The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. BOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 2579 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, as I understand, we have time now until 10:15; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I yield myself such time as I may use.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND PELL GRANTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, over the period of these past weeks I have tried, with other of our colleagues, to bring attention to what is happening across the country in terms of the funding of education.

Many of us took pride in supporting the No Child Left Behind Act. Yet we are finding increasing information showing that more and more children across the Nation are being left behind. We are finding that daily in the reports.

In a little while this morning, I and others will be offering an amendment to try to address some of the special needs in the summer programs which are so important to children, in providing supplementary services to these children.

But I will focus on the overall issue we are facing of funding education, and, in particular, with regard to the availability of higher education for children from working families and from middle-income families and low-income families, and the availability and accessibility of the Pell grant program to help fund their education.

As we have all seen, there have been increasing reductions in support even in the areas of higher education.

First, I want to talk about the effect of the Bush budget on the overall investment in children and in teachers.

This chart shows the overall education program. The proposal was for a 3.5-percent increase last year. We got it up to 20 percent last year. That was really as a result of working together. That is what we all wanted to do, to work together with our colleagues and work with the administration. But working together is a two-way street. Part of it is reform but also investing in education. That is what we were able to do last year. Yet, this year, we see the administration proposal is only a 2.8-percent increase, which is completely unsatisfactory. It does not even meet the cost of living.

Of course, there are increasing numbers of children who are eligible for particularly the title I programs. So we will be, as we move through the appropriations battle, trying to meet our responsibilities to these children.

I will bring to the attention of the Members of the Senate what happened just yesterday in New York City. Madam President, 100,000 teachers and students in New York City gathered to protest the drastic school budget cuts. There are $358 million in cuts proposed by the mayor. One-hundred thousand students and teachers crammed eight blocks outside City Hall to protest the drastic school budget cuts proposed by the mayor.

Parents want their children educated. They want the Federal Government to work with the States and local communities to get the job done. If they see they are not getting it done in one area, there ought to be support for it in another area. They are tired of excuses.

We had the great national debate in terms of K through 12 just this last year. We made some commitments. We have some sense of expectation about what we are asking young people to do. We have some important accountability. But if we are going to ask the children to be accountable, we ought to be accountable. That is the key issue. If we are asking the young children who are going to school every single day to be accountable for the work they are to do, it is not too much to ask whether we are going to be accountable to make sure they are going to have the kind of support they need.

What is happening now is we are failing to do that. Although money does not answer all of the problems, it is a clear indication of a nation's priorities. When you see that we have a virtual abandonment of the commitment in terms of investing in children, and leaving millions of children behind because of budget considerations, it is not satisfactory.

We are, over the period of the remaining time in the Congress, going to be raising this issue. We are putting our friends and colleagues on notice that we are going to insist on accountability in the Senate.

Now, I want to mention an item in the supplemental which is very important, and that is the $1 billion for the Pell shortfall. We are grateful to the appropriators for ensuring that that $1 billion of shortfall was included in the supplemental. That is enormously important.

But as we are looking at the shortfall, we have to look at where we have been and what we are looking forward to. If you look at where we have been in terms of the funding of the Pell grants over the period of the recent years, you can look back from 1993 to the year 2001, and the average increase was $167.

During the Democratic administration, they raised the Pell grants from $2,300 to $3,750. That is an increase of $1,450.

Last year, it was requested that it be raised by $100. The Congress raised that to $250. Look what the administration has requested for this year: zero; virtually zero in their budget in terms of the Pell grants. This is at a time when you have 640,000 more children living in poverty, and hundreds of thousands of those children are going to be eligible for the program, which means there is going to be a further withering away of the Pell grant program. That is fundamentally wrong.

If we are talking about trying to improve K through 12—and we intend to do so—then we are going to have to have better qualified children who will have an interest in going on to college. Some of those young people will not come from wealthy families. There ought to be a system that is available to them, where if they are of limited income they can get the Pell grants, they can get some loans, they can get a work study program, they can work during the course of the summer, and they can put together a package so they can go to a fine public or private university.

It was the intention of this Congress over a long period of time to say to the young people of this Nation that college was going to be available and affordable. It goes back to the 1860s and the Morrill Act, when we had the land-grant colleges. It was repeated at the time of the GI bill in the post-World War II period. It was repeated in the early 1960s, when we had grants and loans. At that time, the grants were about 75 percent, the loans 25 percent, and the system worked.

