURRAY would like some time. I would be happy to yield to her if I could regain the floor at 4:55. Would that be all right?

Mrs. MURRAY. I would be happy to yield the floor to the Senator at 4:55.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield the floor with the understanding I can regain the floor at 4:55.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Presiding Officer and thank my colleague for yielding me time.

Mr. President, I was out here earlier today to talk about the issue of class size. And we are currently discussing the Ed-Flex bill which is a bill that simply means the Federal Government transfers its paperwork to the State governments in terms of flexibility in allowing the school districts to have waivers for different requirements, which I do not oppose, and I think a number of our colleagues will support that.

But what is really expected of us in today's world, where parents and students and teachers and business leaders and community leaders are asking us to deal with education, is to deal with issues that really make a difference in the classroom and in learning.

I will be offering my amendment, as a 6-year effort, to help school districts hire 100,000 new, well-trained teachers in grades 1 through 3. I talked a little bit about that this morning. I wanted to come to the floor this afternoon because one of the questions surrounding reducing class size is whether it is really connected to learning.

When I offer my amendment, I will be talking about four different issues which I think are important reasons that we do this:

First, that it is a bipartisan effort. This is an effort that we began last October. It was supported by Democrats and Republicans. It was supported in both Houses, and it was supported by the administration. We all told our school districts across this country we were going to help them reduce class size. They are now putting their budgets together, and we need to show them that in a bipartisan way we are going to continue this partnership and reduce class size.

Second, I will be talking about research. I will be talking more about that in just a minute. So I will come back to that.

The third reason to do this is that there is broad public support. I hear from law enforcement officers, I hear from business leaders, I hear from teachers, I hear from school board members, I hear from parents, in particular, and I hear from young people that reducing class size is critical and that we need to be a part of the solution on this.

Finally, I will next week talk about the fact that there is a compelling policy reason to pass this amendment now. That is because school districts across this country, school board members, are making their decisions about their budgets right now. They need to know whether last October was just a fluke. Was last October just a political message because of the election or are we really committed to class size reduction?

I will be talking about all of those arguments next week. But this afternoon I really want to focus on the research because I think it is very important that we show why class size reduction really works.

Mr. President, I have behind me a chart which shows that K–12 enrollments are at record levels. That is why we need to deal with this issue. If you will look, we have gone from 45,000 in 1985 and will go all the way up to just under 55,000 in the year 2005. Our school districts are dealing with jammed class sizes, and they are going to get worse if we do not begin to deal with this issue.

All last year, when I talked about my amendment on class size reduction, I talked about research and what it shows. I referenced a 1989 study that was done of the Tennessee STAR Program, which compared the performance of students in grades K through 3 in small and regular-sized classes. They found that students in small classes significantly outperformed other students in math and reading; every year, at all grade levels, across all geographic areas, students performed better in math and reading.

Ask any businessman out there, ask anybody who is hiring a student, ask any teacher, ask any professional, and they will tell you, we need to focus on math and reading in our young students. Reducing class size makes a difference. We knew that from the 1989 study.

A followup study of that 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. They followed these kids, if they started in 1989, and they continued into 1995 outperforming their peers, with achievement advantages especially large for minority students.

Other State and local studies have since found that students in smaller

classes outperform their peers in reading and math, perform as well or better than students in magnet or voucher schools, and that gains are especially significant among African American males.

Mr. President, many of our colleagues have come to the floor decrying the state of education and talking about the performance of our students in math and in reading. Small class sizes make a difference; students perform better. A 1997 national study by Educational Testing Service found that smaller class sizes raise average achievement for students in fourth- and eighth-grade math, especially for low-income students in ''high-cost'' regions.

Particularly of note in the 1997 ETS study was the finding that in eighth grade the achievement effect comes about through the better discipline and learning environment that the smaller class size produces. As policymakers try to make decisions that will affect students in the critical years of middle school, class size makes a difference in terms of behavior and academic achievement. Class size in those early grades transfers to better achievement in the middle grades.

Mr. President, there is good news. These students who were followed in 1985 have continued to be followed, and many of them have now graduated or are just graduating. And last week—just last week—on February 25, I received letters from the head researchers who have been studying the success of the STAR project. As of June of 1998, most of the students from STAR have graduated. A pilot study showed that ''more [of these] students from small classes [in the early grades] had enrolled in college-bound courses (foreign languages, advanced math and science), and had higher grade point averages than students who attended regular or regular-aide classrooms.

''The findings also suggested that small-class students''—students who have been in small class sizes in the early grades —''progress through school with fewer special education classes, fewer discipline problems, lower school dropout rates, and lower retention rates than their peers who had attended regular-size and regular-size classrooms with teacher aides.''

Mr. President, they are now showing us that not only did it make a difference when they were in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades because they were in a small class size, but it made a difference when they graduated. It made a difference on whether or not they went on to college. It made a difference with their grades. It made a difference with their learning.

I have behind me a quote from a letter by Helen Pate-Bain and Jayne Boyd–Zaharias, who were part of the STAR research. They said, ''We can say with full confidence that the findings of this landmark study fully support class size reduction.'' These are the researchers who have been following these young kids who are now graduating. And they began in early grades some years ago.

They said students from small classes—this is what their research shows—enrolled in more college-bound courses, such as foreign languages and advanced math and science. These were kids who came from small classes. They were confident when they graduated. They knew these tough subjects. And they felt qualified to go on and enroll in tougher courses as they went on, because they had a smaller class size when they were younger. They learned the skills they needed. They got the confidence they needed. They had the one-on-one with an adult that allowed them to go on to these kinds of courses. Students from small classes had a higher grade point average. They did better in school. Learning, small classes: Completely connected. They had fewer discipline problems.

You can ask why. I can tell you as a former teacher and a parent of kids in public schools and having been out there many, many times with young kids, when you pay attention to a child when they are having a discipline problem, and you deal with it directly, then you can move on and not continue to have a child with a discipline problem. If you are in a large class with 30 kids, you can't pay attention enough to those kids who have learning difficulties or who are just needing attention, and they tend to be discipline problems later. And this study backs this up. Students from small classes have fewer discipline problems.

