

make progress on it, I will listen, but I am very disappointed in that.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, if I may make a suggestion—Senator DEWINE can speak for himself—this bill is so important and this subject is so important to so many people, I am wondering if we could just be flexible and move the discussion of DC in and out of other things, not stopping anything else that is important or would take precedence, but this issue really deserves full debate. As you know, the hours of Senate debate are not always completely and fully taken. I offer for consideration that we have time this morning, we will have time on Monday, and if the leadership wants to move to something else, we could temporarily set this aside and come back to it. There are many Members, at least on our side, who really want some time to speak about this issue. They are most certainly entitled to because it is a very important issue—not just for the District but for the Nation. I lay that out to my friend and colleague as a suggestion.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2765, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2765) making appropriations for the Government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

Pending:

DeWine/Landrieu Amendment No. 1783, in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, we made very good progress yesterday on the District of Columbia bill. We were able to approve a very constructive amendment by my colleague and friend from California. Senator FEINSTEIN brought to the floor an amendment that brought about more accountability in regard to the section of the bill having to do with the scholarship provision. We did make very good progress. As the majority leader said, we have the opportunity to keep this bill moving forward. We have the opportunity today for Members to come to the floor and discuss the bill. We will have the opportunity all day Monday for Members to come to the floor to offer amendments. We are certainly going to be open for business Monday for Members to come to the Chamber and offer amendments.

I know my colleague from Illinois was on the floor and talked about offer-

ing an amendment to strike the scholarship provision. He certainly has the opportunity to do so, and we can have a very rigorous debate. We started that discussion yesterday, and we can continue it. We hope we can get a vote at some point on that issue.

My friend and colleague, the ranking member on the committee, has had some suggestions. I assume those will become an amendment at some point. We had a good debate last night, along with our colleague from Delaware. They have some ideas that will become a part of an amendment at some point, we assume. We can debate that.

There is good opportunity for good debate. I encourage my colleagues to get those into the form of an amendment, get down here, and let's debate it and move this bill forward.

This is a good bill. This is a bill my colleague from Louisiana and I have worked long and hard on.

As we discussed yesterday, it is a bill that is focused to a large extent on the children of the District of Columbia. It has a provision I take a lot of pride in, and I know my colleague takes a lot of pride in, and it has to do with foster care. We have heard the horror stories, and we have read the excellent series of articles that appeared in the Washington Post—very frightening and troubling articles that the Post has run over a series of months about the horrible situation in the foster care system in the District of Columbia. Children have been neglected and abused; they have not been taken care of.

This bill says, for the first time, that the Federal Government and this Senate intend to try to do something about it. Senator LANDRIEU and I held hearings. We brought in experts from across the country, brought in experts from the District of Columbia. We brought everybody together and said, OK, what is the problem? They told us some of the problems, and we got experts from outside the District who told us of some of the problems as they perceived them. We took that advice and came up with three or four ideas—not our ideas but the experts' ideas—and we put them together in this bill and provided a significant amount of money. That is what is in the bill. So we have the Federal Government taking some responsibility in this area and beginning to move forward.

It is our intention with this bill that this will be the first step. Senator LANDRIEU and I have pledged, as long as we have anything to do with this bill—which I imagine will be for the next several years—that we will move forward to try to help these foster care children. So this is something of which Members of this body can be very proud.

This bill also continues our efforts to deal with the homeland security problems. Since September 11, we have become even more aware of the unique security needs of the District of Columbia. We are a target; we understand that. My colleague in the chair well

knows about this, as the chairman of the committee has been very cognizant of this and helped us to deal with these problems in the District of Columbia as we have worked with the Mayor. This bill continues to try to address these problems.

Thirdly, the bill also addressed some of the long-term infrastructure problems of the District of Columbia. These are issues that are not very glitzy or exciting but what we have to deal with in the long-term. So this is a strong bill, a more reasoned bill, a bill within budget, but it is a bill of which we all can be very proud.

Let me turn to the fourth item which is, frankly, the only contentious issue in this bill, the scholarship program. I believe it is a very well-balanced, well-thought-out section of the bill. It is something that Senator FEINSTEIN, as we discussed yesterday, has been so very helpful in crafting. As I said yesterday, she went so far to help improve the language. The bill in front of us today, frankly, is a better bill because of what my colleague from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, has contributed in her suggestions. She came to Senator GREGG and to me and to the chairman and said she had some suggestions that would improve the constitutionality, allow the Mayor to be much more involved, and would make the system much more accountable so we can measure how well the children are doing, and we incorporated those changes.

Then, yesterday, she had an additional amendment that provided for testing being the same for the children who would be in the program as children not in the program. We adopted that by voice vote yesterday. So she has been a great trigger to this bill, and this scholarship program will be a lot better because of what she has done.

As I was saying, it is a very balanced program. It is a program, as we talked about yesterday, that was designed—and I think this is significant and we need to keep it in mind—not by us but by the Mayor of the District of Columbia. If anybody has any doubts about this, they can just go ask the Mayor. The Mayor is the one who designed this program. The Mayor said: Give me more help with public schools. So we said, yes—with \$13 million more for the public schools.

The Mayor said: Give me more help with the charter schools. The Mayor has been working to expand the charter schools. My colleague from Louisiana has been very helpful in this regard. She has taken the charter schools on as something in which she has been very much involved. We have done that with this bill with \$13 million more to expand the charter schools. It will allow for the creation of three or four or five more charter schools in the District of Columbia.

The third prong the Mayor outlined was this: He said give me some help to create these new scholarships for children, and they and their families will