But we have seen since that time increasing numbers of young people from working families, who have the skills, the talent, and the intellect to be able to go on to college, are denied that opportunity because the Pell grant just does not provide the resources and support. That is enormously important.

We have seen where the administration has failed to fight for increased funding for K through 12. We are saying that the administration is failing to fight for those young people who want to go to our colleges. This, we believe, is absolutely wrong. We are going to go to battle and fight for that.

Let me just review, very quickly, the recent experience on Pell grants.

In fiscal year 1996, the House Republicans cut President Clinton's request for a $2,600 maximum Pell grant by $180, to $2,420. Congress later enacted a $2,470 maximum award. So even though it was cut during the negotiations, in the final negotiations, the macro-negotiations with the administration, they were able to get a very modest increase.

In 1997, the House Republicans again cut President Clinton's request for a

$2,700 maximum Pell grant by $200, to $2,500. Due to the pressure, again, from the President, the House Democrats enacted a $2,700 maximum award.

In 1998, a bipartisan year, President Clinton proposed and Congress enacted a $3,000 maximum Pell grant.

In 1999, fiscal year 2000, the House Republicans proposed a token increase over the Clinton request for Pell grants by $50 in 1999 and $25 in the year 2000.

In 2001, President Clinton proposed a $3,500 maximum Pell grant, which was recommended by House Republicans. Led by House Democrats, however, the maximum Pell grant was later increased to $3,750, providing a $450 increase over the previous year and the largest increase in more than 25 years.

Again, in 2002, President Bush proposed a $100 increase for the maximum Pell, the smallest increase in 7 years. The President proposed the smallest increase—this is last year—in 7 years. With a bipartisan effort, Congress enacted a $250 increase, raising the maximum level to $4,000. And because of anticipated enrollment increases, the budget fell short and would have resulted in an actual cut in the Pell grant. In fiscal year 2003, President Bush proposes to freeze the maximum Pell grant at $4,000. However, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that this will result in a cut of the maximum award to $3,900.

When we are talking about trying to give a helping hand to young people of talent, ability, and intellectual capability to go to the fine schools and colleges of this country after they have gone through the high schools, many of these young people need the kind of financial package which includes some grants, some loans, work study, and other programs. For those in this body who don't understand what a difference $100 can make, if you increase fees by $100 or $200 in most community colleges, you will find a reduction in the number of applications of 5 or 10 percent; $200 to $300 will reflect a reduction of young people being willing to commit to that kind of indebtedness. That is what this is about.

We have tried to show, and we are going to address, the issue of the summer funding programs later on when we have the supplemental. We have been trying to show in the past weeks the failure to invest in K through 12.

We thank the appropriators for the increase of $1 billion they have provided to make sure the Pell grant is not going to fall behind. But as we are thankful to the appropriators for not falling further behind, we are mindful that this administration has requested absolutely zero in this budget. They are proposing $600 billion in tax cuts that will affect the wealthiest individuals and zero in terms of education for Pell grants that offer educational opportunities. Those are the choices being made.

We on this side of the aisle find that that is an intolerable and unfair choice for millions of hard-working families and their children who have the ability. They don't get the grant unless they are able to be accepted into the schools and colleges. We are demanding excellence of those children who go from K through 12. Then when they want to continue their education, what happens? We have an administration that says: Zero.

We want to give the American people the assurance that those of us on this side are going to work with our colleagues and others who are interested, but we will not stand for this kind of indifference in terms of support for young people to attend schools and colleges with Pell grants.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield.

Mr. DURBIN. I was listening to his speech off the floor. Back home in Illinois, we have just gone through a bruising budget battle at the State level. As a result of that battle, they have increased tuition at colleges and universities, meaning that families, particularly working families that already are trying to save so their kids can go to college, are facing even higher indebtedness for their children going to college, greater cost in tuitions and fees. And if I understand the Senator from Massachusetts, on the Federal side of the equation where we help students with Pell grants, for example, the Bush administration is proposing cuts in terms of the Pell grants.

What I would like to ask the Senator from Massachusetts is, isn't this coming at the families in both directions: On the one hand, the States raising the tuitions and costs; on the other hand, the amount of money available through the Bush budget for families across America is being reduced? This seems as if it will create really an incredible hardship on a lot of these families. Is that the point the Senator is addressing?