Finally, they had a lower dropout rate. These students from small classes stayed in school. Students in smaller classes, especially minorities and low-income students, are more likely to take college admission tests. The chart shows this. The graph on the left is large classes; on the right is small classes. Looking at all students, if you were in a small class, you are much more likely to take college admission tests.

Students in smaller classes had significantly higher grades in English, math and science. Again, how many times have we heard from our colleagues on the floor that we need to make significant gains in learning, particularly in English, math and science. Talk to any business leader today. They will tell you they are looking to hire students who come out of our K–12 programs who have a good, solid background in English, math and science. Smaller classes meant higher grades in every part of the study.

Dr. Krueger said:

> These results suggest that reducing class size in the early grades for at least one year—especially for minority or low-income students—generates the most bang for the buck.

No surprise.

I will be offering an amendment to make our commitment to reduce class size continue over the next 6 years. This is a commitment we made last October. We need to continue to stand behind it.

We have teachers, we have school boards, we have communities, we have businesses, we have young students out there today who know what these studies show—that it will make a difference if we reduce class size. We need to do this now. We need to keep our commitment.

It is going to be bipartisan. If we don't get it done today, I will keep doing it until we get it done, because it is the right thing to do. We hear a lot of rhetoric on the floor about education. We hear that we need to make a difference. My amendment will make a difference. Ask any parent, ask any teacher, ask any student.

I thank my colleague from Vermont for yielding me the time, and I look forward to the debate we will have next week on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, my understanding is that under the present situation we are in debate only until 5 o'clock, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no formal order to that effect, though there is an understanding to that effect.

Mr. JEFFORDS. That is no problem. I will go forward under either circumstance and do the same thing.

I certainly commend the Senator from the State of Washington for presenting the results of the study. I understand that is the only study that has been done. Obviously, considerable effort was put into doing that.

Again, I emphasize, as I have to all Members, that I want to keep this bill, the Ed-Flex bill, clear of amendments in order that we can expedite its passage. This will have good reception in the House. I want to get this done so the Governors can, as soon as possible, have the flexibility to be able to handle the problems created in the present law—especially title I.

I am not going to accept any amendments that are related to the elementary and secondary education reauthorization. Otherwise, we will be here all the rest of this year talking and blocking all other legislation because we cannot get this little Ed-Flex bill out, which is small but is really important. I have alerted everyone that I will not accept and will oppose any amendments which are related to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization on which we are presently holding hearings. We have already had several hearings and we will have more hearings. To do it piecemeal, as Members are attempting to do, to do things in this piecemeal fashion before we have held the necessary hearings is very counterproductive at this particular time.

Also, I remind Members, for those amendments which do set forth an authorization for the expenditure of funds, I will second degree those

amendments and have that money go not to the intended purpose of the amendment but, rather, to fully fund the IDEA; that is, money for special education. If there is a shortfall in funding, there is no question that the shortfall in funding is in IDEA.

Behind me, Senators can see a chart that demonstrates how incredibly stingy the Federal Government has been in meeting its obligations. I was on the committee that wrote the original IDEA in 1976, and I remember when we made the pledge to make sure that the Federal Government was responsible for 40 percent of the cost of special education. As Members probably realize by this time, yesterday a Supreme Court decision greatly expanded the potential for expenditure of funds by saying that under IDEA, we have the obligation now—the States do; I think the Federal Government as well—to pay for health care costs related to special education children. That is a great expansion of the present situation.

This is not a mandate, as someone called it, of the Federal Government. This is a constitutional requirement. Any State that offers free education must offer the free and appropriate education to special education children. Thus, this is a constitutional requirement which we agreed to pay 40 percent.

Now, what our goal is—the Republican goal—we have increased the funding by some 85 percent over the last 3 years. That was all done by Republicans for the purpose of trying to get us closer to that 40 percent that we agreed to do back in 1976.

I want to make that clear as we try to move forward on this bill. I know there are a number of amendments that have been put forward contrary to my feeling that we should not be amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act until such time as we have held the appropriate hearings, and that we should only concentrate on the Ed-Flex bill to free the Governors of the kind of complications they have now with respect to trying to get through the maze of regulations, in order to free up flexibility to help more of their communities with the limited funds they have.

Hopefully, we will be offering an amendment in the not-too-distant future that will assist in moving toward improving the Ed-Flex bill, so that we can bring it to an end and be able to pass it out in an expeditious way to help the States be able to handle the problems from which they are suffering.

I am hopeful Members will understand. I hope my friends on the other side of the aisle will not try to take advantage of this opportunity to prematurely amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I hope they will wait until the hearings are finished, and until such time as we have an orderly process, to delineate what the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act should contain.

In a moment I will send an amendment to the desk in order to make progress on the Ed Flex bill. This amendment is drafted to the text of S. 280 rather than the pending substitute. Members should be aware that we will vote shortly after that—depending, of course, on debate—in relation to the amendment.

Mrs. MURRAY. Will the Senator from Vermont yield for a question?

Mr. JEFFORDS. Not at this point. I am ready to offer the amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 38

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. JEFFORDS] proposes an amendment numbered 38.

In the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 31, at the appropriate place insert the following:

SEC. . PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT.

The Secretary of Education shall prescribe requirements on how States will provide for public comments and notice.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I move to table the amendment.

Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is not a sufficient second.

Mr. JEFFORDS. 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. JEFFORDS. 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. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Arkansas be allowed to speak and that the vote occur at 5:15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I am delighted to be here today to speak on behalf of one of the issues that I think is the most important to our Nation. The great philosopher Edmund Burke once said, ''Education is the cheap defense of nations.'' So I think it is appropriate that we have moved on to education after last week's discussions about military spending. I tend to maybe disagree with some of my colleagues over there. I do think this is a very important issue to be discussing right now in the context of all of the different things we can be doing on behalf of our children, which I do think are our greatest resource.

