I finish this way, Mike. It has not been our friendship—the relationship is not like I hired somebody to be my assistant; it is more like I hired somebody who has been my teacher. Maybe that is why we are joined at the hip.

Sometimes when I come to the floor, probably I make mistakes, maybe get too intense, feel too strongly. I will ask Mike, how have I done? He will be willing to give me quite a bit of constructive criticism. But sometimes I will be down on the floor with other Senators and I will go back to the office and I will go to Mike and look for approval. I will say: Mike, how did I do? And he will say: That was just right.

Mike, I hope you think this was just right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. What is the time status?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:15 is under the control of the Senator from Wyoming or his designee.

Mr. THOMAS. Let me first say how touching and impressive it was for the Senators to come to the floor and make these comments. All of us have Mike in our hearts and prayers.

I yield to the Senator from Idaho as much time as he desires.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor today and speak with regard to the Educational Opportunities Act we will be debating later today. The Educational Opportunities Act represents an opportunity to make a striking change in education in America. I will quickly go over what it is that this act with which we are dealing will do.

Title I of the act is dedicated to helping disadvantaged children meet the high standards of education that we seek to have them achieve.

Title II is dedicated to improving teacher quality throughout the Nation.

Title III contains enrichment initiatives for our schools, including initiatives such as the gifted and talented programs; the advanced placement programs; help for neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students; and help for each school to meet each child's unique educational needs.

Title IV deals with developing safe and drug-free schools.

Title V deals with initiatives for educational opportunities, initiatives that will involve opportunities such as taking maximum advantage of the technology education we need to provide for our children.

Title VI involves innovative education where we give flexibility and power to the local teachers and parents to create innovative educational programs in their communities that will help empower students.

Title VII deals with bilingual education and language enhancement acquisition so those who need to develop the necessary skills to speak English can be given the assistance to do so.

Title VIII deals with impact aid, a form of aid critically important for those areas where the Federal Government creates an additional burden through its use of Federal property. And Title VIII deals with Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Alaskan Native education, dealing with specific needs throughout the Nation where we need focused efforts.

I thank the chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator JEFFORDS for his leadership on this bill. I also like to thank the ranking member, Senator KENNEDY, and all the members of the committee for their time and efforts to bring forth a bill that invests in public schools and offers our children an unparalleled opportunity for education reform and a better education. I commend all for your endeavors in tackling the tough decisions that face our schools and our children.

The pending ESEA bill offers students and parents a tremendous opportunity for better schools and a better education. Perhaps our greatest accomplishment in this bill is the reduction of Federal regulations. While the Federal financial contribution is approximately 7 percent of total education costs, the requirements currently placed on States represent a disproportionate burden in redtape and Federal control.

Granting waivers to States, and allowing them to bypass complex, confusing, and time consuming mandates, is one of the most important things S. 2 does to help schools reach their full potential.

In exchange for increased State and local flexibility, the Education Opportunities Act requires greater accountability for improving student performance. By establishing high standards and demanding accountability, this bill represents a great step toward ensuring the academic success of all students.

Senator GORTON's Straight A's proposal also allows interested States to consolidate up to twelve Federal formula grant programs in exchange for flexible approaches that boost student achievement. The Straight A's program gives States more flexibility in the use of Federal funds, so long as it can be demonstrated that the flexibility is used to achieve higher academic results for students.

Senator GREGG's efforts to promote portability should also be commended. This child-centered approach establishes per-pupil amounts to be used for supplemental services, such as tutoring. This change, would for the first time, ensure that the money follows the student. No longer will a school with title I students go without receiving funding for the very students it is asked to educate.

As I have looked through this bill and reviewed the various provisions, I am particularly pleased to see a number of measures I introduced earlier this year in separate legislation have been included. These bills focused on the growing needs of education in our rural communities. Earlier this year, I introduced an education bill—now title VI part B, the Rural Education Initiative—that would allow school districts to combine the small amounts of funding they may receive for specified programs, to accumulate a book of funds large enough to address local priorities. The committee recognized the unique challenges facing rural school districts by incorporating this important provision into the bill before us today. The students, parents, teachers, and administrators in Idaho appreciate your commitment to small, and sometimes poor, rural school districts.