Mr. KENNEDY. The Senator is quite correct. First of all, the general estimate at this time is that the budget deficits for States across the country is somewhere between $48 and $50 billion. The general rule of thumb is about a third of that is education cuts. That is being reflected in higher fees or tuition. In my State, it is higher fees. That just means the fees will go directly to that particular school. If it were tuition, it would go into the State education funds.

As far as the student is concerned and the families, they are still paying it out of their pocket. It is an increase in taxes. It is an increase in taxes effectively. It is money they will have to pay so that this administration can give tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals. We are interested in its impact in terms of education.

What we are seeing is that there is an increasing number of young people of talent, ability, desire, individuals who can contribute to this Nation, to make it a stronger Nation, who can add to the economy, add to the essence of the elements of a democracy, who are being effectively shut out. The best estimate we have is that there will be 100,000 young people with this budget who would otherwise be eligible who will be excluded if we do nothing at all.

I don't see how that reflects what the administration has suggested; that is, education is their most important priority.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator will continue to yield, if I could follow up, we know that he and others, Democrats and Republicans, worked with the President for this education plan, Leave No Child Behind. One of the cornerstones of that plan was making certain we had quality teachers in the classroom.

Frankly, we are fighting a battle that is pretty tough. With more teachers retiring, with the demands on teachers increasing, with the number of teachers who are lured away to other private sector jobs increasing, we find ourselves struggling to maintain teacher quality.

I ask the Senator from Massachusetts, how much easier is it going to be to recruit the next generation of teachers when we are making the cost of college education higher? How much easier will it be if those young students graduating from college have a greater college debt as they come out of school to make the choice to go teach where we want them to teach, K through 12, high school, where we need their skills? How can we maintain teacher quality at a time when the Bush administration's budget is cutting back assistance to colleges, thereby increasing the debt for some students and discouraging others from pursuing higher education?

Mr. KENNEDY. I want to answer the question in two ways:

First, to underline the point being made by the Senator from Illinois, if it is going to cost more to go, if the children are going to borrow more and it will cost more, it will be a disincentive to those who want to have additional degrees in teaching. We want a well-qualified teacher in every classroom. This will be a financial disincentive for them to get their degrees, and it will be a disincentive for nurses to continue their education in order to become better nurse specialists, as it will in terms of child care, to try to strengthen those individuals who are trying to get some degrees to increase their ability to deal with the Nation's children. In those three areas, this will be a further disincentive.

Second, as the Senator will see from this particular chart I have before me, the administration's budget does nothing to improve teacher quality and reduce class sizes. We had final appropriations of $742 million last year. The proposed budget is zero for this year. These funds can be used in terms of recruitment, in terms of developing a mentoring system which has been so successful, as we found in the hearings. In terms of retention, it gives flexibility to local communities. They need

these additional funds to provide financial help for salaries in local communities.

We have given maximum flexibility to communities to ensure that we have a well-qualified teacher in every classroom. We want to provide the incentive to help local communities. We can't do the whole job, but we are committed to trying to do our part.

The Senator raises the issue of where we are in the budget for this year in terms of recruitment and maintaining professional development for teachers who want to upgrade their skills. We find that in this administration's budget it is effectively zero over the previous year. I am troubled by both of these factors when we say we are serious about enhancing education.

Mr. DURBIN. Let me ask the Senator from Massachusetts this question. He was the negotiator, the one who put together this legislation with President Bush and the White House. Aren't we also imposing some obligations on school districts across America to have more teachers certified in certain subjects so that they will teach math and science, for example, computer skills, because they also have the skills and training to do it? Aren't we saying to school districts in the next few years, we want you to have more and more certified teachers, qualified teachers, standing in the classrooms?

I hear that when I get back to Chicago in the State of Illinois. They say: That is a good goal. We want to meet that goal. But understand that takes an investment in teacher education and training; that takes resources for the school district to attract these good teachers and keep them. Aren't we, in the Bush bill, Leave No Child Behind, creating a goal of more certified teachers in the classroom and then in the Bush budget not putting in the money to achieve that goal?

Mr. KENNEDY. The Senator is absolutely correct.

