

THE COSTLIEST HURRICANES IN THE UNITED STATES,
1900–1996—Continued

Ranking: Hurricane	Year	Cat- egory	Damage (U.S.)
9. Juan (LA)	1985	1	1,500,000,000
10. Camille (MS/AL)	1969	5	1,420,700,000
11. Betsy (FL/LA)	1965	3	1,420,500,000
12. Elena (MS/AL/NW FL)	1985	3	1,250,000,000
13. Gloria (Eastern U.S.)	1985	3	900,000,000
14. Diane (NE U.S.)	1955	1	831,700,000
15. Erin (Central & NW FL/SW AL)	1995	2	700,000,000
16. Allison (N TX)	1989	T.S.	500,000,000
16. Alberto (NW FL/GA/AL)	1994	T.S.	500,000,000
18. Eloise (NW FL)	1975	3	490,000,000
19. Carol (NE U.S.)	1954	3	461,000,000
20. Celia (S TX)	1970	3	453,000,000
21. Carla (TX)	1961	4	408,000,000
22. Claudette (N TX)	1979	T.S.	400,000,000
22. Gordon (S & Cent. FL/NC)	1994	T.S.	400,000,000
24. Donna (FL/Eastern U.S.)	1960	4	387,000,000

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise, as did my other colleagues today, to talk about something of great importance to each Member individually. I think we have not taken full advantage to discuss what I think is our greatest blessing in this world, one of our greatest investments. That is our children.

Today I will discuss the importance of education funding and why it is imperative the Senate act quickly and responsibly on this issue. We have an opportunity to do something on behalf of our children, to give them the capability they need. We talk about the magnitude of education on behalf of our children, but we don't often talk about the timeliness that is needed here on this issue today.

I question the wisdom of delaying the vote on the appropriations bill that funds education, the Labor-HHS bill, until after we have completed the other 12 spending bills. I know for myself, as a working mother, and as do all of my colleagues here as working family individuals—we have to prioritize. We have to look at what is important and we make a list. We recognize what is important and then we go about accomplishing it. It seems our priorities are in the wrong place when we vote on the legislative appropriations bill before funding education, waiting until the last minute, the last issue, to try and drum up the necessary funding to educate our children for the future.

School has started all over this country. Kids are taking tests; they are turning in papers; they are getting grades. We, as parents, as aunts and uncles, as mentors to our children all over this country, are encouraging them to aim for the best, to work towards that A, to do what it is they can to accomplish their best, to work hard at their education because it will pay off for them in the end.

What are we doing? We are setting a very poor example. If this Congress was to be graded on its performance on prioritizing our children's education, it would be given a big red F.

I know there is always a contentious debate over how to fund education, but it seems our colleagues on the Republican side are out of touch with the American people on this issue. A recent survey of the American public found

that 73 percent of Americans favor increased Federal investment in education and placed it as the highest priority among the 19 other issues they were asked about. Yet we in Washington have failed to act, and the situation is only getting worse.

During the August recess, instead of having townhall meetings, I set about having five back-to-school meetings across our State of Arkansas. I spent a great deal of time listening to parents, students, teachers, and school administrators at all of these different schools in these meetings that I organized across our State. One school superintendent told me that in his area, an enormously depressed area, they were starting the school year with 22 job openings; short 22 people in that school district. As a result, classrooms are overcrowded, teachers are overworked, and students are not receiving the kind of attention and education they deserve. We must send Federal money immediately to hire new teachers. We must look for incentives to get our young people into teaching.

Do you realize the enormous brick wall we will hit soon, as we are having fewer and fewer of our young people going into the teaching profession? It doesn't matter if we have smaller class sizes or if we have new school buildings; we are not going to have the teachers to put in them. That is essential.

We want to give our teachers the capability to be well qualified. We send our children to school 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. Teachers are some of the most important people in their lives, and they are not given the appropriate time to prepare nor are they receiving the reasonable accommodation in resources they need to be able to teach our children. We must send those Federal dollars to hire new teachers. Waiting until next year is not an option. Schools are already open this year. If we wait as planned, we will have missed an entire grade of children.

I have talked to my colleagues: Oh, we won't get to that this year, or we will do it next year, or we will do it in the next Congress. Think about those years. Think about those first graders from this year. They will be second graders next year and then third graders. By the time we have finally done something on their behalf, we will have missed the most critical stage in their educational process. How irresponsible on our part.