Investing in our children is the best national investment we could possibly make at this stage of the game. Giving our children the tools to succeed is a valuable investment in the success of our workforce and the resulting economy.

Schools are not just buildings where children and teachers spend their days. Our schools serve as the cornerstone of our neighborhoods, and they are the most basic building blocks that our children need to compete in the future and in the coming 21st century. There is no doubt that our time is very well spent in this debate here not only on the issue of Ed-Flex and being able to give States and school districts flexibility to be able to produce the best workforce possible, but it is also a great time for us to be speaking in the context of all issues related to education—certainly, increasing our teachers and making sure that we have the proper infrastructure.

We all have our particular areas in education of great importance, and certainly, we all represent different areas in the country that have specific needs. But we must ensure that as we discuss any legislation to repair our educational infrastructure, our school buildings, and classrooms, that we remember the needs of rural areas as well as urban areas.

We must also do our best to equip all classrooms with the proper wiring and equipment so all of our children can ride the information highway, not just those in urban areas. When I served in the House of Representatives, I worked on the telecommunications conference, and I recognized how absolutely vital it was for us in rural America to have an interest ramp onto that information highway.

Let's not overlook the importance of parental involvement in our educational reform discussions here. When parents read with children each night and help them with their homework, they reinforce what their children have learned during the day. This is so totally appropriate, not only that we are talking again about the flexibility we can provide States and districts but of every aspect of education. And if we spend the first 2 months of this session talking about education and reinvesting in our children, it is certainly worth it.

Teachers will certainly have greater success in the classroom if parents are doing their part as well. We have a great example in northwest Arkansas of a family night constructed by a school district to help bring together fellowship in that school area with parents, local businesses, superintendents, principals, administration, teachers and students to come together in fellowship and understand their school community and how important that school community is to the overall community.

My sister and many of my other relatives are teachers. They have talked to me about the importance of getting

our children ready to learn. When you have a classroom of 5-, 6- and 7-year-olds who come in and are hungry or scared or they are sick, they can't possibly learn. School nutrition is absolutely vital to our children if they are going to be able to learn, to take on the tools they are going to need to be competitive. It is absolutely essential. I have met with teachers who have told me for years they could do their jobs better if they also weren't subbing as psychologists, doctors, and disciplinarians.

There is so much we can do. We can fill our time and our debate here with investing in that great resource of our children. These teachers have also told me one of the most important things we can continue to do is, again, reinforce those nutrition programs in our school districts. I have done some of that debate in our recent hearing this week in the Agriculture Committee, and I hope we will continue debating what an important role that plays in this discussion we have here.

As we discuss ways to empower teachers and improve teacher quality, let's try to support our teachers with resources so they can deal with the troubled children who are in our Nation's schools today. Whether children were born with the side effects of crack cocaine, or have witnessed domestic violence at home, or are tempted by others to smoke, these problems affect their performance in the classroom, and we must be focusing on how to eliminate those temptations to our children. Reducing class size is the first step toward helping our teachers deal with these issues, both being able to get the students' attention, but more importantly, to be the best teachers they can possibly be.

It is important that we move quickly to put 100,000 new teachers into the classrooms because school districts are making hiring decisions right now for the fall. That is what makes that issue important and a part of this legislation that we are discussing right now.

In my own State of Arkansas, like many of the other States that are represented here, a majority of our teachers are beginning to retire. We are losing a large number of our teachers over the next few years to retirement, and if we don't address the issue of teacher recruitment right now, we are going to be in serious trouble in many of our States.

We will not have the qualified teachers to be able to teach our children, to nurture them in what it is that they need to be competitive in the future.

I certainly appeal to my colleagues that all aspects of education must be addressed, and must be addressed as quickly as we can, because we certainly at this point must recognize that this greatest resource of ours, our children, and our future in this Nation are in jeopardy if we are not doing all we can in this debate to provide the best education possible for our children.

Let's reverse the unfortunate road and trend of fewer young adults pursuing a career in education. Let us work towards giving teachers the incentive not only in pay but in stronger classrooms, smaller sizes, and a better capability of reward in what it is that they are there to do, and that is to teach our children.

I thank my colleague for bringing this issue up. I am very supportive and have been an original cosponsor of Ed-Flexibility. But, more importantly, I think it is extremely appropriate for us to be discussing these issues of education. I hope we will continue this discussion and continue to improve this bill with so many of the opportunities that we have before us.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, will the Senator be good enough to yield for a question?

Mrs. LINCOLN. I am glad to yield.

Mr. KENNEDY. I want to thank the Senator for her statement and for her excellent summation of some of the challenges that are facing the children of her State, and also across this country.

The Senator has spoken to the members of our Health and Education Committee about some of the challenges that exist in the rural areas of her State, particularly in terms of ensuring that those children have access to the types of technologies which are commonplace in so many of our schools—not commonplace enough, but at least are important tools for learning—and to make sure that they have teachers who are going to know how to use those technologies in ways that might be taught in those schools.

I know this has been one of the special areas she has been interested in based upon her own visits to a number of the different communities across Arkansas. I want to indicate to her that we look forward to working closely with her on that issue as well as other issues. It is a matter of very significant importance. We welcome the chance, as we have talked with her about her concerns about education, to make sure that these items are given priority.

I thank the Senator.

Mrs. LINCOLN. I appreciate my colleague's concern. I would like to express to him—and I think it is probably the sentiment of many of the Senators from rural States—having visited with some of my communications workers on the technical aspects of what we need to do in order to bring our schools and the infrastructure up to the level where they are actually going to be able to house these wonderful pieces of technology and computers, that we have to bring those buildings up to standard if we don't want to create fire hazards by overwiring classrooms to try to accommodate equipment that we are not prepared for in the buildings. We really have to focus on that kind of investment and infrastructure in our classrooms. I have certainly seen it, traveling rural America—the problems that we see out there. I am dedicated to making sure that all of our children of this Nation receive that help.

