

factories being treated as fact obtain- ing acceptability by how often the lies are repeated thanks to money, money, money.

Under all of that money, what is drowning is the sense we are all in this together as Americans. One of the things America actually stands for in this world is that we are fair with each other. We get a straight deal, and we give each other a straight deal. That is one of the ways we, as Americans, set an example in this world, an example of being fair. There are plenty of coun- tries in the world whose internal polit- ical and economic systems amount to a racket, a racket rigged for the benefit of the rich and powerful where farmers and workers and ordinary families get screwed and the wealthy skim all the cream. Some of these countries are so bad we call them kleptocracies. The world is full of that.

It has been the pride and joy of America that we are not like that. It has been our message to the world that it doesn't have to be like that. But now it is looking more and more like we ac- tually are becoming just like that.

What can we do about it? What can we do to make sure Americans are get- ting a straight deal in all of this? I pro- pose these actions: No. 1, big banks should have to follow the State laws just like local banks do and just like you and I do. No more going to South Dakota and marketing from their cred- it cards 30 percent interest rates that violate the laws of the home State.

No. 2, if big corporations can restruc- ture all their debts in bankruptcy court, so should students and families be able to. No second-class citizenship for those who borrowed college loans and home mortgages.

No. 3, amend the Constitution to make it clear that corporations are not people—never were, never could be. The Good Lord just did not make it that way. We need to make it crystal clear that corporations can't spend money in American elections anonymously or through phony shell organizations. If big oil wants to influence American elections, Americans should know it is big oil.

No. 4: Straighten out our tax systems and, until we do, put in a minimum tax for ultra-high income earners that is at least at the rate that ordinary Amer- ican taxpaying families pay. While we are at it, put in a minimum corporate tax rate that is at least half of what average corporations pay. No corpora- tion that is making millions or billions of dollars should get away with paying nothing in income tax.

No. 5: Shut down the offshore tax hav- ens and charge companies a CEO pay surtax on CEO compensation that is more than 100 times their average worker's compensation.

No. 6: Make polluters pay the actual costs of their pollution. Why should a polluting company be able to push onto all of the rest of us the costs of their pollution? Why should American fam- ilies bear that polluting corporation's

costs? Economics tells us that should be part of the company's cost of doing business.

No. 7: No more corporate tax deduc- tions for offshoring American jobs, and no more favoring of offshore corporate income derived from what used to be American jobs.

No. 8: Take out of those take-it-or-leave-it consumer contracts the provi- sions that take away in the fine print the American right to go before an American jury, as the Constitution and Bill of Rights promises whenever a cit- izen has a grievance or has been harmed.

None of these eight things I have mentioned asks anything of anyone that isn't fair, and most of them sim- ply ask that ordinary Americans get the same deal, or at least no worse of a deal, than special Americans get and big corporations get. This all does no more than put people on the same level, or at least under the same rules, as the rich and powerful.

When someone is getting a better deal than you because of who they are, you are not getting a straight deal. When someone is taking advantage of you because you are small and easy to take advantage of, you are not getting a straight deal. When the rules of the game are rigged to help the winners win and to make you a loser, you are not getting a straight deal. It is time we started giving the people of Amer- ica a straight deal around here.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). Without objection, it is so or- dered.

#### TRIBUTE TO MR. DELMER GROSS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to an out- standing Kentuckian who dedicated his life to serving the children of Laurel County. Mr. Delmer Gross was a bus driver for the Laurel County Board of Education for 39 years and cherishes his memories driving kids to and from school—many of his former students are his good friends still to this day. In his spare time, Delmer serves as the pastor at London Community Church, a role he has enjoyed for almost 43 years.

Delmer started driving a school bus in 1969 when he was only 21 years old. He spent 5 years driving a double route as his first assignment. Each morning he would start by busing students in grades 1 through 12 to Swiss Colony. Then he would go to Mitchell Creek, lo- cated west of Interstate 75, and pick up elementary school students, only to re- turn them to Swiss Colony via the road that is now Ky. 1956.