By the time the money is allocated and school districts can begin to make those hiring decisions, they have missed that opportunity. Our children will be the ones who suffer if we do not do the right thing in the Senate. I also think it is such a shame, as we look at the tax package that has been presented to the President, what it will do in robbing our children of the money that is needed to build new schools, hire new teachers, reduce class size, wire classrooms with the latest technology, and enhance the access to affordable higher education.

Under the Republican plan that has been presented to the President, education funding will be cut by 17 percent. How inexcusable is that, our greatest resource in this Nation, our children, our future, and not even anteing up what we need to do to meet those needs. That is an embarrassment.

It is in our Nation's long-term interest to give our children the very best, highest quality education that we can. But even if we would not do it for our children, should we not do it for our Nation? That is the future of our Nation, our children, their capability to compete with other children across this globe. We should make that a priority in the Senate. The American people have indicated to us that they have made it a priority on their wish list. They are the future of our workforce. They are the future of our country. If we fail our children, we have failed our Nation.

So I rise today to encourage my Senate colleagues to reconsider their priorities and to support public schools by restoring full funding to education and supporting efforts to hire more teachers, to build more schools, and to establish valuable afterschool programs. Now is the time to act—not next year, not next Congress, but right here and right now. Let's get over the partisan bickering and political posturing and get on with the people's work.

More important, let's move beyond the process posturing that the Senate is famous for and really reflect on our priorities, what our priorities should be, what is our greatest blessing, which I believe is our children. Their success is without a doubt the biggest measure of our Nation's success. I encourage my colleagues to do just as I am doing, and that is to talk about the education of our children and move this bill forward.

I yield the remainder of my time.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I compliment my colleague, the Senator from Arkansas, for a great statement on education. That is why I am taking the floor now, to talk about it and to lay out what has happened this year in education funding.

I think my colleague, my friend from Arkansas, has really encapsulated it. There should be no higher priority in our country than the education of our children. I thank my colleague. We will work together on this.

Education should not be a partisan issue. It should be bipartisan; it should have strong support from both parties. However, I am constrained to say at the beginning of this year, the Republican leadership said they were going to make education No. 1, the No. 1 priority. That is what the Senate majority leader said in January. That is what the chairman of the Budget Committee said. I am the ranking member on the appropriations subcommittee for education. When we got our initial allocation, we were then at a cut, in

the beginning, of \$8 billion below a freeze from last year.

I think my colleague, the chairman of our subcommittee, Senator SPECTER, has done a splendid job trying to get us moving forward. We were supposed to have a markup in May. That was postponed. This is for education. Then in June, postponed. Then we were supposed to mark up after the Fourth of July recess—postponed. They were supposed to do it before the August recess. We were supposed to have marked up last week—postponed. We were supposed to mark up this week—postponed. Why? Because the education subcommittee's funding has been raided to pay for other things. So I say to my friend from Arkansas, we have gone from No. 1 to No. 13. We can act on every other appropriations bill in the Senate, but education is dead last.

Talk about priorities. I do not run the floor. The Republican leadership runs this floor and how we bring up the bills. We have not even brought the education appropriations bill up yet. We have 14 days left in this fiscal year. We passed a bill today that includes a pay raise for all the Senators and Congressmen. We passed that. We had time for that. We had the money for that. We had the money for defense. We have had the money for everything else. But we do not seem to have the money for education.

What kind of a signal does that send? I said the other day, I feel sort of like that movie actor Bill Murray in "Ground Hog Day." We keep getting the promise we are going to mark up education and it never happens. It never quite gets there. We never quite get to that day.

So we have gone from 1st to 13th—dead last—in the Senate in terms of the priority for education.

So what happened this week? Again, the education budget was raided, with \$7.5 billion taken out of the education budget for VA-HUD. I am all for veterans. We have to fund our veterans' programs and medical care and housing. But they had to take it out of our education budget. In fact, even as I speak right now, the Appropriations Committee is marking up the VA-HUD bill with money that ought to be in there for education.

So where does that leave us? That has left our Appropriations Subcommittee \$15.5 billion below a freeze from last year. That translates into a 17-percent cut below last year.

What does that mean for education? When you factor out education from all the other things we have in our bill, that is a \$5.6 billion cut in education below what we had last year. And education is the No. 1 priority of the Republican leadership? Say again? I do not understand this. We can fund everything else. We can pass every other bill. We can give huge increases to the Pentagon. But right now, as we stand here today, education is going to take a \$5.6 billion cut.