Regarding title VIII and the Impact Aid Program, I am pleased to see legislation I authored earlier this year included in the bill. My legislation recommended changing the formulas by which Impact Aid funds are distributed to schools. This change, and other important changes in the bill before us, reaffirm our commitment to those children in schools where the loss of local property taxes due to a large Federal presence has placed an extra burden on local taxpayers.

The Educational Opportunities Act also ensures that teachers are an integral part of the effort to improve public education. The bill recognizes that strong professional development for our teachers is the foundation of our effort to facilitate improved student achievement. Whether professional development is emphasized through technology training, quality mentoring, or programs to recruit, hire, and train certified teachers, all which I proposed in legislation earlier this year, under this bill schools will have the flexibility to influence education based on local principles and local successes. Nothing can replace qualified teachers with high standards and a desire to teach. Coupled with professional development opportunities, our teachers must be equipped to positively influence and inspire every child in their classroom, and ultimately accelerate student achievement.

As I close, I would like to clarify one position that I have heard misstated, not only during this debate, but in various forums on education reform. Some have expressed the unwillingness of Republicans to adequately fund education initiatives like many of those we are debating today. Some individuals have gone so far as to say that we have proposed significant cuts. This is far from the truth. Last year's consolidated appropriations bill included significant funding increases for education. In fact, education was funded at $990 million above the President's budget request and $2.4 billion more than fiscal year 1999 levels. While there is a clear disagreement on how to spend education funds, I hope that we can proceed with an honest and accurate discussion about the support for adequate funding.

If we put our differences aside and work together to pass this bill, ESEA will be reauthorized for five years, with a price tag of nearly $160 billion. In 1965, the original ESEA bill was enacted to close the achievement gap between rich and poor students. I have yet to speak to a Senator who is not willing to provide the funds to achieve this worthy goal. But, I believe there are some Senators who share my concern that we will continue to fund a system where the original goal of this 35-year-old law is no closer to being met. Instead of narrowing the achievement gap, we see the gap actually widening. Too many of our students continue to perform at low standards, with many ranking near the bottom of a list of 21 industrialized nations in many subject areas. Continued Federal funding should be implemented with the goal of closing the achievement gap, and rewarding successful schools, rather than funneling money into failing programs. If our original goal remains—closing the achievement gap—it is not unreasonable for Federal funds to be tied to strict accountability standards.

Congress takes up the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act every 5 years. What we do now will significantly impact the lives of all students. We cannot sit around any more waiting to see if our old programs suddenly work. In 5 years, one child will have completed his or her elementary career. Another will graduate from high school and enter our increasingly demanding technological workforce. Are we willing to let another 5 years go by before making real changes? Are we willing to allow another child to be pushed through a failing system? I am not, and that is why the provisions and initiatives incorporated in this bill must be supported.

Education is the key that unlocks the future for our children, our State, our Nation, and there is no higher priority. I support the Educational Opportunities Act, which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and I urge my colleagues to work together to pass a bill we can all take pride in supporting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about our vision for the future, our vision for the future of education and why that is important for the future. We have to provide a high-quality education to the students of the United States in order for them to be able to compete, for them to be able to grow, for them to be able to prosper into our future. I think it is critical at this juncture that we in this country talk about what that vision is of our future, that vision of education in our future.

We are talking about a different model. We are talking about a different way to go. We are talking about more innovation. We are talking about more individual decisionmaking. We are talking about a system which will allow students in that individual classroom, and teachers and local boards of education and States, to make more decisions about their future than they have had the freedom to make, using education dollars, at any time in the past.

This is a model we followed previously. I think the correct model to look at is welfare reform that this Congress, in 1995 and 1996, debated and passed. It was major welfare reform legislation in that we went from a federalized system of one-size-fits-all rules and regulations to a State system. We set up some parameters and guidelines at the outset. We said our objective was to get people to work and have the freedom of the workforce and not continue to be strapped down in a system that did not allow individuals to blossom. It was a system that confined people, in many cases, to failure.