Mr. KENNEDY. Generally speaking, we understand from the various General Accounting Office reports that there is about $125 billion worth of needs for our schools, K through 12, to bring the buildings and facilities up to safety standards and to meet other kinds of codes. In many different communities, whether it is urban or, as the Senator pointed out, rural, there are not sufficient resources to help. Those communities can help somewhat. The State can help somewhat. But they are looking for a partner. At least I find that is true in my own State. We are going to have an opportunity to address that particular need, to try to figure out how we can best partner with the State and local communities and work with those in the rural areas as well as the urban areas.

I want to give assurance to the good Senator that we want to work very closely with her as we try to work through this process. I believe we can take some important steps in this Congress in that area. We look forward to her insight and her assistance in doing so.

Mrs. LINCOLN. I appreciate my colleague, although he probably grew up as a city boy, understanding the needs of us in rural America. It is very important to us. We really appreciate it. (Laughter.)

Mr. KENNEDY. I accept that definition. I have not been described in that way, but I am glad to be described in that way.

I thank the good Senator.

Mrs. LINCOLN. I thank the Senator. I thank the Chair.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote be postponed until 5:20 and that Senator BURNS be able to proceed for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Vermont and my good friend from Massachusetts. It won't take me long to make a couple of points before we go into the vote, because I think everybody wants to wrap up and get out of here for Thursday evening.

I am pleased to cosponsor and support this Ed-Flexibility Act. I want to make a couple of points. I want to thank our good friend from Tennessee, who a couple of years ago really elevated the awareness on the importance of this issue. The report that he prepared stands to be read by everybody.

I don't know if everyone visits schools when they go home. But for the week that I was home a couple of weeks ago, I had two or three chances to go into some high school assemblies and to talk with some teachers. The problem they are incurring is that they teach for a half-day and then they spend the rest of that day on paperwork compliance.

I think this is a very first step where teachers and parents and principals can

make some very vital decisions on the education they want to give our children. All 50 States have the ability to grant individual school districts waivers from selected Federal education requirements, like title I—there is no lack of support in this body for title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—and even the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act and the Applied Technology Education Act.

When we talk about distance learning, nobody has been involved in distance learning longer than I have on the Commerce Committee, and I think the Senator from Massachusetts. We work very hard on demonstration units of distance learning. We even did it here on the inner cities and worked very, very hard on two-way interaction between teachers.

We have over in eastern Montana, where we have a lot of dirt between light bulbs, schools as far as 200 miles apart with teachers sharing sciences and languages in a class. She teaches there and also interacts live with students in three other classrooms. The total graduating class of all those schools put together will be fewer than 50.

Distance education, making those decisions of using the new technical tools that we have developed, has been one great thing to watch. It blossomed. Now we are teaching teachers in our land grant universities how to use those tools.

Unfortunately, right now many of our Federal education programs are overloaded with rules and regulations. States and local schools waste precious time and also resources in order to stay in compliance. It is obvious that these State and local districts need relief from the administrative burdens that many federally designated education programs put on States, schools, and education administrators.

We hear a lot about numbers of children in classrooms. I want to tell you, in our State the numbers are sort of going down. The goal of this legislation and our goal should be, at the Federal level, to help States and local school districts to provide the best possible first-class education for our children that they can. They can't do it if they are burdened with rules and regulations and always reading the book on compliance. This is one big step toward taking care of that.

I compliment my friend from Vermont on his work in education and his dedication to it, because we will probably not take up any other piece of legislation that will have as much impact on local neighborhoods, on our taxing districts, and also the attitude of educators at the local level.

This is one giant step in the forward direction. It won't fix all of the problems. It won't fix them all, because we can't fix them all. But I think it places the trust back in the people that the Federal Government, yes, does play a role. We want to play a role. But we want to play a constructive role in helping meet the needs of the local communities and put the decision back with teachers, parents, and, of course, administrators at the local level.

I thank my friend from Vermont for yielding the time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the motion to table the amendment. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Kentucky Mr. BUNNING and the Senator from Oklahoma Mr. INHOFE are necessarily absent.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota Mr. DORGAN is necessarily absent.

The result was announced, yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 32 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Abraham	Frist	McConnell
Allard	Gorton	Murkowski
Ashcroft	Gramm	Nickles
Bennett	Grams	Roberts
Bond	Grassley	Roth
Brownback	Gregg	Santorum
Burns	Hagel	Sessions
Campbell	Hatch	Shelby
Chafee	Helms	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Hutchinson	Smith (OR)
Collins	Hutchison	Snowe
Coverdell	Jeffords	Specter
Craig	Kyl	Stevens
Crapo	Lincoln	Thomas
DeWine	Lott	Thompson
Domenici	Lugar	Thurmond
Enzi	Mack	Voinovich
Fitzgerald	McCain	Warner

NAYS—43

Akaka	Feingold	Lieberman
Baucus	Feinstein	Mikulski
Bayh	Graham	Moynihan
Biden	Harkin	Murray
Bingaman	Hollings	Reed
Boxer	Inouye	Reid
Breaux	Johnson	Robb
Bryan	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Byrd	Kerrey	Sarbanes
Cleland	Kerry	Schumer
Conrad	Kohl	Torricelli
Daschle	Landrieu	Wellstone
Dodd	Lautenberg	Wyden
Durbin	Leahy	
Edwards	Levin	

NOT VOTING—3

Bunning	Dorgan	Inhofe

The motion to lay on the table the amendment (No. 38) was agreed to.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. 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. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is now 6:10 p.m. on a Thursday evening, and we have had this Ed-Flex legislation before the Senate since yesterday. The Ed-Flex proposal would permit States and local communities to have greater flexibility with accountability for scarce resources that are provided by the Federal Government—in this case, the Title I program, which is about $8 billion that focuses on the neediest children in this country. There was an effort to give greater flexibility to the local communities, consistent with the purpose of the legislation, to try to have a more positive impact in the achievement of the children in this country.

This legislation was thought to have been a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We were going to have an opportunity to consider those measures together, but it was a decision of the majority of the committee to vote that out as an early piece of legislation. I voted in favor of that process and procedure. And then there was the indication by the Majority Leader that this measure would be before the Senate at an early time in this session.

