

finally, to say we want to give parents more authority, to empower parents to choose more often than not the public schools they attend.

I will close with this: If I needed any proof that public school choice was going to work, I got it, literally, the week after I signed, as Governor of Delaware, public school choice legislation into law. I was in a forum where there were a number of school administrators talking amongst themselves. During the break, I overheard one school administrator say to another, about public school choice: If we don't offer what parents want for their kids, they will simply send their children to another school.

I said to myself: He has it. In our State, if we are not offering in school A what parents want for their kids, if they are offering it in school B, the child can go to school B and the money follows the child. The State appropriation follows the child. It infuses competition and market forces into our schools and other schools attempting public school choice in ways we never imagined possible. That is the potential. That is the hope of part of what we are doing today, this week, and later this month.

I ask my colleagues, as we address the consequences for schools going forward in the future, if we are serious about empowering them to do public school choice, if we are serious about making charter schools a reality, keep in mind the legislation and the amendment to be proposed by Senator GREGG and myself.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARPER. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

EDUCATION

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, as we gather today in this Chamber, it is quiet. We have people here prepared to take down our words, but relatively few words are being said. We are on the threshold of a historic occasion here in the Senate, where the leadership, at least the majority, is about to pass from our Republican friends to the Democrats' side of the aisle.

While there are many issues about which there might be partisan disagreements, there are many issues on which there is bipartisan agreement. One of those is the education of our children.

Today, visiting our Nation's Capitol, coming to this Chamber and that on

the other end of the building in the House of Representatives, are the young and the old. In those groups of visitors to their Nation's Capitol are many schoolchildren. In many cases they are with parents and with teachers. They have come here to experience our Capitol, to experience the longest living democracy in the history of the world, the United States of America.

This Chamber was not silent just for a good part of this day but for much of last week as well, as we were in recess in observance of Memorial Day. In Delaware and in States across the country, on Memorial Day and during last week, we remembered and saluted and thanked our veterans who served in our Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, who in many cases sacrificed their lives in wars of the past century, and the two before that.

There is a document we are all proud of in this country called the Constitution. The Constitution of our Nation is the longest living written constitution of any nation on Earth. It was adopted on September 17, 1787, first by the little State of Delaware. As I like to kid my colleagues, Delaware for one whole week was the entire United States of America. Then we opened it up, and other States came in: Pennsylvania and New Jersey and Maryland and the rest joined us. Eventually there were 50 of us, and it has turned out well.

Mr. President, 213 years later we are going strong. Every now and then our democracy is put to the test. That democracy will be put to the test in this Chamber as we prepare for the passing of the torch from the current majority, Republicans, to the next majority, the Democrats.

One issue we will address later this afternoon, to take up again, is one we have been addressing for the better part of a month, and that is redefining the role of the Federal Government in the education of our children. While we have some disagreements in the margins, there is much about which we agree.

I say to all who come here today and in the days ahead to observe this debate, whether you happen to be from schools in Claymont, DE, or schools in Colorado or any other place, that we will endeavor to do our best to make sure the young people—very young people and those not quite so young—will have every opportunity to be successful in their schools and in their later endeavors, so when they walk across the stage and get that diploma and leave high school, it means they are ready to go on to be successful in college, careers, military, the private sector, public service sector—whatever they do—to be successful for their employers and, just as importantly, for themselves.

There is a meeting commencing this afternoon, after the Democrat and Republican caucuses. A number of Democrat and a number of Republican Senators were invited to the White House, presumably to meet with the President

and members of his administration to discuss education reform.

While the numbers have shifted here a bit in the Senate, what should not have shifted is our commitment to our young people and making sure the Federal Government plays a more appropriate role in the years ahead. As we infuse more resources into our public schools, as we provide greater resources to the public schools, we seek to hold those schools accountable for results, rewarding the kind of performance we want to see and, where it is not happening, to make sure we take steps and the schools take steps to get the kind of performance they want and need and we desire as well.

Finally, we must make sure, better than we did before, that we empower parents to make decisions, real decisions, meaningful decisions, about the education of their children in the public schools of America.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. 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 now closed.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to extend programs and activities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Pending:

Jeffords amendment No. 358, in the nature of a substitute.

Kennedy (for Dodd) amendment No. 382 (to amendment No. 358), to remove the 21st century community learning center program from the list of programs covered by performance agreements.

Biden amendment No. 386 (to amendment No. 358), to establish school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and local school systems, by providing school resource officers who operate in and around elementary and secondary schools.

Voinovich amendment No. 389 (to amendment No. 358), to modify provisions relating to State applications and plans and school improvement to provide for the input of the Governor of the State involved.

Reed amendment No. 425 (to amendment No. 358), to revise provisions regarding the Reading First Program.

Leahy (for Hatch) amendment No. 424 (to amendment No. 358), to provide for the establishment of additional Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Helms amendment No. 574 (to amendment No. 358), to prohibit the use of Federal funds