That translates into real cuts—real cuts for teachers, for example. We fig-

ured this out. We had an initiative last year of reducing class sizes. Everyone agrees, reducing class sizes is a goal that we ought to be pursuing diligently. This year we funded reducing class sizes by \$1.2 billion. If this cut, where it stands right now, goes through, we will have to fire 5,246 teachers we just hired will lose their jobs. So 5,000 teachers we hired for this school year, to reduce class sizes, will have to be let go with the 17-percent cut.

Then I looked to see what it would do in my own State of Iowa. In Iowa, for example, some of the things that are most meaningful in education, title I—the title I reading and math program will be cut \$11.3 million with this 17-percent cut; special education, IDEA, will be cut \$8.5 million; class size reduction—the one I just spoke about; cutting the teachers—will be cut \$1.6 million in the State of Iowa; safe and drug-free schools will be cut \$717,000 from a \$3.6 million level. That is just in my State of Iowa.

I suggest to Senators that they might want to take a look at how much in each of their States' education funding will be cut where we are right now with that 17-percent across-the-board cut with what we have in our Education appropriations bill right now.

Check your State. Then go back and tell your Governors and tell your State legislators, tell your school boards, tell your principals and superintendents and teachers how much education is going to get cut and how much they are going to have to come up with in increased property taxes. I bet the Governors will love that in the States.

So right now education is dead last in the priorities in what is going on in the Senate. What does that say to our kids? What does that say to the people in general? We have increased defense spending. Oh, yes, we increased defense spending \$16 billion. We have cut education by \$5.6 billion. I guess we are going to have the strongest military in the world, and we are going to have a bunch of dummies in it or have more money in the military for remedial math and reading programs to bring them up to standards.

Mr. President, I end where I started. We went from first in priority to dead last. That is unacceptable. We have to turn it around for the future of this country.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank Senator HARKIN for his statement and his commitment to education and the tremendous job he is doing to do the right thing, to get education back as the top priority of this Senate and not the last priority. I very much appreciate his strong words and his work, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. President, I remind my colleagues, at the beginning of this

year,—as we were discussing budget priorities—virtually every Member of this Chamber—Republican and Democrat—came before you to say how important education is. I was proud to see that the issues that American families talk about around the kitchen table were finally being talked about here on the Senate floor.

As the year has progressed, however, we have seen that it was just that—a lot of talk and no action. Members have not matched their talk about education funding with actual funds.

For example, earlier this year, the budget chairman indicated he would increase funding for education and training by \$5.6 billion. Including yesterday's actions on VA-HUD appropriations, we are now looking at—not an increase of \$5.6 billion—but a decrease of more than \$15 billion in education funding from last year.

How are we going to look the American public in the eye and honestly say that we are doing what we have promised?

This Congress has turned its back on the bipartisan commitment we made only last year. Schools in my State—and all across the country—are using the Federal money we appropriated last year to hire more teachers right now. And it is working. But the current budget process cuts this progress off at the knees.

A budget document is a statement of our values. When you look at the budgets that have come out this year, they show that Congress' values don't match Americans' values. How can we say that education is a priority if it receives only 1.6 percent of Federal spending?

I cannot in good conscience sit quietly as this Congress goes back on its word and ignores the priorities of the American public.

This is the most important discussion we can have right now. School is back in session, and people are talking about improving education. Only Congress is not listening.

Sometimes in this Chamber it is hard to hear what our actions sound like across the country. Let me tell you what it sounds like to my constituents. They have told me in no uncertain terms that education funding matters.

The people are speaking, but Congress is not listening.

The American people have said that our children should not sit in overcrowded classrooms. When a child's hand goes up in the classroom, we all want the teacher to be able to focus on that child's question.

What is Congress's reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we keep our children in overcrowded classrooms.

The people are speaking, but Congress is not listening.

The American people have said that our teachers should be well-trained and have the most recent skills and resources to meet today's complex

needs—including knowing how to use technology to boost student achievement.

What is Congress' reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we cannot give our students the well-trained teachers they deserve. The people are speaking; Congress is not listening.

The American people have said they want their children to learn in modern schools, not schools where plugging in a computer blows all the electrical circuits. What is Congress' reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we will not be able to modernize our aging schools. The people are speaking; Congress is not listening.

Over the past year, one place where our children should be the safest, our schools, has become a home to unspeakable acts of violence. At the end of last school year, we had tragedies in Colorado and Georgia. The American people have told us they want their children to be safe in school. What is Congress' reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we take away resources for safe and drug-free schools now, when we need them the most. The people are speaking; Congress is not listening.

When my colleagues say they are listening to the American people, they must be listening with their hands over their ears because they aren't getting the message.