There are many important parts of this No Child Left Behind. But for me the point of having a well-qualified teacher in front of every child in this country and doing that over a 4-year period—we gave the priorities to the areas where we had the neediest children, where you have the highest numbers of teachers who have not gotten their degrees. You have to admire these people anyway; they are teaching in difficult circumstances, and the best information we have is many of them want to continue teaching in these underserved areas if they will have an opportunity to get a degree and enhance their education.

But does the Senator know that there will be 18,000 fewer teachers who will be trained this year over last year because we have failed to provide the resources? I ask the Senator what possible sense that makes as well.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to the Senator from Massachusetts that we can't have it both ways. We cannot establish standards and say to school districts across America that we want you to have accountability and testing and the very best teachers in the classroom, we want you to prove you can educate our young people so they can produce for the 21st century, and then have the President send us a budget that doesn't provide the resources.

We had the press conferences. Everybody was patting one another on the back and smiling and saying we were all committed to education. Now comes the sorry part of the picture, when the budget itself is not presenting the resources the school districts need. As I see it, over the past several years we have made dramatic increases in education, increasing our commitment as a nation to better schools and better students. Now we seem to have taken a dramatic step behind. I might add, the Senator from Massachusetts understands, as I do, that to do this is terrible, but to do it in order to generate another tax cut for the wealthiest people in America makes no sense at all in terms of investing for our future.

I ask the Senator, haven't we had a long run here of increases in spending for education that is now, in the Bush budget, being broken?

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, the Senator is absolutely correct. If you take the past years of expenditures, the increases, we show that from 1997 to 2001, in terms of education, it went up 13 percent. In 2002, total education is 16 percent. If you look at the budget request by the administration—I draw this to the attention of my colleagues. Look at the budget projections over the future. From 2003 to 2010, it is virtually zero. It is the cost of living, which in this bill the request is not—but it is not any increase whatsoever in terms of children. As a result, we are going to find out the number of children who are going to be left behind.

These are the facts. You are going to find out all the way out to 2007 that you are still going to have—current projections—over 6.5 million children left behind. If we had funded the legislation—No Child Left Behind—which the President signed, we have gone from 6.3 million down to 3.9 million over that period of time. If we are going to say we are not going to leave any children behind, we ought to have this number zero. This is the best we could do in terms of the legislation. This is what the rhetoric is. This is what the reality is. That is what is happening in this country not only in funding this legislation but in school budgets.

I would like to inquire of my colleague and friend, does he not find in Illinois that parents want their children to be able to go to a good school and learn? They are less interested about what the funding stream is going to be from the local, State, or Federal. Obviously, we have a responsibility to meet our obligations as to States and local communities. The parents want to be sure children are——

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REED). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask unanimous consent for 3 more minutes.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Now we are putting it at risk—both the kinds of reforms we have gotten out here and in terms of the assurances to those parents that we are going to do our business. Doesn't the Senator agree with me?

We heard so much about accountability, that we ought to be accountable, as well as these children in local schools, and by doing that meet our responsibilities in investing in the children.

Mr. DURBIN. I think the Senator is correct. At this time, parents sending their children to school are less concerned about the sources of the money going into the schools. They want to make certain that the children coming out of the school are well educated.

Here we have a President who really did some historic things. He made an announcement that there was going to be a Federal commitment to education. His political party had said in years gone by they wanted to eliminate the Federal commitment to education. He said: I am going to take a different course. We are going to make a Federal commitment to schools and education and funding. We applauded him, and the Senator from Massachusetts did. We voted with him and gave him a bipartisan, strong vote. We said we will stand with you because every level of government should make a commitment to this most basic issue in America: educating our children.

And now comes the first budget. The promise of the Federal commitment to education is disappearing before our eyes. So for the parents in Illinois, and in Massachusetts, and in Wisconsin, who are concerned about the quality of schools, they have to feel they have been misled by a President who said he wanted to make this commitment but then presents a budget that does not.

We have to make the difference here in Congress. We have to put in the resources, and I think this Democratic Senate has to lead the way.

I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for his leadership.

Mr. KENNEDY. Our time is expiring, but we are going to take time every week to go over these figures and give a report to the American people and our colleagues on what is happening in real terms. We are giving the assurances that we are going to fight in these remaining weeks and months to make sure we are going to invest in the children. We are very hopeful we will get the support of our colleagues in doing so.

I thank the Senator and I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.