

Thomas Jefferson knew that it was not enough to send Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Ocean without the means to return. Lewis and Clark knew that the discoveries and contacts that they made had to be lasting to make a difference for our economy.

The Education Competitiveness Act is also designed to have a lasting effect. This legislation embraces education in its earliest stages, following through to continuing education and worker training. Each provision is designed with maximum flexibility to meet our States' unique needs. It is a bill that recognizes excellence, welcomes innovation, and rewards ambition.

The Education Competitiveness Act has seven important components.

First, it recognizes that our Nation needs to continue to bring quality teachers into the classroom. The bill funds 100,000 scholarships for future teachers of languages, early education, and science. It creates incentives for teachers to serve in rural and underserved areas. And it rapidly expands funding to advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs.

Second, the bill recognizes that early education is widely considered to be one of the best education investments that money can buy. The bill creates a flexible program of matching grants to build a national system of universal, voluntary prekindergarten. The bill sets out benchmarks for quality and provides help for States to make sure that their teachers are the best that they can be.

Third, the bill helps students to go the extra mile in their studies, by offering States the means to expand afterschool programs in everything from college test preparation to drug prevention. Summer programs get students out of the classroom for hands-on experience in science, technology, mathematics, and engineering.

Fourth, the bill looks to the needs of tomorrow's workforce. That workforce will increasingly demand technical skills based in math, science, and engineering. The bill provides a free college education to any student wishing to study science, technology, math, or engineering. In return, the student must work 4 years in that field of study. The bill offers States matching grants to establish and expand specialty math, science, and technology schools. And the bill makes young promising scientists eligible for cash grants to continue their research.

Fifth, the bill addresses the chronic neglect of our Nation's Indian education. The bill fully funds Indian colleges and makes a real commitment to the Johnson O'Malley program. The bill also increases the Pell grant to \$6,000. Eighty percent of Montana's students rely on financial aid, including Pell grants.

Sixth, the Education Competitiveness Act allows American workers to continue learning. The bill funds programs to link businesses and schools,

to give workers the skills that they need. Where universities and community colleges are too far away, distance learning grants will help bridge that gap.

Finally, the bill's tax provisions grant greater access to education. The bill starts by simplifying confusing tax credits and combining them into a single refundable higher education credit of up to \$2,000 per student. The bill eases the burden of loan repayment by permitting graduates to deduct more of the interest paid on their student loans. And the bill increases the deductions for charitable contributions to schools as well as teachers' expenses in classrooms.

Taken together, these seven components form a bill that is both comprehensive and responsible. It is a bill that would help to secure a more competitive American economy.

I look forward to returning to the floor to describe each title in greater detail. I also look forward to discussing these proposals with my colleagues.

The Education Competitiveness Act sets out a bold agenda, to be sure. Some of its rewards may only be reaped decades from now. Some of its benefits may only be realized by our grandchildren. But I firmly believe that this is an agenda that we must begin to implement today.

Like the journey of Lewis and Clark 200 years ago, this is an agenda that portends discovery and rewards for America. It is an agenda that promises a passage to a new nation. I urge my colleagues to join me as we advance to this future, and join me in sponsoring the Education Competitiveness Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 570—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER AS "NATIONAL AMERICAN HISTORY AND HERITAGE MONTH"

Mr. DEWINE (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 570

Whereas the United States has a remarkable history and a cherished legacy abounding with stories and biographies of heroes and patriots;

Whereas time has proven that, by teaching the principles of the foundation of the United States, the children of the Nation grow up to become good citizens;

Whereas George Washington stated, "A primary object . . . should be the education of our youth in the science of government";

Whereas the children of the United States have the right and the responsibility to know the history and heritage of the Nation;

Whereas, in 1952, Olga Weber, a mother and homemaker from the State of Ohio, out of concern that citizens of the United States were taking their freedoms for granted, petitioned the municipal officers of her town to establish a Constitution day in honor of the ratification of the Constitution of the United States, and further requested that the State

of Ohio designate September 17, 1952, as "Constitution Day";

Whereas, in 1953, Governor Frank J. Lausche of the State of Ohio signed a law designating September 17, 1953, as "Constitution Day";

Whereas, in August 1953, Mrs. Weber urged the Senate to pass a resolution designating the period beginning September 17, 1953, and ending September 23, 1953, as "Constitution Week";

Whereas, in 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law the request of Mrs. Weber, and designated the period beginning September 17, 1955, and ending September 23, 1955, as "Constitution Week";

Whereas many parents have become increasingly concerned by the lack of knowledge and interest that the people of the United States have for their history and heritage;

Whereas the period beginning September 17, 2006, and ending September 23, 2006, is nationally designated as "Constitution Week";

Whereas September 17, 2006, is nationally designated as "Citizenship Day";

Whereas September 11, 2006, is nationally designated as "Patriot Day";

Whereas the Constitution of the United States was signed on September 17, 1787;

Whereas the greatest honor that the citizens of the United States can give to all of those citizens who have dedicated their lives and sacrificed so much to preserve the freedom and legacy of the United States is to remember what those citizens have done;

Whereas the designation of September as "National American History and Heritage Month" will—

(1) emphasize to the citizens of the United States the importance of knowing the history and heritage of the Nation; and

(2) pay tribute to the Founding Fathers and the many patriots, heroes, and heroines who built the Nation;

Whereas a month-long celebration honoring the history and heritage of the United States will encourage more organizations, including schools, businesses, faith communities, and individuals to get involved in programs and opportunities to incite interest and foster respect for understanding the history and heritage of the United States; and

Whereas celebrations relating to the history and heritage of the United States will encourage more individuals to engage in a study of the history, heritage, and foundation of the United States, and will instill pride in the citizens of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of September as "National American History and Heritage Month";

(2) recognizes that the President issued a proclamation encouraging Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, social, and educational organizations, to conduct ceremonies and programs that celebrate the Constitution of the United States and reaffirm our rights and obligations as citizens of our great Nation;

(3) recognizes with great appreciation—

(A) the contributions of the millions of citizens of the United States who have devoted their lives, often at great sacrifice, to the improvement and preservation of the Nation; and

(B) those who continue to devote their lives for the betterment of the United States; and

(4) encourages more citizens of the United States to share their time, knowledge, and talents to share the light of liberty with our children, the future leaders of our Nation.