And it is wartime. I don't understand that. I have tried to find out who was responsible for having a Florida trucker pick up ice from New York to take to the victims of Katrina in the Gulf of Mexico and have the ice dropped off in Massachusetts, and we get stuck with $15,000, and the victims of the hurricane get nothing. But there is no accountability for anything.

So we will be introducing legislation, with 23 cosponsors later, this week. It is going to punish war profiteers—and, yes, there has been rampant profiteering going on. There will be substantial punishments for war profiteers. This antiprofiteering provision is based on a piece of legislation that Senator LEAHY introduced, and that was included in our contract and reform bill.

Our bill will also restore a Clinton administration rule on suspension and disbarment, which prohibits awarding Federal contracts to companies that exhibited a pattern of failing to comply with the law. That provision, by the way, was done away with by the current administration.

It seems to me it is time to say that you only get one chance, and if you cheat us, no more contracts. This notion of a slap on the wrist and a pat on the back is over. There was a time when exactly the same company had been in Federal court in Alexandria, VA, with allegations of fraud against the American taxpayer against that company; and on the same day, they were signing a new acquisition contract with the Department of Defense. That ought to never happen again.

We ought to crack down on contract cheaters. We ought to force real contract competition. When somebody such as Bunnatine Greenhouse speaks up and says ''this is the most blatant abuse in contracting I have seen in my career,'' that ought not to be a cause for penalty. This woman risked her career and we are still trying to get to the bottom of who is accountable for her demotion. She was given a choice of being fired or demoted because she spoke out against contract fraud and abuse.

We think we need to strengthen whistleblower protection. We think it is important to have full disclosure of contract abuses and to restore the provision that says if there is a pattern of abuse, you don't get to engage in contracting anymore with the Federal Government.

This is very simple. I come from a small town, a town of slightly less than 300 people. There is a very simple code in towns such as that. If you are a business man or woman on Main Street and someone cheats you, you don't do business with them again. That is simple. That is a lesson apparently lost on a behemoth Federal Government.

The contracting provisions we will introduce are common sense, and this Congress ought to adopt them quickly. There will be a substantial number of cosponsors in support of the legislation that is filled with common sense, at the very time that we have witnessed the most significant waste, fraud, and abuse in this country's history. Accountability? What about accountability for what happened? What about accountability for what is about to happen? We are still spending a lot of money. We will have $100 billion requested of us and another $150 billion to replenish accounts, much of it through contracts. We say with this piece of legislation that it is long past the time for this Government to be accountable to the taxpayer and accountable to the citizens of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes in morning business.

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

HEAD START REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, later this afternoon, several of us will be introducing legislation to reauthorize Head Start. Senator KENNEDY, Senator ENZI, Senator DODD, and myself will be the cosponsors of the legislation. We have been working on it for a long time, all through the last Congress. We have heard from lots of parents, children, and Head Start operators. I wish to talk about that.

The Head Start program is an enormously popular and successful Federal initiative. It began in the 1960s when Lyndon Johnson was President of the United States. In fact, I have always thought it was a part of the story of the American dream that President Johnson went back to Cotulla, TX, near the Mexican border, where he taught first grade, to announce the Head Start program. It exemplifies one of the great principles of what it means to be an American—that we believe in equal opportunity. For that President of the United States to go back to where he was a first grade teacher reminds us that other children could succeed, as he did, in becoming President.

Today, Head Start has grown to a nearly $7 billion Federal program. That amount was spent last year. It served 900,000 children. In my State of Tennessee, 20,000 students or so were served. The funding was $118 million for Tennessee. This is a program that touches a lot of people. It deserves the Senate's attention, and it has had the Senate's attention.

During the last Congress, I made clear, as did several other Senators, that we want to see Head Start serve more children. But first, we wanted to make sure the program is accountable, financially solvent, and meeting the purpose for which it was formed. President Bush, in his message to Congress, said much the same thing 2 years ago. ''Great program,'' he said. ''But let's make it more accountable. Let's recognize that now we expect children to learn more and be able to do more before they arrive at school.'' The President said we want to get the States more involved, which was a good suggestion because when Head Start was founded, it was almost the only program to help preschool children. Today, while it is a large $7 billion program, there are $21 billion more in Federal dollars being spent to help preschool children in one way or the other, and there are a great many State and local programs that are Head Start or preschool programs.

