at least one inadequate building feature, whether the roof is leaking, plumbing is not functioning well, or windows are inadequate. In addition, four out of five schools report at least one unsatisfactory environmental factor, such as air quality, ventilation, or lighting. We will need to attend to some or all of these conditions soon as Hawaii continues to feel the impact of increasing enrollments.

Over the next decade, the Hawaii Department of Education estimates that it will need $1.5 billion for capital improvements. This will include 15 new elementary schools, 2 new intermediate schools, and 2 new high schools. The figure also accounts for 400 new permanent classrooms and $120 million for building replacement.

In addition, class size will need to be reduced before learning is stifled altogether—this will be had to do with more students in schools. Hawaii's average class size is already in the mid-20s, while the recommended size is 18. These are only a few examples of the need in our public schools that will be heightened by rising enrollments.

It is easy to see shy I cannot condone the education cuts that would result if the tax bill became law. I am not opposed to tax cuts, but committing $792 billion to tax cuts at this time would lead to serious neglect of this country's greater priorities. In an era of budget surplus, we would have to hang our heads in shame for using funds for tax breaks when problems loom large: Social Security and Medicare need to be made solvent for future decades; the amount we are putting toward interest on the debt must be reduced; and our domestic priorities, including education, most be boosted.

However, the majority's tax plan calls for about 50-percent cuts in nondefense discretionary programs. For education, this means: 6 million children denied extra academic support under Title I funds for the disadvantaged, including 25,000 students in Hawaii; almost 800,000 students denied a Pell grant, including 2,000 in Hawaii; and nearly $3 billion less in IDEA funding to States, including $9 million intended for special education in Hawaii. The tax bill would mean a giant step backward for education.

Now, it appears that the majority is going after education funding for the next fiscal year. It is bad enough that the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill is often left for last, which means that it picks up ''leftovers'' after other appropriations bills have been taken care of. This is how we treat a bill that contains programs for the most vulnerable Americans.

We are currently tangling with an even bigger problem with this bill caused by low allocations for the Labor-HHS bill—something which could have been avoided in this era of surplus. In their zeal to keep the budget surplus sacred for tax cuts, my colleagues in the majority capped the Labor-HHS bill at $73.6 billion. This would translate into a 17-percent cut in overall education funding.

We know that this 17-percent cut will be felt by State and local education agencies, school districts, schools, and classrooms. Its impacts will go directly to our children. The Safe and Drug Free Schools Program will be cut almost $80 million from current funding, which means a cut of more than $375,000 from programs in Hawaii's school- and community-based drug education and prevention activities. Looking at title I for the disadvantaged once again, Hawaii would lose more than $3 million. Hawaii's schools cannot afford this loss in funding. There are additional cuts I could list. The bottom line is that it would be a travesty to see this Congress ravage education funding.

Mr. President, I stand here not only as a Senator representing the people of Hawaii. I stand here as a former teacher, vice principal, principal, and administrator in Hawaii's school system. I remember what it is like to be at the front of a classroom with young faces and bright eyes eager to learn and looking for guidance. I listened to parents' concerns at PTA meetings. I talked to individual students about a poor academic record, spotty school attendance, or disruptive behavior that made it difficult for others in the class to learn. I remember what it was like being on the front lines of education.

I cannot see any good for the future of our country coming out of these large education cuts. We bemoan problems facing our schools today such as unexpected and shocking incidents of violence. Let us put muscle behind our rhetoric and treat education as a priority by preventing this 17-percent cut.

I ask my colleagues to join me in restoring education as a priority and calling for increases, not huge decreases, in the investment in our country's future. I thank my colleagues for this opportunity to speak on an issue that is near and dear to my heart, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for up to 10 minutes as if in morning business.

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

QUALITY TEACHERS FOR ALL ACT AND THE TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING ACT

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, during the next couple of weeks, I plan to introduce a series of education bills for consideration in the context of reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As you know, one of the most important issues facing America today is improving the quality of our public school system. Improving the quality of education in America requires a comprehensive approach. I believe the basis for that approach must be raising standards and achieving greater accountability. This approach cannot focus on any one facet of our education system but must address all facets. The bills that I will introduce address three key areas; these bills raise standards and improve accountability for our teachers, for our schools and for our students. Today, I am pleased to introduce two bills, which I believe will go a long way towards raising standards for teaching in America's schools—the Quality Teachers for All Act and the Technology for Teaching Act.