We had legislation last week to address the very important, critical and legitimate needs of our service men and women, to try to give them a fair increase in their pay—particularly those individuals who are serving in harm's way in many different parts of the world, but generally for the armed services of this country, in order to make up for the failure to do so at other times. We had a good debate on that, and it was voted on. We had 26 different amendments that were advanced during that period of time, some of which were accepted and some of which we voted on. But we came to a conclusion on that particular measure.

So we started the debate on Ed-Flex. I don't think most of those American families who are watching now would really understand exactly what Ed-Flex is really all about. Nonetheless, it might very well provide some benefit to some young people in this country, and we were going to move ahead with it. I think most parents would understand if their children were in a classroom where there were fewer children in the class and a well-qualified teacher was interacting with that child and the 17 or 18 other children in that particular classroom, rather than the 30, 32, or 33 children in many classrooms across this country. I think parents would understand the advantages of moving toward smaller classes.

I think the overwhelming majority of Americans would favor that action, and we have an excellent proposal to do that, which was accepted by Republicans and Democrats in the final hours of the session last year prior to the election. And now we have many of those communities that are asking, ''Well, should we just hire a teacher if we are only going to have a teacher for 1 year? Let us know, Congress of the United States. You didn't do the whole job last year in authorizing it for the complete 6 years. Let us know whether you are going to make the judgment

and decision, as recommended by the President, that we ought to have the full 6 years.'' The President of the United States, in his budget, has allocated resources to be able to do that. The communities want to know.

Senator MURRAY has an excellent amendment to deal with that issue. I don't know about my other colleagues, but I know that in my own State of Massachusetts, communities want to have an answer to that particular question. And we are prepared to move ahead with that debate. We are prepared to have a full discussion on the floor of the U.S. Senate. We were prepared to do that yesterday. We are prepared to do it tonight. We are prepared to do it tomorrow or Monday, or at any time. It is of critical importance, and it is the kind of business that we should be dealing with in terms of education.

Families can understand smaller class size. Families can understand, as well, the importance of the development of afterschool programs. I referred, earlier in the debate, to the excellent review that has been made by independent reviewers on the value of the Title I programs, and there were a number of recommendations in there. They noted that we have made some important progress in the past few years in targeting the Title I programs more precisely, as we did in the last reauthorization legislation. But we also know of the importance of the afterschool programs.

I will mention this report, the evaluation of promising results, continuing challenges, of the national assessment. This is about Title I from the Department of Education, 1999, and was just released. One of the findings shows that in a recent study of elementary schools in Maryland, the most successful schools were seeing consistent academic gains as a result of extended-day programs. Afterschool programs are extended-day programs. And there are others, such as programs that extend into the weekend and summer programs that continue the education during the summer months.

There are a number of different ways that local communities have been implementing afterschool programs. Last year, we had some $40 million in appropriations for afterschool programs, and there were $500 million worth of applications for those programs coming from local communities. The President has raised his appropriation up to $600 million to reach out to one million children in the country and provide afterschool programs. We have an excellent amendment by our friend and colleague from California, Senator BOXER, and also one from Senator DODD in that particular area—one would be based upon the schools, and the other would be based upon nonprofits. They are somewhat different approaches, but I think they both have very substantial merit.

Nonetheless, Mr. President, we have the opportunity to vote and debate on a measure that will make a real difference in terms of families' lives for extended-day programs. That will make a difference. It will improve quality education and student achievement.

We were prepared to move ahead with that particular debate. But that, evidently, will not be the case. We had a good opportunity and a good record to explore and to engage those that would differ with us. We have the amendment that our colleagues are familiar with that was advanced by Senator BINGAMAN, REID and others, that brought special focus and attention on the problems of school dropouts. Sure, we have a lot of dropout programs. But this program was very innovative in terms of the evaluation of that, and was successful in implementing a program that can make a difference.

I commend those Senators for the work they have done on it. In the past, that amendment was accepted overwhelmingly by this body. That could make a difference to children that are in school now, today and tomorrow. We were prepared to debate that program, but we have been unable to bring that to resolution.

As the good Senator, Senator BINGAMAN, pointed out, some 500,000 children drop out of school before graduating from high school each year. There are important reasons for that. There have been successful programs to try to correct that. But this was a worthwhile effort to bring the authorization of funding for that particular program.

My colleague and friend from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY, had a modest program to provide additional help, assistance and training to principals to help them deal with some of the more complex issues that they face. And that is a very, very worthwhile amendment.

Our good friend from North Dakota, Senator DORGAN, and others had a program to have a report card on various schools so that parents would have better information about how the schools were doing.

There were others, but not many others. I haven't gotten the complete list at this time, but there are a few others.

But on each and every one of those, Senator DASCHLE was prepared to recommend to all of us that we move ahead with short time limitations. As far as I was concerned, we would have been able, at least from our side, to have concluded the consideration this measure by Tuesday of next week. We were glad to try to accommodate the interests of the majority in working out the time limits of these particular measures, and even the order of them. We assume that there may be amendments to be offered by the other side, including the very important amendment that was brought to our attention with regards to IDEA and children with special needs. That amendment would provide additional help and assistance to local communities, through IDEA, to offset some of the serious financial burdens of educating of children with special needs.

We have an important responsibility to children with special needs, and the States have an obligation under their own constitutions to educate every child.

We did make the commitment back in 1975 that we would establish a goal of 40 percent federal funding, and we have failed to do so.

I believe very strongly that we should support those programs, particularly in light of yesterday's Supreme Court decision that will permit children with special needs to continue their education. It will be supported by the local communities as well. That will add some certainty for those children, so they will be able to continue their education.

That is the most important and significant aspect of the program. But there will be some additional financial responsibilities. This is an area of national concern, because all of us understand that our participation in the education process is limited and targeted to special priorities. We have made disadvantaged children and the neediest children in our country a priority. Certainly those with special needs ought to be a national priority as well. We ought to be willing to help children, regardless of what community they live in, and regardless of what their needs may be.