The President's objective, as was ours, was to find a way to make all of these programs work well together. We listened carefully and I believe, as Senators KENNEDY, ENZI, and DODD believe, we have made significant improvements to the bill.

For example, the bill will establish 200 new Centers of Excellence that will serve as model Head Start programs across the country. The Governors will be involved in this. Hopefully, we can learn over the next 5 years from the States how, from these models, we can put together State efforts, local efforts, Federal efforts, and Federal Head Start efforts in a more efficient way to help children who are of preschool age.

Second, our legislation requires grant recipients to recompete for new grants every 5 years to help ensure a constant high level of quality.

Third, we clearly define what we mean by deficiency. We don't aim to catch people doing things wrong; we would rather catch them doing things right. When there are things that are wrong, the Head Start providers deserve to know what the standards are so they can make sure they meet them.

Fourth, this legislation provides clear authority to the governing boards to administer, and be held accountable for, local Head Start programs while ensuring that policy councils on which parents sit continue to play a crucial and important role.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, this legislation continues to encourage State standards especially that cause there to be more cognitive learning, more emphasis on what children should be able to know and be able to do before they get to first grade—make sure they are ready to learn.

Americans uniquely believe that each of us has the right to begin at the same starting line and that, if we do, anything is possible for any one of us. We also understand that some of us need help getting to that starting line. Most Federal funding for social programs is based upon an understanding of equal opportunity in that way.

Again, Head Start began in 1965 to make it more likely that disadvantaged children would successfully arrive at one of the most important of our starting lines—the beginning of school. Head Start, over the years, has served hundreds of thousands of our most at-risk children. The program has grown and changed, been subjected to debate; but it has stood the test of

time because it is very important. We have made a lot of progress. Only a few professionals had studied early childhood education when it began. Even fewer had designed programs specifically for children in poverty with the many challenges.

The origins of Head Start come from an understanding that success for these children wasn't only about their education. The program was designed to be certain that these children were healthy, got their immunizations, were fed hot meals and of crucial importance—that their parents were deeply involved in the program.

From the beginning, comprehensive services, including medical, dental, and nutritional services—and parent and community involvement were a part of Head Start programs, and that is still true today. In the early days, teacher training and curriculum were seen as less important. Now we know a lot more about brain development and how children learn from birth, and we understand that even for these very young children, teacher training and curriculum are very important.

Today, young children are expected to learn more and be able to do more in order to succeed in school. Many public schools now offer kindergarten. When this program started, Tennessee didn't have a public school kindergarten program. Now 40 States offer early childhood programs.

As Congress prepares to reauthorize Head Start, it is important that we recognize the program's importance and work to make it stronger. But we need to recognize also that today it is not fulfilling its promise as well as we would like. It is not meeting the purpose of serving our children who are most at risk as well as we would hope. I am not satisfied with the current practices, which fall short of the standards the taxpayers should expect, and that is why there are some changes in the bill.

We address this issue, first, by holding up successful local programs as models so others may follow their example, and by clarifying lines of accountability so any corrupt practices may be rooted out. The bill creates ways for States to help strengthen and coordinate Head Start, but would continue to send Federal funds directly to the nearly 1,700 grantees that provide services in over 29,000 Head Start centers that serve just over 900,000 disadvantaged children.

Let me talk about the Centers of Excellence first, because this is one of the most hotly debated parts of the bill—or it was. I think it is pretty well accepted now. The bill authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to create a nationwide network of 200 Centers of Excellence in early childhood built around exemplary Head Start programs. These Centers of Excellence would be nominated by the Governors. Each Center of Excellence would receive a Federal bonus grant of at least $200,000 in each of 5 years, in addition to base funding.

The Centers' bonus grants could be used for some of the following:

One, to work in their community to demonstrate the best of what Head Start can do for at-risk children and families, including getting the children ready for school and ready for academic success.

Two, it can coordinate all early childhood services in the community. As I mentioned earlier, we are spending $21 billion in Federal dollars for these children. Many States and local governments are spending money. We need to spend it together.

Three, we can offer training and support to all professionals working with at-risk children.

Next, we can track Head Start families and ensure that their services are provided seamlessly to children, from prenatal to age 8.

Next, they can be models of excellence held accountable for helping our most disadvantaged children.