Improving teacher quality continues to be one of my top priorities in the Senate, because research demonstrates that teacher quality is the single most important factor in student achievement. The Quality Teachers for All Act will improve instructional quality by ensuring that teachers in Title I classrooms possess the subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and teaching skills necessary to work effectively in our nation's classrooms. The Technology for Teaching Act, which I introduce today on behalf of myself, Senator PATTY MURRAY and Senator COCHRAN, will improve the quality of instruction by providing teachers with necessary training in the use of technology in the classroom.

I am a strong supporter of the hard-working teachers in American classrooms. As the son of two teachers, I know that the profession is extremely challenging and meaningful. I also know that the vast majority of our teachers are dedicated, professional and competent. Far too many schools in America, however, allow classrooms to be led by teachers with insufficient training and qualifications to teach. Unfortunately, it is the schools and classrooms with the neediest children who often have the greatest number of unqualified teachers. During a time when we are demanding increased levels of performance for our schools and our children, we also must set high standards for all our teachers, including those instructing students who will have the greatest hurdles to overcome in the learning process.

Improving teacher quality is one of the most important changes we need to make to our educational system—especially if we are serious about improving the education of low-income and minority children. Good teachers are so important that almost half of the achievement gap between minority and white students would be erased if minority children had access to the same quality of teachers, according to recent research published by the Education Trust. Parents, business leaders, and the public at large rank teacher quality as a top concern because it just makes sense that a student's teacher would have a dominant effect on his or her education. The need for further progress in improving teacher quality was recently highlighted in two 1999 studies—one from the Secretary of Education, the other from Education Week.

Over 30 percent of all math teachers are teaching outside of their field of academic preparation—with even higher percentages in other academic areas and in high-poverty schools. Almost 15 percent of the new teachers hired in high-minority districts lack full teaching credentials, which usually involve passing tests to demonstrate needed skills and knowledge. In my home State, during the past school year, 1,074 people were teaching in New Mexico's schools with substandard licenses. Another 737 of New Mexico's teachers were teaching subjects they weren't certified to teach.

The Quality Teachers for All Act addresses this problem by requiring that all teachers in schools receiving Title I funds be fully qualified. This means possessing necessary teaching skills and demonstrating mastery in the subjects that they teach. By ensuring quality teachers in every classroom, we will be empowering our children by providing one of the most important resources for academic achievement. Under the Quality Teachers for All Act, an elementary school teacher must have State certification, hold a bachelor's degree and demonstrate subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and teaching skills required to teach effectively in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and other elements of a liberal arts education. Middle school and secondary school instructional staff must have state certification, hold a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate a high level of competence in all subject areas in which they teach. This demonstration of competence may be achieved by a high level of performance on a rigorous academic subject area test, completion of an academic major (or equal number of courses, or in the case of mid-career professionals, a high level of performance in relevant subject areas through employment experience.

Recognizing that some areas have difficulty attracting qualified teachers, the Quality Teachers for All bill addresses this problem by allowing school districts to use funds authorized under the bill to provide financial incentives for fully qualified teachers, such as signing bonuses. In addition, the bill supports efforts to recruit new teachers by providing alternative means of certification for highly qualified individuals with college degrees, including mid-career professionals and former military personnel. The bill also provides support for State efforts to increase the portability of teachers' pensions, certification and years of experience so that qualified teachers can have greater mobility and districts can fill unmet needs for qualified teachers more easily. School districts also may use the funds to support new teachers to ensure that we retain the qualified teachers that start in the profession.

The bill also empowers teachers by providing financial support for programs designed to assist teachers currently working in the system to achieve the qualifications required under the bill. The bill will provide grants to assist States and LEAs to provide necessary education and training to teachers who do not meet the necessary qualifications. The forms of assistance can include tuition for college or university course work.

Recognizing the critical role played by parents and the need to make them a partner in our efforts to raise teaching standards, this bill requires districts and schools to provide parents with information regarding their child's teacher's qualifications. This effort builds on provisions I authored which became part of the Higher Educations Act of 1998. Those provisions require a national report card on teacher training programs. By reporting this information, the public as well as the schools can assess the strengths and weaknesses of teacher training programs. Likewise, the parental right-to-know provision in the Quality Teachers for All Act will empower parents by informing them of the strengths and weaknesses of their children's teachers and help them to provide support for increased teacher quality efforts.

If our educational system is going to prepare our children for the 21st Century, we must do a better job at preparing our teachers and our students to use the tools of the 21st Century—technology. We also must use this valuable resource to improve instruction and expand access to learning. Therefore, efforts to raise standards for teaching also must include greater incorporation of technology into our teacher training programs and our classrooms. In response to this need, I—along with Senators MURRAY and COCHRAN—are proud to introduce the Technology for Teaching Act. If enacted, this bill will build on existing efforts to improve teacher training in the use of technology in the classroom and provide resources to develop innovative uses of technology in the classroom.

