

In addition, education savings accounts will be increased to \$5,000 and expanded from K through 12, not just college anymore.

We also include additional dollars for States to use to control violence and other crimes in schools because there is no doubt that in our country, if children are not safe and secure in their schools, they are not going to have the optimum learning environment. No doubt about it, they must have secure schools and drug-free schools.

Parents will be given a greater flexibility for their child's best interest. School districts will be given greater flexibility. This will be accomplished by decreasing administrative costs and paperwork. When I do townhall meetings in my State, teachers come in and say: Get rid of the paperwork. Let me teach. Let me spend my time with the students finding out what they need and helping them learn.

One teacher came to a townhall meeting that I had with a stack of papers this big and said that is what she had been working on all week. Instead of being in the classroom or counseling children after class, she was filling out forms this thick. That is not what is going to improve public education. It is the attention a teacher can give to children, to assess what their weaknesses are and bring them up to speed.

We are going to provide technology assistance, and math and science instruction will be reemphasized, as well as basic literacy. Partnerships between schools and higher education institutions will be encouraged, and new Federal initiatives such as Reading First K through 12, and Early Reading First Preschool will offer States incentives to implement rigorous literacy education.

We have solved a problem in my home State of Texas. The University of North Texas has an accelerated math course for high school math prodigies, so that high school students with math aptitude can go to the University of North Texas and take college courses and get their high school degree with accelerated capabilities to go into college. This is so that you don't hold back the students who are already beyond high school competency. You give the child a chance to grow at his or her level and competency capability. It is quite exciting. I would love to see that happen all over our country, where an innovative, higher education institution would offer programs for high school students. I hope we will be able to encourage that by passing the bill that is before us.

We are also going to try to help teachers help themselves. They deserve recognition and assistance. The President's plan will allow teachers to make tax deductions of up to \$400 to help defray costs associated with out-of-pocket classroom expenses. I don't know a teacher that doesn't spend money from his or her own pocket to try to help the child get the tools the child needs in class, the crayons, or a ruler, or a tab-

let to write on, because the child comes to school without the proper school supplies. Many times, the child's family doesn't have the money for the school supplies. The teacher digs in her pocket and puts the money out and buys the supplies for the kids. That teacher does it because that teacher is dedicated. But we want to help defray those out-of-pocket costs. We want to give those young people the opportunity to have everything they need but not at the personal expense of the teachers. We don't pay teachers enough for the work they do anyway. The last thing we should expect is for them to defray the cost of their young people's school supplies out of their own pocketbooks.

Mr. President, as I close today, I want to say that there is nothing more important that we will do in this session of Congress than to reform public education, to make sure that public education gives every child the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. Yes, we think private schools are great and, yes, parochial schools are great, and they are a part of the option that a parent might have. But what we are responsible for is to make sure that every child has access to a public education that is quality and that competes with any other school in the world. That is what will keep our democracy strong, and that is what will fulfill our responsibility as Members of the U.S. Senate.

I can't wait to get to this bill because I have some amendments I want to offer that would provide creativity for our school districts, that would try to encourage more people to come into the classroom with expertise in an area—maybe not a teaching degree but someone with an expertise. I want to offer single-sex school classes in public schools as another option, which is now available in private schools but not in public schools to any great degree. I am going to talk about those amendments later.

I want to get on to this bill so that we can pass these reforms and so that the next school year that starts in September will be a school year that is different from the past 25 years and will have more options and more creativity and more capabilities for the young people of our country to excel.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I join my colleague in entreating to get this bill moving. I am proud to serve on the committee. It is badly needed.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I respond to the Senator from Virginia and mention that he, as a very senior member of the Senate, asked to go on the Education Committee because of his interest in improving our public schools. I appreciate he made that a priority. His contribution is very much one that has helped this process this year.

Mr. WARNER. If I may say to my colleague, at the time our conference was allocating that last seat, I knew of the interest of the Senator from Texas.

She extended to this Senator certain courtesies I shall not forget, enabling me to have that as my third committee. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

BOB KERREY, DISTINGUISHED OFFICER

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I address the Senate with regard to Senator Bob Kerrey. I do this out of, first, a sense of duty. I was Under Secretary of the Navy beginning in February 1969, together with our most beloved and distinguished former colleague who sat behind me many years, Senator Chafee, who was the Secretary. Senator Chafee and I, then Secretary of the Navy and Under Secretary WARNER, were a very close working team. I have searched my mind many times as to what he would say were he here today. I think I can safely represent to the Senate that my remarks today would be very close to, if not exactly, what my dear friend, our former Senator and former Secretary of the Navy, would have said about our colleague, Bob Kerrey, this distinguished officer of the U.S. Navy.

I came to know him in the many years we served together in the Senate. We often sat together on the floor. I remember distinctly going over to his side of the aisle. We reflected on those days together of Vietnam. He shared with me some very personal insights with regard to that conflict and how they affected his life.

I am also very respectful of Senators MCCAIN, CLELAND, HAGEL, and JOHN KERRY. I have, likewise, had the benefit of listening to them and sharing with them my recollections of that incredible period of American history. I served in the Pentagon beginning in February 1969, leaving in 1974, for 5 years plus a few months during some of the most intense periods of that conflict. I visited Vietnam on occasions, as did Secretary of the Navy Chafee, and then when I became Secretary of the Navy, succeeding Chafee, of course, my visits continued. I have been on the fire bases, in the hospitals, where the wounded were brought back.

I remember one story, the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Krulak, came to see me just before his confirmation to review various procedural matters with regard to his confirmation. We were there with General Mundy. He was then Commandant of the Marine Corps. We spent an hour together in a very thorough analysis of his background. I was doing it on behalf of then-Chairman STROM THURMOND. General Krulak got up to leave. This is a moment I shall never forget in my career as a Senator.