Finally, to have the flexibility to serve additional Head Start, or early Head Start children, or provide more full-day services to better meet the needs of working parents.

Head Start centers are uneven in performance, but usually they excel in two areas critical to success for caring and educating children: No. 1, developing community support and, No. 2, encouraging parental involvement. Alex Haley, one of my closest friends, and the author of ''Roots,'' lived by these words:

> Find the good and praise it.

For me, that was an invaluable lesson. My hope is these Centers of Excellence will find the good and praise what is best about Head Start and show it to the rest of us.

It also helps to get the Governors involved. The President had suggested that we turn more of the funding over directly to the States. I and others are not willing to do that, at least at this stage.

One of the beauties of Head Start is that it is very decentralized and for a long time it has worked well that way. So our compromise was that the Centers of Excellence, which will get the Governors involved, will help coordinate the programs more effectively and maybe we can learn something over the next 5 years that we can put then in the next reauthorization of Head Start.

Also, this bill goes a long way to help make the spending of that $7 billion of taxpayers' money more accountable. First, it requires recipients to recompete for grants every 5 years. This ensures that after 5 years, each program is still meeting its standards.

I recognize there are concerns about this recompete requirement. Some people say we need continuity and it will create anxiety among children, among teachers if they are afraid they may lose their right to continue serving after 5 years.

Many Head Start grant recipients are doing a very good job, and rather than causing a disruption every 5 years, I hope this recompete process will highlight their success. To help streamline the process for successful programs, grant recipients that are neither deficient nor have been found to have an area of noncompliance left unresolved for more than 120 days will receive a priority designation during the recompetition process.

Second, the bill defines what makes a local program deficient. Right now, the deficiency standard is very general and inconsistent across the Nation. But if an action threatens the health, safety, or civil rights of children and staff, denies the parents the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities, misuses funds, loses its legal status or financial viability, or violates other standards specified in the bill, those are the more specific standards that are now a part of the bill. It will help make it possible for grantees to have a clearer idea of what they are expected to do.

Finally, the bill makes clear that the governing board shall be the body that is charged with running local programs and which will be held accountable for those programs. This may seem like a little bit of inside baseball, but it is actually not. It goes straight to the heart of several of the problems we have had in some Head Start grantees around the country.

Perhaps the most effective witness I heard in any of our hearings was the mayor of Shelby County, TN—that is around Memphis—A.C. Wharton. A.C. Wharton testified, as did other witnesses, that the dual governance structure between the governing board and the policy council was inadequate and neither body had adequate decision-making authority. Here is what he told the committee:

> What we're faced with is not merely a benign situation in which an errant agency through no bad intent runs afoul of the guidelines. In many instances the wrongdoings and shortfalls are calculated to bring about the political empowerment or financial enrichment of those who profit from the wrongdoing.

I believe we fix that problem based on the advice we received from Mayor Wharton and other witnesses. This bill gives governing boards direct authority and holds them accountable. That is an important element of the bill, and I think it is a necessary step. But Mayor Wharton and others reminded us that we need to be careful about how we handle this issue. Mayor Wharton said the governing body should not ''be allowed to ride roughshod over the dignity that should be accorded all participants in Head Start programs whether they are grantees, policy councils, policy committees, or certainly children and parents.''

I appreciate the mayor's concern, and I appreciate that note of caution. I thank him for his straightforward testimony. Perhaps he will know that long trip from Memphis to Washington was not in vain because his concerns are right in the middle of the bill that we will introduce later today.

We all understand the importance of parental involvement and parental responsibility over the operation of the Head Start Program. We want to preserve that parental responsibility, but we also want to make sure we preserve fiscal accountability of the program at the same time, and we believe we have done that. We have crafted a careful balance. We give the governing board fiscal and legal responsibility, while ensuring policy councils on which parents sit continue to play an important role in the running and operation of local Head Start Programs within the framework the governing board sets. It is a fair compromise and one that will strengthen the program.

I learned about the importance of preschool education in a very personal way. When I was growing up in Maryville, TN, at the edge of the Great Smokey Mountains, my mother operated the only preschool education program in our town—well, there may have been one other. I think Mrs. Pesterfield also had one. But she operated this program in a converted garage in our backyard. She had 25 3- and 4-year-olds in the morning and 25 5-year-olds in the afternoon. I think she charged $25 a month for this care for these children.