Education technology can enlarge the classroom environment in ways that were unimaginable only a decade ago and can empower students to develop as independent thinkers and problem-solvers. Teachers deserve the skills needed to bring these extraordinary resources and opportunities into the classroom. Without these skills, America's teachers will find it increasingly difficult to meet the rising international standards of educational excellence. We also must provide for research and development, as well as evaluation of existing uses of technology, in order to ensure that the most effective education-related technology is in place in our nation's schools. In addition, we must close the digital divide by making technology available to all students, during the school day and outside the school day.

The Technology for Teaching bill will provide federal support to: (1) provide training to teachers to assist them to integrate technology into their classrooms; (2) evaluate the role of technology in the classroom; (3) stimulate the development and use of innovative technologies to assist students to achieve high academic standards; and (4) narrow the ''digital divide'' by providing high-need communities and students with greater access to technology.

Experts say that we should invest at least 30 percent of our technology budget in training. Nationally, we are now investing less than one-third that amount. Only 15 percent of teachers had 9 or more hours of technology instruction in 1994. Trained teachers help make computers useful to students, connect school to the home and community, and help prevent misuses of technology. Most of all, trained teachers can improve student achievement by applying the technology to academic content areas. The Technology for Teaching Act establishes two teacher training programs, administered by the Office of Education Technology in the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Education, to make competitive grants to State Departments of Education. One program promotes the inclusion of education technology in the initial undergraduate preparation of new teachers; the other focuses on ongoing professional development of current teachers.

Schools of education that train new teachers will be eligible to apply to State Departments of Education for grants to improve their programs in education technology. Grant support would require and enable schools of education to work in collaboration with local K–12 school districts and the education technology private sector. Through these partnership activities, schools of education will improve and expand the ways in which they prepare future teachers to use technology in the classroom.

Local K–12 Education Agencies (LEAs) will be eligible to apply to State Departments of Education for grants to improve their professional development programs in education technology. In applying for grants, LEAs will be required to develop consortia that include one or more schools of education, education technology companies, and other partners able to help improve their professional development programs. These consortia will provide LEAs and teachers with access to the latest education research and the most current education technology available. The results of these partnership activities will be new and innovative programs for teacher professional development.

The question of whether education technology is an effective tool in the classroom is already being answered in part by solid peer-reviewed studies which show a significant improvement in student performance and attitude in all age groups and all subject areas through better use of technology. This research demonstrates what advocates have believed all along: if used correctly, technology in the classroom

produces measurable improvement in student achievement and enthusiasm. A new $25 million research and evaluation program at the National Science Foundation will provide even more insight into the positive impact of education technology. The need for a larger scale research and coordination initiative remains. The Technology for Teaching Act requires the Secretary of Education to evaluate existing and anticipated future uses of educational technology. The Secretary may conduct long-term controlled studies on the effectiveness of the use of educational technology; convene experts to identify uses of technology that hold the greatest promise for improving teaching and learning and to identify barriers to the commercial development of effective, high-quality, cost-competitive educational technology and software.

We also must continue to support research and development efforts to explore new uses for technology to improve instruction. The bill provides for grants to stimulate the development of innovative technology applications. The Secretary awards competitive grants to consortia of public and private entities developing innovative models of effective use of educational technology, including the development of distance learning networks, software (including software deliverable through the Internet), and online learning resources. For example, grants could be awarded to projects seeking to develop web-based instruction to provide access to challenging content such as Advanced Placement courses.

Reduces inequities in access to computers and the Internet must continue to be a main function of federal education technology programs. Education technology can engage students, provide much-needed employment skills, and open up a world of learning and experiences. But like well-trained teachers and new school buildings, these resources tend to flow to wealthier school districts. If we believe that no child should be too poor to have a quality teacher, a safe classroom or textbook, the same should hold true for access to computer technology. The federal government ha always been the great equalizer between the haves and have-nots. Therefore its main mission with respect to education technology should be to do what it does best—level the playing field so all students can acquire the computer skills to function in today's world. the bill targets existing technology grants and the new grant funds authorized by this bill to high-poverty, low-performing schools. The bill also supports the development and expansion of community technology centers to serve disadvantaged residents of high-poverty communities. The centers provide access to technology and training for community members of all ages.