We said we were going to let the States innovate. We were going to let the States work to help people more instead of having this one-size-fits-all system. It has been a brilliant success in welfare reform. Welfare rolls are down 50 percent. People are working and receiving a check in the mail, and they are happy about it; they are in charge of their future rather than thanking the Federal Government for a small subsistence payment to mire them in poverty all of their lives.

It was innovation, it was opportunities, it was local decisionmaking, and it has been wildly successful. We want to replicate that model in education—local decisionmaking, innovation, individual opportunities, and I think this is going to be wildly successful if we are given the opportunity from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle in the Democratic Party to allow us to move forward with this model of education reform.

I hope we do not get hung up as we did last week on the marriage tax penalty saying, to pass marriage tax penalty, we want to deal with germane amendments, and then we were stopped by a number of nongermane amendments on topics that were not relevant at all to the marriage tax penalty. It appears we are starting down the same track.

We want to do something significant in education reform. We can do it. We have the time, we have the floor, and we have the opportunity. Or are we going to be stopped by things that simply do not pertain to education at all?

The Democratic Party is going to have to decide whether we move forward with an education bill or this is just another chance to block major legislation and complain about a Congress that does not do anything when there are those on their side of the aisle who seek to stop us from doing anything.

In a vision of the future, I imagine a future in which a human being actually steps onto another planet in our solar system, and I imagine that the coming generations will look forward and say: We do not fear cancer as a major threat to health. In fact, the odds may be pretty good we both have a pretty accurate vision of opportunities in the future.

Indeed, at this point in our Nation's history, in the wee hours of a new millennium, we have tremendous potential to accomplish things that until now have been unimaginable—eliminating cancer as a major health risk in the country or going to other planets.

However, for the future to become how we envision it today, our Nation's children must receive a first-class education. Over the next couple of weeks, we will have a chance to address our visions for the future in providing that first-rate education for our children.

When I say visions for education, I use the plural for a reason. When Senators from both sides of the aisle close their eyes and envision the future of American education, they often see very different results. One vision about which we have heard quite a bit in the past few weeks is the vision of the status quo. Some want to move into the new century using the old model which spends education funds through specific categories that the Department of Education sees fit. They will continue to hold school districts accountable primarily for filling out their paperwork correctly and on time.

In one sense, this model is very successful. This model has been successful at creating programs. Currently, ESEA is comprised of over 60 different programs, each one specifically tailored to address a problem or problems with public education that Washington perceives. With 46 million students in approximately 87,000 public schools, it is pretty impressive that we can figure out their needs so well from here—one place.

The status quo model has also been extremely successful at holding States, school districts, and schools accountable for filling out paperwork. While the Government provides only 7 percent of local school funding, it demands 50 percent of all school paperwork. Those are pretty bad odds. In fact, some State education agencies devote 45 percent of their staff to administering the funds they receive from the Federal Government. Quite wasteful.

This paperwork burden demands 49 million hours each year, or the equivalent of 25,000 employees working full time on paper rather than kids. Indeed, fewer than 50 percent of the personnel employed by public schools are teachers today.

Unfortunately, with all of its success over the past 30 years, the status quo model has been a failure in one very important aspect, and that is student performance. Many of the status quo programs have been specifically targeted toward low-income students. Yet in the fourth grade, 77 percent of the children in urban high-poverty schools are below basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test.

Problems with student performance are not confined to urban districts. These problems have touched the lives of literally millions of Americans. Since 1983, over 10 million students have reached the 12th grade without having learned to read. Over 20 million have reached their senior year unable to do basic math.

The bill before us has in it a different vision for American education. This new vision is the vision of innovation versus the vision of status quo. Under this model of innovation, instead of relying on Washington to assess the problems facing 46 million students, we rely on the parents, teachers, and principals who know the children's names. Instead of counting on the bureaucrats at the Department of Education to figure out the needs of 87,000 public schools, we leave it up to the school board members and State education officials who can tell you about the neighborhood where the school is located.