This was before Head Start. This was before we understood very much about preschool education and the early development of the brain. But parents instinctively knew that was a good place for their children. When Alcoa moved executives to our little town, they usually would find a way to get their children into Mrs. Alexander's nursery school and kindergarten before they looked for a home because those parents knew then that preschool education was important to their children's success.

We all understand that for all of our children. We understand that the earlier this starts—at home first—and then with all the extra help we can give that home, these children will be ready to get to the starting point.

I am the only U.S. Secretary of Education, I think, Mr. President, who spent 5 years in kindergarten. The reason I did was that my mother had no other place to put me than the kindergarten she operated in our backyard. Looking back, there probably wasn't a better place for me to have been than that 5 years of intensive preschool education. It is something we should hope for virtually every child growing up in this country. We believe anything is possible. We believe in free enterprise, we believe in competition, and we believe in the starting line. But there is no Federal program that exists that does a better job of helping disadvantaged children get to the starting line than Head Start.

I congratulate Senator KENNEDY, Senator ENZI, and Senator DODD, and the other Senators who have worked on this legislation. We look forward to introducing the legislation this afternoon. I thank all those who have taken time to come to the hearings, and I especially thank the mayor of Shelby County, Mayor Wharton, for his testimony because it has made its way directly into the legislation to help make sure Head Start not only helps children but that there is accountability to the taxpayers.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have been on the road and I telephoned in and asked the cloakroom to reserve the period of 3:45 to 4:30 for the Senator from Virginia and seven other Senators to speak briefly. I ask unanimous consent that my request be granted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, may I speak as if in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business, and the Senator may speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. THOMAS. Just 10 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the order we are under.

NOMINATION OF CARL JOSEPH ARTMAN

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I will talk about something very important which will soon be pending before the Senate; that is, the nomination of Carl Joseph Artman as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

The Indian program in this country is very important. As part of the Government, we have part of the Interior Department working on it. I rise to offer my strong support for the nomination of Carl Artman for Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior. Mr. Artman is an excellent candidate with diversity and experience in both the public and private sectors and has the leadership and the academic credentials needed for this extraordinarily demanding position.

This position is unique in that many of the issues with respect to Indian affairs are unique. Yet it has to be someone who has background in government and operations. The Assistant Secretary implements Federal Indian policy set forth by the Congress and facilitates the government-to-government relationships with 561 Indian tribal governments. That is a large challenge.

The Assistant Secretary is responsible for a variety of activities and programs in Indian communities, including economic development, law enforcement, trust assessment management, social services, and education. In discharging these duties, the Assistant Secretary must balance many competing interests and needs in working with the States, in working with the tribes, and in working with the Federal Government. Mr. Artman has pledged to facilitate more vibrant communication among the Indian tribes and their neighbors. I believe that is helpful in terms of furthering Federal policies of interaction with the Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis and encouraging Indian self-determination and self-government. That is our challenge and the challenge the tribes take, to become more independent economically and from a government standpoint so they can operate as they choose with self-government.

The job of Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs has been made exponentially more difficult by the methamphetamine plague that has ravaged the Indian tribes and the Indian communities. I am encouraged by Mr. Artman's commitment to fighting and defeating this epidemic, which may require aggressive efforts by the agency he will lead as well as other Federal and tribal partners to achieve measurable results.

Mr. Artman is also committed to assisting tribal governments develop the socioeconomic infrastructure and fight the obstacles in many of our Indian reservations that foster hopelessness and despair. One of the issues is to provide opportunities for the tribal members to have jobs, to be somewhat sufficient and self-supporting in terms of their economy.

Although many Indian tribes have made tremendous gains through tribal self-governance and some have managed to flourish materially in recent years through economic development, it is a common misperception that most tribes have experienced economic prosperity as a result of successful gaming facilities. In fact, poverty and unemployment are sill prevalent in far too many communities in Indian Country. A robust and diversified economy is essential to improving the quality of life of these communities and to providing the people living in them with alternatives to such heartbreaking problems of suicide and substance abuse, of which there is an abundance.

I am confident that Mr. Artman will provide outstanding leadership in this daunting challenge. I urge my friends in the Senate to approve his confirmation, which I hope will come before the Senate in the very near future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Oregon.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I know we are in morning business. I will speak in such. I came from a meeting with the