Mr. President, these are some of the items that we are talking about. I think most families in our country could make up their mind pretty easily about the kind of priorities that we should be considering. I think the overwhelming majority of Americans would feel support for the programs I have begun to outline.

Let me point out that they are very modest and important programs, with demonstrated effectiveness. Certainly we are able to do so and support those programs. Many of them, as I mentioned earlier, have already been targeted for support by the President in his budget—financial support has been there.

Mr. President, we find ourselves in the situation on Thursday evening where effectively by the rules of the Senate are not going to be debating these issues tomorrow, we will not be debating these issues on Monday, and at 5 o'clock the Senate will vote whether or not we are going to exclude all possibility of considering those amendments on this particular measure. We will not spend the time tomorrow, which we certainly could, in debating and considering these issues. We will not do it on Monday. And we will delay the eventual outcome of consideration of these measures to a future day.

We heard earlier today, around noontime, that those that are supporting the measure of Senator BINGAMAN were actually filibustering the legislation. This is after a day and a half of considering the amendments to the Ed-Flex

legislation. We had indicated at that time that we were prepared to accept—at least Senator BINGAMAN was—the amendment and move ahead.

It reminds me of where we were at the end of the last session where we were effectively denied any opportunity to bring up the patients' bill of rights, which American families were so strongly in support of. We were denied the opportunity for fair consideration and debate on it. We were denied the opportunity to consider an increase in the minimum wage for working families in spite of the extraordinary progress that we have had—economic prosperity which so many have participated in, but not those at the lowest end of the economic ladder. We were prepared to refute the case that a modest increase in the minimum wage is going to mean lost jobs or is going to add to the inflation in this country, ridiculous claims by those that were trying to stop any increase in the minimum wage.

We will have an opportunity to consider a minimum wage increase. I must say that the responses that Speaker HASTERT has given on the consideration of the minimum wage has given us some reason to hope that we will have an opportunity to debate and to act on increasing the minimum wage. But we were denied that chance in the last Congress, as we were denied the opportunity to act on a patients' bill of rights.

Some of us have come to the conclusion that the only way we can get a vote is if we offer an amendment that the majority agrees with. That seems to be the rule. We are denied the opportunity on this side to bring these matters up and have a full debate. I quite frankly don't understand why this should be so. The American people want action in the field of education. I believe they want partnership—a Federal partnership with the State and with the local communities. They understand the primacy of the local control on education, and they understand the importance of State help and assistance to many different communities. And they value the limited but important targeting that is given by some of the Federal programs.

But they want to have the participation of all of us in a partnership to try to help families. They have heard the various philosophical and ideological debates. They want action. They want well-qualified teachers in every classroom. They want classrooms where children can learn. They want to make sure they are going to have the kinds of technology in those classrooms which will permit children going to public school to compete with any young person going to school in any part of the country. They want their teachers' skills upgraded so they can integrate those skills into the curriculum with additional training.

They want afterschool programs, because they know that it makes a difference to give a child the opportunity to get some extra help in the course of the afternoon—maybe getting their homework done instead of watching television or engaging in other kinds of unhealthy behavior—so when the parents return home, the child can spend some quality time with those parents and the parents don't have to say, ''You have been watching television all afternoon. Get upstairs and get your homework done.'' These are issues about which families care very deeply.

Sure, we have a full agenda on many matters—on Social Security, but Social Security reform is not ready for debate; on issues dealing with Medicare, but Medicare is not ready for Senate consideration either. Sure, we have important responsibilities in trying to get a Patients' Bill of Rights, but we are attempting to work that out through the committee process and hopefully will have an opportunity to address that in the next several weeks. Yes, we have important responsibilities in protecting the privacy of individuals regarding to medical records, but that legislation is not ready to be considered.

I really challenge the leadership on the other side to indicate to the Members what is on the possible agenda here that is more important for our attention, effort and debate than the issue of the education of the young people of this country. There is nothing. That is why this course of action, of effectively denying the debate and for the Senate to work its will in these very important areas, is so unacceptable—unacceptable.

We want to make sure that those families understand. You might be able, although I don't think they will be able, to have cloture, in effect denying Members the opportunity to consider those particular amendments on Monday. But you are not going to make this battle go away, because those amendments are going to be offered on other pieces of legislation—they make too much of a difference to families. They are not going to go away. It is the early part of this session. We are not in the final hours when you are able to jimmy the rules in order to deny the opportunity for people to bring these matters up. You cannot do that now. We are going to insist that we have this debate and discussion, and have the Senate work its will.

I thank our colleagues today who have been willing to participate in this effort and have spent close to 3 hours or so in quorum calls during the course of the day when we could have been debating these issues. I hope we will not hear anymore from the other side about filibustering by amendment, because there are too many who have waited too long to try to at least get a result here in the U.S. Senate on some of these issues.

I know, finally, that it is painful, evidently, for some of our colleagues to vote on some of these matters. We heard a lot of that this afternoon, ''We don't want to vote on it. It is painful to vote on them.'' That is, unfortunately, what this business is about. It is about choices and priorities, to a great extent. We have every intention of pursuing these issues. We are not going to be denied. I believe we will not have cloture on Monday. It will be up to them, then, whether we are to deal with these issues in the timely and reasonable way which we are prepared to do. But if that is not the case, I just want to make certain everyone in here knows—I know this from speaking to our colleagues who have worked so hard in so many of these different areas—that we are going to be quite prepared to advance these frequently, on each and every opportunity that will present itself.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I will not resist the opportunity to make a few comments about what we have been doing here today. Both sides are very much interested in improving education. I don't think the enthusiasm of one side is outweighed by that of the other side, or vice versa. But the question of how to do it at this particular moment is the question with which we are faced.

This side believes very strongly that we need to ensure when we vote for new programs, when we vote billions of dollars for the existing programs, we ought to know whether or not they are working. Our system is set up in a very logical way. Every 5 years we take a look at programs, and we reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is up this year. It is the most important piece of education legislation we have. It is not something which should be ignored, saying, ''We don't need any hearings. We don't need to worry about anything. We know the answers already.''