By ensuring high-quality, well-prepared teachers in our classrooms, we empower our educational system and our nation to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and challenging world. I know that most, if not all, of my colleagues agree that a critical first step in improving our nation's schools is to support efforts to raise standards for teaching in our poorest and most challenged schools and to prepare our teachers and our children in the use of technology, while also capitalizing on the benefits of technology as an educational tool. We made great progress in our efforts to improve the quality of instruction by raising standards for teacher quality in the higher Education Act last year and through existing program supporting the use of education technology in schools. I urge my colleagues to continue to support these efforts by supporting passage of the Quality Teachers for All Act and the Technology for Teaching Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 15 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 10 minutes.

Mr. President, I hope our colleagues pay careful attention to the excellent presentation that has been made by my friend and colleague from New Mexico. I think all Members who are fortunate enough to serve on the Education Committee know Senator BINGAMAN has been tireless in addressing the issue of enhancing the quality of education for the children of this country. This afternoon he outlined very important, thoughtful steps that I think ought to draw strong bipartisan support. He has certainly urged our colleagues to try to find ways in which we can work together in support of those proposals. I join with him in urging our colleagues to do so.

For the number of years I have been in the Senate, the issue of education has never been a partisan issue. I think for the first 15 years I was in the Senate on the Education Committee, we never had a single vote that divided Republicans and Democrats on issues of education—not that we always got it right, but we always attempted to find ways of working closely together.

We recognize there are limited resources we can provide for education, probably 7 cents out of every $1, but what the American people are looking for is a partnership to try to find ways we can enhance educational opportunities to children.

I rise somewhat reluctantly to draw attention to the fact that we are in a very desperate situation as we come to the end of this session in regards to addressing the issues of education. I think many of us remember the early January speeches by our Republican leader. Senator LOTT said, ''Education is going to be a central issue this year. The Democrats say it's important and it should be a high priority. Republicans say it's a high priority.'' Many were hoping this was the clarion call for all to come together and work together. We had similar statements by our good friend, the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator DOMENICI, who said, ''I'm going to recommend the Republicans say it's time to quit playing around the edges and dramatically increase the amount of money that we put in public education.'' This was enormously encouraging.

At the outset, I will say just allocating resources is not always the answer to the challenges we are facing in education. It is a pretty clear indication of what our Nation's priorities are. We heard from the leadership in the Senate the rhetoric that this was going to be the education Congress and the education year.

It is appropriate that we look back over this past year and over the past few years to find out exactly what our record has been under this leadership in the areas of education. I can remember right after the 1994 elections with the new leadership elected in the House and the Senate of the United States Congress, one of the first things we had was not an appropriation of additional funding in the areas of education, but we had a recision.

What does a recision mean? It means it is the judgment of the House, the Senate, and the President to allocate certain resources in the education programs. In my hand I have the conference report, the 1995 recisions: $1.7 billion in the House of Representatives. Those were programs, for example, such as the Title I program to help some of the neediest children; it was cut back almost a third; the Eisenhower Professional Development Programs, which enhance teacher qualities for math and science in our high schools, cut $100 million; the Safe and Drug Free Schools, cut $472 million.

We air a great deal of rhetoric on the floor of the Senate about how we will make our schools more safe and secure. Going back to 1995, we find the attempted recisions in the areas of education. Then in 1996—I have the report on the appropriations, the request from the House appropriations which is $3.9 billion below the 1995 figures. That is under the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives—$3.9 billion below.

Does this sound as if it is beginning to be a pattern?

Wait just a moment, and we will find out what happened in 1997. I have the committee report on appropriations for 1997. This was $3.1 billion below the President's request.

Now we have 1995, we have 1996, we have 1997; we have 1998, $200 million below the President's total; and now, 1999, $2 billion below the President's request.

That is a fearsome record in terms of the allocation of scarce education resources. Now we see this happening again this year. That is why Democrats are so concerned.

We have seen under the Republican leadership a recommendation of a 17

percent cut in education that would be represented by a $15 billion cut this year in the education programs on an appropriation that we cannot even have sent here to the Senate. We find that somewhat distressing and disturbing.

What has happened in the past when the Republican leadership had responsibilities? The education proposal in 1995 came in 7 months after the end of the fiscal year. In 1997, the final agreement was not passed until the final day of the old fiscal year, September 30, 1996. In 1998, it was passed 1 week after the end of the fiscal year. In 1999, it was passed 3 weeks after the end of the fiscal year.

There is a pattern here—cutting back on education resources and doing it at the very end, the last business for the Congress.

If a political party wants to put education at the top of the American agenda, it doesn't come last, it comes first. It doesn't come with the greatest kinds of cuts we have seen in any appropriations bill in recent times; it comes after due deliberation of these very needs and requirements and then the support for those programs. That is the way we deal with it.

