

surplus dollars, they should not try to tell us how to spend them on their priorities. If the US Department of Education is so smart, take a look at how successful they are in running the schools in the District of Columbia.

States and local school districts are innovative. Without question, it is states and localities that today are serving as the engines for change in education. The groundwork for success is already in place at the local level—teachers, parents, principals, and communities demonstrate on a daily basis the enthusiasm and desire to succeed. However, flexibility at the state and local level is critical to the success of our schools.

But along with the resources, the federal government must also give states and localities the freedom to pursue their own strategies for implementation. With respect to education, tactics and implementation procedures are virtually dictated by the federal government.

Rather than working closely with the states, the Congress created 70 new federal education programs in the 1980's. President Clinton, thinking that 552 federal educational programs are not enough, suggested 14 more in his fiscal year 1999 budget proposal. The rationale for expanding an already overly large and burdensome federal education establishment is simply not discernible. Instead, the states should have the flexibility to put together state strategic plans under either the Straight A's program or the Performance Partnerships program. Under such a plan, the states would establish concrete educational goals and timetables for achievement. In return, they would be allowed to pool federal funds from categorical programs and spend these consolidated resources on state established priorities.

Paul Vallas, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago school system, explained the crucial elements of the bold reforms that he and his colleagues have been making in Chicago. He didn't have more money to work with. What he had—and has made highly effective use of—was, in his words, “flexibility with money and work rules, high standards and expectations, accountability from top to bottom . . . and a willingness to take advantage of options.”

Vallas went on to say:

[Another] key to our success has been flexibility. We are fortunate to have a great deal of control over the allocation of resources. In Chicago, almost all of the tax levies for the schools are consolidated. The revenue comes right to us. In addition, our categorical grants from the state are consolidated into two block grants—one for regular education and one for special ed. We decide how all this money is spent.

* * * because the state has given us all our funds in block grants and has basically said, “Here's your money—you decide how to spend it.” I have been able to reallocate about \$130 million into our classrooms and to generate about \$170 million in other savings.

As we all know, there is no more important issue today than education.

Some of my colleagues across the aisle have a whole array of programs that they think will solve the problem. Among their many amendments, I have counted at least 12 new programs that range from \$50 million to \$1.3 billion. For many of you, more money and more federal education programs are the answer to all our nation's education woes. Of course these programs sound good—but will they really do any good? More money or an additional program is often a surrogate for the structural reform that American education needs. Structural reform, change—this is what many in the education establishment fear. Instead, their response to crisis is more money and another federal program.

But, the last thing that we need is another federal program. The last thing that our schools need is more bureaucracy and federal intrusion. Instead, what Washington should and can do is to free the hands of states and localities and to support local and state education reform efforts. When localities find ideas that work, the federal government should either get out of the way or lend a helping hand.

The Educational Opportunities Act is a step in the right direction. Building on the bipartisan success of Ed-Flex, we have increased flexibility and empowered parents. I look forward to the debate that we will have about further empowering parents and children with the ability to choose where their children go to school.

I commend the chairman for his hard work and dedication to education. I think there are some very good provisions in this bill.

I strongly support both Straight A's and the performance partnership program that are in title VI.

I am pleased to see report card language in title I—I agree with the chairman that knowledge is power and that by empowering parents we are creating agents for positive change.

Unlike class size reduction proposals, which require States and local schools to hire new teachers, the Teacher Empowerment Act, TEA, provides maximum flexibility to states and locals in using \$2 billion annually to develop high quality professional development programs, hire additional teachers, provide incentives to retain quality teachers or to fund innovative teacher programs, such as teacher testing, merit-based teacher performance systems and alternative routes to certification.

I applaud the chairman's rural flexibility initiative, and I am delighted that we have consolidated several different programs and titles. Although I wish we could have consolidated a few more programs and titles, we have made some progress. We used to have 14 titles, now we have 11.

Mr. President, let me be clear. This debate is not over money. It is not over who cares the most about our nation's school children. This debate is over who knows best—the federal govern-

ment or the parents, teachers and administrators back home who interact with our children every day. The debate is over who do we trust? Federal bureaucrats or people back home who struggle under the weight of federal mandates to help children learn.

The federal government has a track record of failure despite many billions of dollars spent. States and localities, however, have shown the promise and the possibilities of success with innovative methods to raise student achievement and to reduce the achievement gap.

This bill will give states and localities the tools and the flexibility necessary to begin to restore American education to preeminence. To achieve educational excellence will take time. There is no simple solution and gimmicky short-term fads, like those offered by this Administration, will not lead to long-term success. The Republican party is dedicated to a sustained long-term effort to assure that every child in America receives not just an education, but a quality education. In our global economy, it is no longer good enough to be adequate. We must be outstanding.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words today about biotechnology and trade. As a working family farmer, I see the effects of this debate nearly every week at the grain elevators in my hometown of New Hartford, Iowa.

With the benefit of this personal experience, and as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee's International Trade Subcommittee, I have addressed the issue of biotechnology and trade in many ways.

Last October, my Trade Subcommittee looked at the biotechnology issue during hearings on agricultural trade policy. Last fall, I brought Charles Ludolph, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Europe, to Iowa to hear the concerns our corn and soybean growers have about the European food scare over GMO products. Last December, I addressed this issue at the WTO Ministerial Conference Meeting in Seattle.

And I have continued to have high-level discussions about trade in genetically modified foods with the European Commission. I recently had another meeting in this city with David Byrne, the EU Commissioner for Consumer Health and Safety Protection. This was a very informative meeting. If followed