Let's examine where the ''already'' is, and what has happened. We had notice in 1983 that we had a terrible educational crisis in this country. The Nation at Risk report came out during the Reagan administration. The Governors got together in 1988, and they formulated the goals that we ought to be meeting. Here it is in 1999—and I sit on the Goals Panel—and there is no evidence that we have made any improvement in anything that is measurable.

So why would we go racing out to fund programs about which we have had no hearings at this time? That is neither an appropriate nor a logical way to proceed. What do we know? We know a couple of things. First of all, we know from the experiences we have had with the experimental programs in six, and then twelve, States that more flexibility in existing program regulations will enable States to more efficiently and effectively use that money. All of the Governors say, ''Please, help us and release us from the growing volume of burdensome regulation.'' That

is all we are trying to do. It is something we can do quickly, now, and get action immediately.

Second, where is the greatest need for resources right now in this country? It is at the local level. The programs that are being discussed are dealing with matters which are primarily being addressed at the local level. But where Federal support is needed most is where we promised it would be provided back in 1975–76 when we passed the bill to open up vistas for children with disabilities so they had an opportunity for the kind of education which was appropriate for them. We guaranteed—quote-unquote, I suppose, from a Federal perspective—that we would provide 40 percent of that funding. Yesterday's Supreme Court case has greatly, incredibly worsened that situation by requiring that not only do we have to provide an appropriate education at the State level, but also that somebody has to provide the health care to ensure that when that child is in school, he or she receives the best health care to enhance their education.

Where is that burden going to be? Right now it has just been placed right at the local level, where it remains if we do not do something about that as soon as possible. What we have been saying today, and what we have been dedicated to as Republicans for the last 3 years, is that we must ensure that those communities that are trying to provide educational opportunity for children with disabilities have money enough, as promised to them by the Federal Government, to enable them to meet those needs.

It would take $11 billion to raise that level now to what we promised back in 1976. What we are saying is, before we go off into untried programs which have not even had hearings, we ought to provide that money immediately or make it available for the process of appropriations immediately. So, we will take the money that is in these programs that are untried—the authorizations—and say: Give it to where it is really needed, to the local governments and the States so they can provide an education for the young people, all of the young people, which they cannot do by themselves because the demands are so high and because we have failed to provide to them the $11 billion they are entitled to under our promise.

So I implore, my good friends on the other side, we are not trying to in any way hold anything up. What we are trying to do is to get a straightforward bill passed which will immediately help the States to maximize their resources. That's what we want to do. Instead, rather than being able to take this small step forward, we are having to go through this whole process of being asked to adopt all these programs about which we have no evidence whether or not they will work.

The Department of Education now is spending, I think, $15 billion under Federal programs supporting elementary and secondary education, and we do not know if they are working. As far as we can tell, little or nothing is working. So we have to get in there and make a careful examination of these programs. That is what we should be doing—and what we are doing—through the reauthorization process. We have already had hearings to find out what is working, what is not working, and why is it not working. We will have further hearings to explore these issues. I cannot even tell now, from reading reports, from research, or anything, what impact this money is having. Before we start new programs with large sums of money, we ought to at least know whether the ones we are supporting now are working. We simply cannot go charging off to try to grab scarce resources to fund programs that are not effective.

We in no way are trying to hold things back. We want to give help immediately to the States in order to loosen up existing resources to help the local communities improve their schools.

I really get a little bit excited when the claim is made that we are trying to stop things from happening, when our whole purpose here is to try to make available to all 50 States the opportunity to improve their ability to deliver quality education. Then, we must have the hearings we need so we can go forward responsibly in reviewing Federal efforts in elementary and secondary education in their totality and do what our job is supposed to be.

Some examples: The program which has been mentioned with respect to afterschool activities is one which I authored in 1994 and which was enacted as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization bill that year. That program—21st Century Schools—already exists. The President has embraced it as his own. He now thinks it is a great initiative, after previously refusing to put any money in it at all. I am happy that that program is now funded and is likely to receive further funding increases. I am also aware that the President would like to see changes in the program, but this is not the time to try to suddenly put them in place. We need to go through the regular authorization process. I am anxious to do just that, but I want to do it right.

We are just trying to proceed in an orderly fashion. I hope that we have an opportunity, even tomorrow, to move this bill forward. We can pass it tomorrow. Then, let us put all our effort into hearings on elementary and secondary education so that when we do things, we know what we are going to do, and hopefully we will find some things that will work.

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

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

The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the Senate has now been debating the pending education flexibility bill for approximately a day and a half. There has been some good debate. A number of Senators have been able to speak on behalf of this very important bipartisan legislation that is supported by the President and supported by the bipartisan National Governors' Association. I am pleased that we have it up early in this session, and I am pleased that we made some progress.

But while progress has been made on this vital piece of legislation, I am beginning to sense now that there is a feeling of gridlock on the part of our Democratic colleagues, if they are not successful in offering nongermane amendments or if they are not able to offer them in the way they would like to. I hope this is not true.

I know there is a genuine effort on both sides of the aisle to work through a way we can get to completion of this legislation in a reasonable time next week, so that we can move on to the next bill that will be considered, including the emergency appropriations supplemental bill which was, I believe, reported out of the Committee on Appropriations this afternoon.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, in order to assure prompt passage of the bill, I now send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on amendment No. 31 to Calendar No. 12, S. 280, the Education Flexibility Partnership bill:

TRENT LOTT, JIM JEFFORDS, JOHN H. CHAFEE, ROBERT SMITH, THAD COCHRAN, ARLEN SPECTER, SLADE GORTON, MITCH MCCONNELL, RICHARD SHELBY, BILL FRIST, LARRY E. CRAIG, JON KYL, PAUL COVERDELL, GORDON SMITH, PETER G. FITZGERALD, and JUDD GREGG.