His second route took him all the way down to Rockcastle River and was much more dangerous because of the truck traffic. "We didn't have a four- lane road then," Delmer recalls. "There were a lot of crooked places where I had to pick up kids on the op- posite side of a curve. I've had trucks slide at me sideways. A couple of times it was quite frightening." Delmer drove this route for almost 24 years before he began driving a town route with spe- cial-needs students in 1997.

One time, Delmer was driving on Ky. 1956 through freezing rain and snow and made a stop just under the crest of a hill. Two girls got off the bus just be- fore a car came over the hill and barely stopped in time. Unfortunately, a sec- ond car came along and was unable to stop. It crashed into the back of the first, sending the car spinning into a driveway. The second car bounced into Delmer's lane as a result of the crash and hit the bus head-on, clipping one of the girls in the knee. Delmer went straight home, got in his car, and drove over to the little girl's house to help her father take her to the hospital. Thankfully, she walked away with only minor injuries.

Delmer deeply cherishes the count- less memories that he made with the students he shuttled throughout his three-decade-long career, and he rarely had any disciplinary issues with any of the children. "I had a good relationship with almost all of the students I hauled," Delmer said.

Madam President, Mr. Delmer Gross's dedication to his job and the safety of his students is admirable. I commend him for his 39 years of excel- lent service to the children of Laurel County schools. Delmer's career serves as an inspiration to the people of our great Commonwealth and exemplifies the true spirit of Kentucky. The Laurel County-area Sentinel Echo published an article in the spring of this year to honor Mr. Delmer Gross's achieve- ments. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, Spring 2011]

DRIVING A BUS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER

(BY CAROL MILLS)

Delmer Gross loved being a bus driver for the Laurel County Board of Education for 39 years, but he saw the behavior of students getting worse over the years.

"The last 15 years the students have been getting progressively worse," he said. "Less respect for adults, less respect for authority. You had several that were pushing their boundaries. I see the attitudes of children, the discipline and behavior is a much greater problem than it was 20 years ago. It's becom- ing a problem in all public places. Kids don't have parents who really discipline them. As adults they have major problems with soci- ety. They weren't taught respect, weren't forced to respect and it's showing."

Gross said the Bible teaches "to spare the rod we hate our child." "I don't think we get much smarter than the man who said that," he said. "In his day he was the wisest man

that ever lived. Solomon wrote all those proverbs that are recorded in the Bible."

Gross did not have many disciplinary problems with the students on the bus and when he did, he usually handled them himself.

Gross, now 64, started driving a school bus in 1969 when he was 21 years old. He also painted houses between routes and has been the pastor at London Community Church for almost 43 years.

"I had a double route, which most drivers did," Gross recalled. "I left this community and went to the next community which is White Oak. I transported all of the children first through 12th grade to Swiss Colony and then I would drop all of the kids and go to Mitchell Creek, which is back by Interstate 75 just on the west side of 75. Then I would go through that community and would pick up just elementary kids and bring them back on what was old Route 80 at the time. It's (Ky.) 1956 now. I would run that route from Interstate 75 along with Mitchell Creek and transport them back to Swiss Colony. I did that for a short time."

Gross drove the White Oak route for five years and then he let someone else take it over who lived in that community. He then took a dangerous route on Old Ky. 80.

"It was a very dangerous route because of the truck traffic. We didn't have a four-lane road then," he said. "I drove all the way down to the Rockcastle River. I drove that route for 23 or 24 years. There were a lot of crooked places where I had to pick up kids on the opposite side of a curve. I've had trucks slide at me sideways. A couple of times it was quite frightening."

In 1997, Gross started driving a town route with special-needs students. He said it was not as hectic as driving a route with all the age groups.

Over the years while driving a school bus, Gross had two or three minor accidents and one that could have been very dangerous.

"It was a day in March. It would snow and then it would melt, then freeze and then snow some more, melt and freeze," he recalled. "The officials kept an eye on most of the main roads, but just about 3 o'clock it started freezing and snowing. I picked up a load at South High School and came to (Ky.) 1956. I made a stop just under the crest of a hill, probably 150 to 200 yards away. A car came over the hill just after I dropped off two girls. The car stopped in time. Another car came over the crest and when she braked, she hit the little car in the rear end and spun it around and pushed it back into a driveway."