That is what we find as we come into the last weeks—the enormous frustration of many in this body who believe very deeply, as the American public does, that if we are going to meet our responsibilities in education, we ought to have the opportunity to debate these issues in a timely way and not have the efforts that have been made on 17 different occasions when we tried to bring up various amendments, to have those amendments either immediately tabled or immediately effectively ignored, virtually denying Members the opportunity of having a full and complete debate on what are our fundamental and basic responsibilities for a national Congress and a President of the United States in education.

So I believe the Republican leadership bear grave responsibilities in this area. We will over these next few days point this out in very careful detail, about what these particular cuts and programs are, and how they have really affected and adversely impacted the opportunities for children to move ahead. That is the record. It is one of great discouragement, and it is one I hope our Republican friends will be willing to address.

MINIMUM WAGE AND BANKRUPTCY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last Thursday the majority leader filed a cloture motion on S. 625, the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1999. If the Senate adopts cloture, an amendment to increase the minimum wage could not be offered to the bill. Some Senators may support cloture because they believe the minimum wage is not relevant to the bankruptcy debate, but I disagree. Raising the minimum wage is critical to preventing the economic free-fall that often leads to bankruptcy, and many of us have sponsored the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 1999 to begin to right that wrong.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Is that all 15 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The 10 minutes allotted to the Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Then I yield to myself just 4 of the last 5 minutes, please.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, invoking cloture would deny us the opportunity, on the floor of the Senate, to offer a minimum wage amendment that will raise the minimum wage 50 cents next January and 50 cents the year after and provide some $2,000 of purchasing power for minimum wage workers. In all, over 11 million Americans will benefit from an increase in the minimum wage.

We seek to raise the minimum wage at a time of virtual price stability, at a time of virtual full employment, and at a time when the ink is not even dry on the vote by the Members of the Senate to give themselves a pay increase of over $4,000 this year. I will say, at least the Democrats who voted in support of that increase would also vote in support of an increase in the minimum wage. But why should we be denied that opportunity? Why should we be denied the opportunity to have a vote on this particular issue? It makes such a difference to families that work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year.

We believe raising the minimum wage is relevant to the bankruptcy issue. The threat of bankruptcy is related to the availability of resources. The fewer financial resources individuals have, the more difficult it is for them to meet their economic challenges. We do not have the opportunity, at least at this time, to get into all of the reasons so many individual Americans are going into bankruptcy. But we find half of the women are in bankruptcy because their husbands refuse to pay child support. Of workers who are over 55, the greatest percentage of those in bankruptcy are there because they don't have health insurance. Many in bankruptcy are workers dislocated from their jobs because of mergers, who find themselves caught in a downward economic spiral.

We should have an opportunity to address those issues. Why does the Republican leadership deny us the chance to have a fair vote on raising the minimum wage, providing hard working Americans with an extra $2,000? That might not seem like a lot to many here, but it is about 7 months' worth of groceries for a family, or 5 months of rent. It will pay for almost two years of tuition for a worker or her son or daughter to attend a community college. It is a lot of money for many hard-working Americans.

Finally, the minimum wage is a children's issue because the children of workers who earn minimum wage are impacted by their parents' scarce resources. It is a women's issue, because the majority of minimum wage workers are women. It is a civil rights issue because one-third of minimum wage workers are African-American or Hispanic. It is basically and most fundamentally a fairness issue. At the time of the greatest prosperity in the history of this country, are we going to continue to deny our brothers and sisters, Americans who are working hard, 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year, the opportunity to have a livable wage?

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kathy Curran, a Labor Department detailee, be granted the privilege of the floor during today's debate.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts, as well as the Senators from Hawaii and Mexico, for joining in our message.

My fear is, in the closing weeks of this session, if the Members of the Senate were accused of having passed legislation this year to help the families of America, we could not gather enough evidence to prove the charge. We are about to leave town in a few weeks emptyhanded, having done little or nothing on education, little or nothing on minimum wage, little or nothing on health care. Frankly, I think the American people sent us to this body to do things to make life better for families across America. The Senator from Massachusetts speaks about minimum wage and education. There are so many other items on the agenda that should be addressed by a Congress listening to the American people.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 4:15 shall be under the control of the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, or his designee.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to visit a little bit about the remaining weeks in this session. I have a little different view of what has happened from that of my friends who are just leaving the floor, who suggest nothing has been done. They did not mention Ed-Flex, one of the most important education bills that has been passed in this Congress, which allows families and school boards and States to have more say in education. They didn't talk about the tax bill which provides an opportunity for families to invest and save their