Under this model, we count on these people to identify the problems facing our students and schools and to be innovative in finding a solution to fix these problems.

This model has already started to work in places such as my State of Kansas. Over the past 3 years in Kansas, we have seen Federal education funds increase by over $21 million. However, when one talks to the people who deal with the Federal education funds, they want to talk about the success of consolidated planning, which Kansas implemented under an Ed-Flex waiver.

Consolidated planning was a modest step which helped eliminate some unnecessary bureaucracy and helped the State use Federal funds more efficiently. More than that, it gave Kansans a taste of what can be accomplished with a little innovation. I want to give Kansas and the rest of the Nation more room, an incentive to be innovative. That is why I support the bill before us today.

Under the leadership of the Senator from Vermont and other colleagues such as Senator GREGG, our committee was able to produce a piece of legislation that takes very important steps toward the innovator model, the first being the Straight A's proposal about which several of my colleagues have already spoken.

In conclusion, we have had a taste of this in education, and it has worked. We like the taste of it, and we like what it produces. We experienced it in welfare reform, and we have seen enormous success.

Let's move forward with this innovation. Let's allow this opportunity to blossom so our kids not only can envision but fulfill the dreams of going to other planets and of curing cancer, but they need a quality education to fulfill those dreams. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I have been listening with a great deal of interest as my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have expressed their views on education. I particularly commend my neighbor and colleague from Kansas and my good friend from Idaho for their very perceptive comments about education.

As I listen to the debate back and forth, it is clear we have two very different approaches to education being championed. On the one side, we have trust of local schools; on the other side, we have mistrust.

On one side, we advocate local control; on the other side, they advocate Federal control.

On our side, we say that parents, schools, teachers, and school boards know best. On the other side, they say Washington knows best.

For me it is not a tough choice. This is not rocket science: trust, local control, parents, schools know best. There is no question in my mind.

I come to the Senate floor today to say—and I have said it before and I will say it again—I spent my adult career working with parents, teachers, and school boards in Missouri. I have watched them work. I have watched their education decisions. I spent the last 13 years in this body watching Congress debate issues and watching the Federal bureaucracy administer programs.

When it comes to wasting money, it is not even close. It is not a contest. It is a good thing that local schools do not operate as does the Federal Government because local schools could not afford to. Luckily, schools are far better at applying resources to the needs of children in their schools. Unfortunately, the Federal bureaucracy has been good at creating waste, misdirected priorities, red tape, and unnecessary hassles and regulations.

As it is the case in other areas as well, our congressional zest to provide assistance has become part of the problem—our good intentions. And they are good intentions. Nobody questions the intentions. When the Congress went about creating 765 programs, every single one of them was a good idea. Unfortunately, it was at the wrong place. It was a good idea in Washington, not a good idea at the local school level.

Our good intentions have become burdensome regulations, unfunded mandates, mounds of paperwork, and unwanted meddling. We have created a system where parents, teachers, and local school officials have less and less control over what happens in the classroom.

Instead of empowering parents, teachers, and local school officials, we have empowered the Federal Government and the bureaucrats. We have been slowly eroding the opportunity for creativity and innovation on the local level and have put a system in place where the Olympians on the hill pretend to know what is best for the peasants in the valley.

We need to be bold enough to stand up and admit that these good intentions have gone astray. Our good intentions are failing our public schools and, most importantly, they are failing our children. Let's recognize what we do not know in Washington has become obvious. Washington does not always know best, especially when it comes to micromanaging the education of children in local schools throughout this country.

What is wrong with giving control of education to local schools and to the States? What happened to everyone saying that education is a national priority but a local responsibility? I firmly believe that is true. If that were true, and the other side trusted those at the local level, this debate would not be as controversial as it is.

What is wrong with letting classroom teachers, principals, and school boards fashion plans to improve learning and achievement in their own schools?

Back in my home State of Missouri, no one thinks the answer to improving public education lies within the Halls of Congress or in the granite buildings in downtown Washington's Department of Education.

Almost everyone I have talked to will say: Stay out of the way and give the local schools the opportunity.