CALL OF THE ROLL

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. LOTT. Under rule XXII, this cloture vote will occur then on Monday, March 8. I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote occur at 5 p.m. on Monday and that there be 1 hour prior to the vote to be equally divided between Senators JEFFORDS and KENNEDY for debate only.

Mr. KENNEDY. Reserving the right to object, will the leader ask for 2 hours equally divided? Is that agreeable?

Mr. LOTT. I think that is fine, Mr. President. I amend my request to that effect, with the time equally divided.

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

Mr. LOTT. Again, I hope progress can be made on the bill. There have been some proposals going back and forth, and we will continue to work on those, hopefully later on tonight. Tomorrow morning, Friday, when we are in session, there will be a recorded vote, hopefully by 10:30 a.m., and we will then give the Members a report on what action, perhaps, has been agreed to beyond that.

I know Members from both sides of the aisle will be working on this. If progress is not made, then we will go forward with cloture. If something can be worked out—and I think it can; I hope it will be—then certainly we can take action to vitiate this cloture vote.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business, with Members permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO MISS RUBY MCGILVRAY BRYANT: AN UNSUNG AMERICAN HEROINE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today Miss Ruby McGilvray Bryant of Jackson, Mississippi, was recognized by the Mitsubishi USA Foundation and PBS Television's ''To the Contrary'' as one of America's four Unsung Heroines.

''Miss Ruby,'' as she is lovingly called, has served her Mississippi community for the better part of three decades. She has been instrumental in creating a number of programs to help physically and mentally challenged children and adults.

It all started thirty years ago when Miss Ruby looked for a way to give disabled children and adults a camp experience similar to the one other campers were enjoying. Working with the Mississippi State Park system, she created a one-week summer camp program full of activities including a beauty pageant where everyone wins—everyone gets his or her moment in the spotlight. With the help of Dream Catchers, a volunteer organization serving the disabled, campers also get to experience the thrill of horseback riding. Miss Ruby even went the extra mile by helping to raise the money needed to send a number of children and adults to this special camp. However, her efforts did not stop there. She also organized a number of other activities throughout the year such as hayrides and banquets.

Miss Ruby also fostered the development of the ''the Mustard Seed,'' a local residential home in Brandon, Mississippi, for disabled persons to live when their parents have passed away. The Mustard Seed teaches ''life skills'' so the disabled can be what they want most, independent and productive individuals.

She was also the driving force behind ''Calvary Care,'' a program that provides all-day activities for the physically and mentally challenged in a safe and loving environment. Participants are taken on field trips to such places as the zoo or the museum. They also have an opportunity to share fun and fellowship, to experience the small things in life that many of us take for granted. This program also helps parents and other loved ones gain some much-needed time for themselves. ''Calvary Care'' attracts families from as far as 100 miles away because there is no similar program.

''Lady Talk,'' another of Miss Ruby's successful programs, is aimed at women who have little or no contact with the outside world. Many of its participants are former residents of mental institutions who have been long forgotten or abandoned by family members. Miss Ruby takes these women to a church facility for a day full of activities and social interaction. She makes sure that each woman is well fed and clothed and that each woman has someone to listen to their needs and problems.

As the director of the Sunday school special education program at Calvary Baptist Church since 1969, Miss Bryant has ensured that mentally and physically challenged individuals learn the Bible's teachings and play an active role in the ministry. Here, the children refer to her as ''Sweet Momma.''

Miss Ruby is an inspiration to us all. She teaches us that kindness, love, and patience are strong virtues. That self sacrifice is its own reward. That all of us, regardless of our abilities, are God's children and deserve respect and dignity. Most importantly, Miss Ruby is a shining example of how one person truly can make a positive difference in the life of so many others.

Miss Ruby is a heroine for Mississippi and heroine for America—for everything she has accomplished on behalf of the disabled and everything she will continue to do.

I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to Miss Ruby McGilvray Bryant for her thirty years of dedicated service to the physically and mentally challenged, and their families, and for being recognized as an Unsung American Heroine.

APPRECIATION FOR THE SENATE SERVICE OF WILLIAM J. LACKEY

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the Senate recently bid farewell to a longtime employee, William J. Lackey, who retired from the position of Journal Clerk. Bill was a familiar presence on the Senate dais, faithfully and accurately recording the daily proceedings of the Senate.

In fact, the Constitution requires that ''each house of Congress shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time . . . publish the same.'' The Journal is the highest authority on actions taken by the Senate and can only be changed by a majority vote or by unanimous consent. Bill was responsible for recording the minutes of the Senate's legislative proceedings for publication as the annual Senate Journal. He always undertook this responsibility with great professional diligence and attention to detail.

In total, Bill gave 35 years of service to the Senate, more than 20 of those in the Office of the Journal Clerk. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Bill for his faithful and dedicated service, and wish him well in his retirement.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, March 3, 1999, the federal debt stood at $5,653,396,336,274.78 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-three billion, three hundred ninety-six million, three hundred thirty-six thousand, two hundred seventy-four dollars and seventy-eight cents).

One year ago, March 3, 1998, the federal debt stood at $5,528,587,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-eight billion, five hundred eighty-seven million).

Five years ago, March 3, 1994, the federal debt stood at $4,546,225,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred forty-six billion, two hundred twenty-five million).

Ten years ago, March 3, 1989, the federal debt stood at $2,745,475,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred forty-five billion, four hundred seventy-five million) which reflects a doubling of the debt—an increase of almost $3 trillion—$2,907,921,336,274.78 (Two trillion, nine hundred seven billion, nine hundred twenty-one million, three hundred thirty-six thousand, two hundred seventy-four dollars and seventy-eight cents) during the past 10 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:59 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 603. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify the application of the act popularly known as the ''Death on the High Seas Act'' to aviation incidents.

H.R. 661. An act to direct the Secretary of Transportation to prohibit the commercial operation of supersonic transport category aircraft that do not comply with stage 3 noise levels if the European Union adopts certain aircraft noise regulations.

H.R. 707. An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize a program for predisaster, to streamline the administration of disaster relief, to control the Federal costs of disaster assistance, and for other purposes.