

math and science because the starting salary for a teacher in those two areas is so outweighed by the amount that the private sector will pay you just cannot get good teachers. We had 40,000 new math and science teachers in America last year, and 3,000 majored or minored in math or science—3,000. The other 37,000 did not have the background. Some of them might be good teachers, but if this is such an important subject, don't we want someone with an adequate background?

In every corner of my State, people talk about this problem. In the past, we were lucky in America. We had captive cohorts of people who went into teaching. In the 1930s and 1940s, we had Depression babies, people who knew the pain of unemployment in their homes. They went out and got a civil service job. It might not have paid that much, but they had job security.

Then in the 1950s and 1960s, we had fabulous women go into teaching. In those days, so many other careers were not open and available to women, so they became teachers. Some became nurses. I am talking about teachers today, but for both fields the cause was the same. Because of the lifting of the barriers, half the medical school enrollees today are women and half the law school enrollees are also women. That is great. That is America living up to its potential. We no longer have a captive audience of teachers.

Then there was a third cohort. We often forget, but large numbers of young men in the late 1960s and early 1970s went into teaching because you would get draft deferment. And particularly during the Vietnam war, when millions of young men did not want to go fight that war for whatever reason, they became teachers. Many stayed.

At open school night for my daughter, who is in the 11th grade, I asked her six teachers in her six subjects how they became teachers. There were three women. They fit the category I mentioned. And there were three men, all three of whom started teaching in the late 1960s.

Those captive audiences of teachers are gone. In fact, the average age of a teacher in America is around 50. Half our teachers will retire in the next decade. If we don't do anything, the people we replace them with will not be close to as good or as dedicated, and our educational system, which has trouble now, will get worse.

Studies show that the most important things in how well a student does in school are the values and input from that student's family. We are not here changing that right now. We need prayer and internal workings and spirituality and a lot of other things to bring the family back up. I believe strongly in that, although I don't think it is a governmental matter. But the second largest thing that influences how well a student does is the quality of the teacher.

I have always supported reducing the number of kids in the classroom, but I

don't think it is as important as improving the quality of the teacher. I would rather have a good teacher for 21 kids than a mediocre teacher for 18. If we can't replace all the good teachers for the 21 kids, we have real trouble. We can't even start talking about class size. Yet that is what is happening. We have to change that. If we could do one thing in the educational system, that is what we have to do.

Now, how do we do it? Well, certainly we want teachers to have more prestige. I am totally befuddled by those who would try to improve the educational system by bashing teachers. It makes no sense to me. Most teachers I meet are pretty good and pretty dedicated. There are some bad apples, as there are in every profession, but overall they are pretty good.

I just flew home last night. My young daughter, who is 12, was in her school concert. She plays the oboe. We have been hearing the oboe play "Watermelon Man" for the last 3 months in the house. Why the oboe? Because she is a nice kid, and her music teacher said: Alison, if you don't play the oboe, we will have no oboe in the Hudde Junior High School band. She said: OK.

Now she regrets it because she is more a trumpet-type girl than an oboe-type girl. But the music teacher was fabulous, a dedicated man; you could see him get up there. These kids who were in the sixth grade, who had only been playing their instruments for 6 months, were great. Last night, that person personified, to me, the dedication of so many teachers, to take these kids, sixth graders, 12-year-olds—they would rather be doing a lot of other things—and get them to play so well together.

We have to make teaching more prestigious, and we should praise our teachers when they do good. We have to give teachers more authority in the classroom. The rules and regulations that prevent a teacher from dealing with an unruly student go overboard. I would rather see those changed and give the teacher more authority and not see teachers worried that they will be sued for this or that if they try to exercise some authority. All those things are necessary. Most of them are up to the locals.

But we will not improve teachers unless we raise the salaries. The reality is, right now we ask people to make sacrifices. In New York City, we can't get certified teachers for all the reasons I mentioned. How about in our wealthy suburbs where a starting salary for a teacher is pretty good, \$35,000, which in New York, Long Island, for instance, is not a lot. You can do a lot more with \$35,000 in Mississippi than you can in Long Island, but it is still not bad. When do they all quit? Three years later when they have to buy a home.

Unless we do more for teachers' salaries, we won't solve the problem. Unless we do more to help give prestige to teachers, we won't solve the problem.

Unless we give teachers some support in the classroom, we won't solve the problem. It takes money, and it takes standards, both. You can't have one; you can't have the other. You need both. Just money, low standards, forget it. It is wasted. Just standards, low money, you won't get the people who can meet the standards.

The second area I will be focusing on as we debate this bill in the weeks ahead is how to improve the quality of our teachers. It is key. I wouldn't want this choice, but I would rather have a school that is a little old and a little grimy with a teacher who really cared and did a great job than a brand spanking new school and a mediocre teacher. I would rather have almost nothing in the education world except for parents who watched their kids and taught them values and helped them with their homework. That is probably first. But second? Good teachers.

You get what you pay for, when the starting salary for a teacher now in America is \$26,000 in what should be the exalted profession of the 21st century, particularly in math and science, but even some other areas, special ed, languages, computer skills.

I hope my colleagues will pay attention to this debate. It is crucial for America. I hope it will be a long and full debate. I hope that I will get the kind of bipartisan support that I think the measures I am talking about deserve.

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. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time under rule XXII be yielded back and the motion to proceed to S. 1 be agreed to. I further ask consent that immediately following the reporting of the bill, the Senate then proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators to speak up to 10 minutes each. Finally, I ask consent that the Senate resume consideration of S. 1 at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday morning and Senator JEFFORDS be recognized at that time to offer an amendment to the so-called bipartisan amendment.

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

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the bill.