Missourians know, and I know, that the real solutions—the laboratories—are the local schools when they are given the opportunity to excel and not have to play the ''Mother, May I'' game with Washington, DC.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle keep talking about class size, afterschool programs, and numerous other programs. These will be new programs, with new mandates, and new responsibilities for schools directly controlled and regulated by Washington, smothered with reports and regulations and redtape. Is this the direction we want to go? I do not think so. This will only exacerbate the ''Mother, May I'' game.

As we debate ESEA today, I hope we will keep certain things in perspective. One of those things is how much money the Federal Government actually provides to the local school district and what amount of Federal involvement is appropriate with the amount of funding provided.

I have heard over and over again that the Federal Government provides less than 10 percent of a local school district's budget. Yet the Federal Government accounts for over 50 percent of the local school district's paperwork burden. How can any of us justify this proportion of Federal meddling and paperwork burden for less than 10 percent of the district's funding? In my State of Missouri, on average, Federal funding accounts for only 6 percent of the local school district's budget.

My great State of Missouri has some wonderful teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members—some of the best in the country. I cannot believe my colleagues are not

hearing the same thing from their constituents that I am hearing from mine. If you are not, I suggest you are not listening. Go back and ask them. They will tell you. However, just in case you have not heard, let me share some of the things I have been told.

The Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools in Missouri said:

> The amount of paperwork that the federal government causes local school districts to engage in is often overwhelming. That extra effort and time often reduces productive classroom time and energy that could better be spent working directly with children.

Mr. Berrey of the Wentzville R–IV School in Missouri said:

> Limiting federal intrusion into decisions best left to local communities is what I believe our founding fathers had in mind.

From Neosho R–5, in Missouri:

> The individuals working most closely with the students are indeed the ones who can best decide how this money can be spent for the benefit of students' education.

From the Superintendent of the Special School District of St. Louis County, MO:

> As head of a school district specializing in special education, I fully understand how my district's financial needs differ from other school districts' needs. In order to best utilize the limited funds that are at my disposal, I need maximum flexibility in determining how to put those funds to the best use.

From the Board of Education President of the Blue Springs School District in Missouri:

> Without local control, the focus is taken away from the needs specific to the children in each school system.

I think the Superintendent of the Taneyville R–II School District in Missouri sums it up well:

> I feel that the State and Federal government has tied our school's hands with mandated programs and mandated uses for the monies we are receiving. The schools are likened to puppets on a string. Pull this string this way and the school does this; pull it another way and the school does that. School systems and communities are as different from one another as individual people are different. What works for one will not work for another.

These are the types of comments I have heard over the past couple years. These comments led to the development of my Direct Check for Education proposal that is S. 52.

As introduced, S. 52 took six Department of Education programs, primarily competitive grant programs, and combined them and determined that the funding would go out based on average daily attendance in school districts. It would give school districts added flexibility.

I intend to offer an amendment that would allow us to try this as a demonstration program.

I know it is hard sometimes to get Governors to support this concept. But I stand here as a recovering Governor. I know that Governors and States have the responsibility for welfare programs, State transportation programs; but the responsibility for directly delivering student education rests in the hands of those at the local level.

Let's give them the opportunity to demonstrate they can deliver. States can still establish standards and requirements. They still have the ability to control their local school districts. What I am saying, with Direct Check, is to keep their hands out of the bureaucratic maze that the Federal Government imposes on them. I hope my colleagues will take a look at that proposal when I offer it.

Another area I am looking at very carefully is having an amendment on Impact Aid. Impact Aid is one of the oldest Federal education programs, dating from the 1950s, and is meant to compensate local school districts for the ''substantial and continuing financial burdens'' resulting from Federal activities. These ''activities'' include Federal ownership of land, such as military installations or Indian reservation lands, as well as local school enrollment of children whose parents work on Federal property. It is a Federal responsibility.

In my State, we have two outstanding military bases: Fort Leonard Wood and Whiteman Air Force Base. I would argue it is a quality-of-life issue for our military and one we must address. I look forward to working on it with my colleagues. I believe the Senator from Oklahoma will be working on it.