Let me be clear: Cutting education funding by more than 17 percent is not what the American people want. It is not what our students need, and it is not what this Congress said it would do.

Why do I feel so strongly about this? Because making sure that we invest in public education and prepare our students and our country for tomorrow is at the core of who I am and why I am a United States Senator. When I was raising my children and my State was about to cut a small but very essential preschool program, I started talking to people around me about how we could keep that program. It wasn't very long before I had 15,000 people behind me making their voices heard in my State capital to save that preschool program. We fought very hard over a very small program, and we prevailed. The program wasn't cut, and today it is still helping students as it has been for the past 40 years.

These same parents and parents like them from around my State have responded so deeply to the need to invest in education that they sent me to the school board, the State senate, and now to the United States Senate. I stand before you as a person with a mission—to make sure that policymakers across this country do not walk away from their responsibility to the future of America and that they understand the importance of the Federal education dollar.

Since I have been in the Senate, I have noticed a change. Because of the efforts of Members like myself, TOM HARKIN, TED KENNEDY, CHRIS DODD, BARBARA BOXER, JACK REED, and Republicans such as Senator JEFFORDS and others, this body is finally talking about education in a way that it never has before. This Chamber's discussion is more reflective of the discussions that go on around kitchen tables all over this country. But you don't get points for talk alone.

I am sure that after my remarks today, some Members of this body will come here to say our public schools are failing, and they will paint us all a picture of woe and despair. The truth is, our public schools are doing a good job educating our children, and they are doing that good work in the face of enormous challenges today.

I have to say it again because it has never been more clear: Our public schools have not failed us, but if we don't stop this Republican budget, we will be failing our public schools.

The American people say education should be the highest priority. This Congress is making it our last priority. The American people say education should be our first priority. This Congress made it the last bill we will debate, after all the dollars have been spent, and there is only a little bit of spare change left.

Some of the proposals out there would have you believe that we can solve everything just by making our Federal programs more flexible. We all want our programs to be flexible. But you can have all the flexibility in the world, and it won't solve our education problems. Our schools need resources and our schools need funding.

The education budget has been left for the last. When we go home in a month, how will we explain the resulting decisions to our constituents? Which 17 percent of the kids are we going to say are not worth educating? To which 17 percent of the parents and families are we going to say: Sorry, we didn't have enough money to teach your child? Which 17 percent of schools are not worth making safe, secure, and drug free?

We cannot waste a single student. Even though it is very late in the game, and there is a lot of work to be done, we can turn this around. We can still decide to keep our word on education and to keep in step with the wishes of the American public.

It is not too late. I urge all of my colleagues to act now to increase education funding and do right by our children.

I thank the Chair and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GORTON. 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. GORTON. Mr. President, is the Senate in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

BELLEVUE INTERNATIONAL'S INNOVATION IN EDUCATION AWARD

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, today is National Student Day. In honor of this day, I would like to congratulate an outstanding group of students from my home state. Recently, the SAT scores for Washington state's graduating classes of 1999 were released. At the top of the public school list were the graduates of the International School of Bellevue, averaging 601 on verbal and 590 on math. Both scores surpassed the national averages by almost one-hundred points.

In my visits to hundreds of schools across Washington state, I have seen the benefits of countless innovative reforms and programs. The International School of Bellevue is an example of what local educators can do when they are given the freedom and flexibility to create new and better ways to educate.

The International School is a public school that was created approximately eight years ago by highly innovative teachers from the Bellevue School District. The founders' vision was to create a school in which a student would be placed in the classroom based on his or her ability—not his or her age. The founders also wanted to create an atmosphere in which each student would maintain close relationships with the teachers, and would gain clear understanding of how our country fits into today's world.

At the Bellevue International School, each student is required to take seven classes each year which include humanities, international studies, math, science, a foreign language, fine arts, and fitness. Even though this school serves grades 6-12, there are not specific grade levels. Each student takes his or her courses at the student's own performance level, starting at level one and ranging up to level seven for each of the seven courses.

The students are also encouraged to spend one month abroad at one of the International School's sister schools. While abroad, the students attend classes and are treated as regular students of their guest schools.

In order to attend the International School, students are not required to take an exam, submit test scores or previous grades. Any student with the desire and motivation to attend this school can submit his or her name into a lottery out of which names of the new students are chosen.

The Principal of the International School said that her students, "are not necessarily the smartest kids, but they have a terrific work ethic, converse with their teachers, and are highly resourceful and responsible for themselves and for others."

I applaud the International School's class of 1999 for its magnificent scores