

all played a major role and were significant participants in what we have accomplished today.

With that, I think I will stop. I am very excited about this particular bill. It accomplishes much in a way that I think will really set that track for the next several months as we consider other legislation. We do have a fresh start for education. It is a first step. It does not address all the problems, all the challenges in education, but it is a major first step.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI pertaining to the introduction of S. 595 are located in today's record under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I see the Senator from Pennsylvania may wish to make a statement in a moment also, but if I could just do a couple of things here.

First, before the Senators leave the Chamber, the Senator from Tennessee and the Senator from Oregon, I want to again thank them for their effort. It was bipartisan because the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, made it so, stayed in there, worked with us, but I particularly wish to thank the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. FRIST, the doctor, who gave us an education. He took us to school. He used apples and information and examples. He acted like a good teacher should. I congratulate him for that. He even showed us how you could use a scalpel to cut the redtape, and that is what this Ed-Flex bill will do.

So to the two Senators, I thank them for their leadership, for their work, for their persistence because they both have been heckling me about this bill for a year, and I am glad it is done. I congratulate them for their effort.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE ACT OF 1999

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now turn to S. 257, the Missile Defense Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 257) to state the policy of the United States regarding the deployment of a missile defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, then, the Senate will be able to have the initial statement by Senator COCHRAN, the manager, tonight. We will resume the missile defense bill on Monday, and it is our hope that an agreement can be reached on a time agreement and that amendments will be offered during Monday's session.

I urge that Members be present on Monday to make their statements on

this legislation and to offer amendments, if they have them. This is a very important defense initiative. I am pleased that we are going to be able to go straight to the bill, and I hope that within short order next week we will be able to get to the conclusion of this very important national defense issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, let me thank the distinguished majority leader for calling up the national missile defense bill and also compliment the Democratic leader for refraining from objecting to proceeding to consider this bill at this time.

Senators may remember that this is the bill that was brought up on two occasions during the last session of the Senate and objections were made to considering the bill, a motion to proceed to consider the bill was filed, and then it was necessary to file a cloture motion to shut off debate to get to the bill. On both of those occasions we fell one vote short of invoking cloture on the motion to proceed to consider the bill. So this Senate has agreed to take up this legislation without objection. This is progress, and we are very proud to see this momentum to address this issue that is so important for the national security interests of the United States.

For the information of Senators, the operative part of this legislation is simply a statement of policy as follows:

It is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate).

I look forward to discussing questions that Senators might pose about this bill when we reconvene on Monday. The Armed Services Committee has considered it and reported it out without amendment, and we are ready to proceed to consider the bill. We look forward to discussing this important issue.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now have a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. SPECTER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to comment on the important education bill which we passed on its substantive merits, and also to speak briefly on the politics,

where the bill might have appeared at some points to be partisan, with three votes on amendments being cast along party lines. I am convinced that we had a very strong bipartisan vote on final passage. At the same time that the Senate will pass this Education Flexibility Partnership Act, the House of Representatives is working on similar legislation, so it will be presented to the President for his signature, which we are optimistic of obtaining.

I think it is important to note that there were important provisions in amendments offered by Members on the other side of the aisle, where there were good programs which can be taken up in due course. The program for new teachers I think is a good idea. The program for dropout prevention is another good idea. The program for afterschool provisions I think, again, is sound and can be taken up at a later time. But had they been pressed on this bill, we would have had gridlock and this bill would not have been enacted.

Last year, the President proposed \$1.2 billion as a starter for 100,000 new teachers. That was accepted by the Congress. Before the President came forward with that proposal, in the subcommittee of Labor, Health, Human Services, and Education which I have the privilege to chair, we had put provisions in for some \$300 million which would have provided for as many new teachers as could have been hired during fiscal year 1999. The President came in with a bigger figure at a later date. That was ultimately accepted by the Congress.

But I do think the idea for new teachers is a good idea. The question of how to fund it is always the tough issue. Similarly, the proposals for dropout prevention and afterschool programs again are sound and it is a question of finding the adequate funding for these kinds of important programs.

I believe the Senate spoke very loudly and very emphatically on the question of giving local school districts the choice as to whether to use the money for special education, or whether to use the money for new teachers, or what to use the money for. The local education agencies were given that discretion on a vote of 61 to 38, where 6 Democrats voted with 55 Republicans on that choice issue. Funding special education is a very major problem in America today. The Federal Government has imposed a mandate on the States, and the Supreme Court in a recent decision has broadened the terms of that mandate.

In the subcommittee that I chair, which funds education, we have provided very substantial increases for special education, but the Federal Government has made a commitment for 40 percent funding and we are nowhere near that. So when you talk about the priorities of more new teachers or money for special education, that matter was put to the Senate for a vote and, not strictly along party lines, the Senate voted to have the option with