I also offer my support, in advance, for an amendment I have been working on for some time with Senators STEVENS and JEFFORDS, along with a number of our other colleagues, that focuses on early childhood education and development.

While most of the debate this week will be about elementary and secondary education—the years of what we might call ''formal schooling''—the education and mental development of a child, however, begins long before that child enters kindergarten. In fact, the education and development of a child begins practically at birth. From the experiences we have had in Missouri with parents and teachers, we know that those first 3 years are vitally important. Giving the parents the right tools to help that child get started can make a tremendously important difference in the educational achievement of that child throughout that child's educational experience.

The amendment the Senators from Vermont and Alaska will offer recognizes these basic facts; that the education and mental development and entire development of a child begins early in life. Through this amendment, we hope to support families with the youngest children to find the early childhood educational programs that can help those families and parents provide the supportive, stimulating environment we all know their children need.

The amendment recognizes that if we want to do everything possible for our Nation's children and their overall education, we need to focus on the earliest years, as well as the years of formal schooling. We can do this—and this amendment proposes to do this—by supporting and expanding the successful early childhood programs and initiatives that are working right now at the local level. I invite anybody to come to Missouri to see how well these programs work.

I am pleased to say the amendment is based on the basic ideas and principles set forth in legislation that I was pleased to introduce several years ago with my good friend and colleague from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY.

Mr. President, it is my opinion that if we want to improve our public education system to educate our children for a lifetime of achievement, we must take the stranglehold of the Federal Government off the local school districts and the States and give the resources directly to those local school districts and States so they can do their job.

I look forward to supporting an amendment by my colleague from Missouri, Senator ASHCROFT, which deals with some of the very serious problems that the current IDEA imposes. Talk to any school official, any schoolteacher, any school personnel in Missouri, and they will tell you they are scared because the requirements of IDEA put other students, teachers, and school personnel at risk from dangerously violent students who sometimes carry guns and are sheltered by the Federal regulations that come with the individual education program. We should not have a Federal Government program that puts people associated with schools at risk. We need to change the laws to protect and nurture those with IEPs but not to expose those with whom they deal to violence and perhaps even to guns.

In closing, we must empower parents, teachers, school administrators, and school boards because education decisions can best be made by educators, board members, parents, teachers, and local school officials who know the names and the needs of the children in their schools. I hope we will be spending our time debating education, not every issue under the Sun that may come up as an effort to derail this vitally important reform of our education system.

Our children deserve the reform this bill delivers. This ESEA bill deals with one of the most important national priorities, and that is education. It deals with it by moving the control and the responsibility out of Washington and back into the real world where the best decisions can be made. I look forward to working with my colleagues.

I thank the floor manager, the chairman of the committee, for allowing me the extra time. I look forward to continuing the debate and working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to achieve successful ESEA reform, with perhaps some of the bells and whistles added that I have mentioned.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, what is the order of business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. JEFFORDS. When does morning business terminate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business terminates at 11:15.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report S. 2.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2) to extend programs and activities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order of amendments to S. 2 be modified to show Senator MURRAY's class size amendment is the fourth amendment in lieu of Senator KENNEDY's teacher quality amendment.

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

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield to the Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. I believe under the previous order it is now in order for me to offer an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

AMENDMENT NO. 3110

(Purpose: To strengthen the Academic Achievement for All Demonstration Act (Straight A's Act)

Mr. GORTON. I send an amendment to the desk for immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON], for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. LOTT, and Mr. COVERDELL, proposes an amendment numbered 3110.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 630, strike lines 24 and 25.

On page 653, strike lines 12 through 22.

On page 654, between lines 16 and 17, insert the following:

''(12) ACHIEVEMENT GAP REDUCTIONS.—An assurance that the State will reduce by 10 percent over the 5-year term of the performance agreement, the difference between the highest and lowest performing groups of students described in section 6803(d)(5)(C) that meet the State's proficient and advanced level of performance.

''(13) SERVING DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—An assurance that the State will use funds made available under this part to serve disadvantaged schools and school districts.

On page 656, beginning with line 22, strike all through page 657, line 5, and insert the following:

''(9) Section 1502.

''(10) Any other provision of this Act that is not in effect on the date of enactment of the Educational Opportunities Act under which the Secretary provides grants to States on the basis of a formula.

''(11) Section 310 of the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2000.

On page 657, line 6, strike ''(11)'' and insert ''(12)''.

On page 657, line 9, strike ''(12)'' and insert ''(13)''.

On page 657, line 21, insert ''that are consistent with part A of title X and'' after ''purposes''.

On page 665, strike lines 16 through 18, and insert the following:

''To the extent that the provisions of this part are inconsistent with part A of title X, part A of title X shall be construed as superseding such provisions.

On page 846, line 15, strike ''and''.

On page 846, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

''(E) part H of title VI; and

On page 846, line 16, strike ''(E)'' and insert ''(F)''.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, we are now launched into that portion of this vital debate on education when amendments will be proposed, debated, and voted upon. Under the order, there will be first a Republican amendment; second, an amendment for a Democratic alternative; the third, another Republican amendment; and fourth, the Murray amendment that was just outlined by the Senator from Vermont.

I hope, and I think the leadership hopes, we will vote on the first two amendments before the end of business today, but that certainly is not guaranteed. At the present time, there is no time agreement.

Mr. KENNEDY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. GORTON. I yield.

Mr. KENNEDY. I appreciate what the Senator said. I think we can move more rapidly if we exchange the amendments. We have just received the Gorton amendment and we want to be responsive in a timely way. We would be glad to try to stay two amendments ahead so those who have the responsibility to inform their colleagues, as well as to speak on these issues on the floor, have an opportunity to be prepared to address those questions.

I hope, out of a spirit of comity, we could try to do that. It is generally done in areas of important policy. There is no reason not to. We know what these matters are. I indicated to the chairman of the committee 2 days ago what our amendments were going to be, and they are the ones we offered in committee. There are no surprises. I hope we could at least try to do that as a way of moving this process forward.

This is related not only to the Senator from Washington. We know he has spoken to other groups that he intended to offer an amendment, but we will try to work with the floor managers to exchange these amendments so we can move it forward in a way that will benefit all Members.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I will do all I can to make sure the Senator has appropriate notice.

Mr. KENNEDY. We will provide to the leader our first amendment, as I indicated, the Democratic alternative, and then the Murray amendment. I will be glad to give the particulars to the floor manager.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Thank you.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I think the suggestion of the Senator from Massachusetts is an excellent one. As I say, I hope we will debate for the balance of the day on the amendment I have just submitted and on the Democratic alternative. I, for one, will have no objection during the course of the day if the Democratic amendment is before the body more or less contemporaneously with my own. They can be debated at the same time. Whether we will be able to finish today and vote on both of them is uncertain. I think it is the hope of the leadership we can do so. The idea that the next two amendments that are already enshrined in the unanimous consent agreement should be exchanged today so each side can see them for debate tomorrow, in my view, is an excellent idea.

The subject of my amendment is one of the important and dramatic changes proposed in the bill reported by the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. It is an amendment to the Straight A's portion of that bill. I will discuss Straight A's a little bit more in detail as we go forward today, but, fundamentally, Straight A's in the form in which it is found in this bill is a 15–State experiment available to 15 of the 50 States, pursuant to which roughly a dozen of the present categorical education programs—including, most notably, title I—would be combined and consolidated without the great bulk of the rules and regulations literally amounting to hundreds of pages and the forms and bureaucracy that accompany those rules and regulations.

There would, however, be one overwhelming requirement substituted for the procedural rules that accompany the present programs that are included in Straight A's. Those procedural rules have literally nothing to do with student achievement. They have to do with eligibility. They have to do with the nature in which the money coming through those programs is spent. They, of course, have as their goal student achievement. But most notably, the 35 years of title I have not been marked by any significant reduction in the difference between partially privileged student achievement and those of the underprivileged students, at which title I is aimed.

This amendment is slightly more than a technical amendment, but it