"One of the girls managed to run across the road and over to the edge of a bank," he continued. "The car that caused all of this bounced off that little car and into my lane and hit my bus head on and went underneath the bus. The other girl who had gotten off the bus was clipped on the knee by the car that caused the accident. She only had a minor injury. The drivers of the two cars weren't hurt. I thought both girls were going to be pinned between my bus and the car."

Gross said the officer who worked the accident did not mandate the girl who was hurt be taken to the hospital to be checked out.

"I was quite surprised after it was all over and when I went home, I called back to the child's home and I took my little car and waited until her father got home from work and we took her to the hospital."

One of Gross's memorable moments on the bus route was the day two boys were cutting up and joking. They were sitting up front so that he could keep an eye on them.

"They were cutting up quite a bit, joking, teasing and laughing," Gross said. "That didn't bother me. I was listening to them. One of them said something kind of funny. I thought I could be cute so I said something

I thought topped what he had said. He looked at his little buddy—they were both elementary kids—"Tell you what," he said, "5,000 comedians in this country out of a job and look what we're stuck with." I got so tickled I didn't even try to top that line."

"I had a good relationship with almost all of the students I hauled," Gross added. "A lot of the older age groups are grown up now and are good friends of mine."

Gross is married to Yvonne and they have three children—Suzanne Gray, Cheryl Winters, and Delmer Paul Gross.

#### ILLINOIS JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, as a proponent of smart and fair crime policies, as well as improving the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system, I would like to commend my home State of Illinois for its recent reforms in this area. I have long supported and sponsored legislation in Congress to ensure that children are treated appropriately, whether they are sexually exploited victims who do not belong in the criminal justice system, or whether they commit crimes and deserve targeted assistance or punishment. As one of several States in the Nation moving away from a punishment-based juvenile justice system and toward one of rehabilitation and prevention, Illinois has been nationally recognized for its progress. Two recent laws in particular have advanced our treatment of youth in the criminal justice system in Illinois.

First, as of January 1, 2010, 17-year-old misdemeanants in Illinois are no longer automatically filtered into the adult justice system. Under Public Act 95-1031, 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanors will now have access to the juvenile courts rather than the adult system. This change will allow more youth to participate in much-needed rehabilitation services such as mental health, drug treatment, and community-based services.

In addition, the state legislature took another step forward by enacting Public Act 96-1199 last year. This law requires the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission to study the impact of expanding the juvenile court's jurisdiction to 17-year-olds charged with felonies. It also requires the Commission to develop timelines, propose a funding structure, and submit a final report to the Illinois General Assembly by December 31, 2011.

These new State laws will help our state use its resources more effectively and give more young people the opportunity to live productive lives. In their efforts to further these goals, I would also like to commend two of our juvenile justice advocates in Illinois. Betsy Clarke is the founder and president of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative and has spent more than 20 years advocating for the youth of our state. Along with leading efforts to reduce the prosecution of youth in adult criminal courts, she has supported Redeploy Illinois, a program that emphasizes com-

munity-based alternatives over secure confinement. Redeploy Illinois has saved Illinois taxpayers millions in corrections costs. Ms. Clarke also played a role in the formation of the new Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and legislation requiring early counsel so youth can obtain quality legal representation from the beginning of their dealings with the criminal justice system.

Grace Warren is the co-director and family organizer for the National Parent Caucus, a group of parents and family members dedicated to keeping youth under the age of 18 out of the adult criminal system. She became involved in this public awareness campaign in 2004 when her 17-year-old son was convicted and sentenced as an adult. Previously, she worked with the Tamms Year Ten Campaign and the Illinois Coalition for Fair Sentencing of Children at Northwestern University. She currently volunteers with the John Howard Association of Illinois, monitoring juvenile and adult facilities, and she recently provided testimony to the Federal Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice on the importance of family engagement by juvenile and criminal justice systems.

In this time of shrinking state budgets, it is important to recognize efforts to improve outcomes for our youth and communities which also utilize our state resources more effectively. With the recent juvenile justice reforms in Illinois and the hard work of two dedicated leaders in this field, Illinois is well on track to succeeding in these goals. I commend this progress, and I will continue to wholeheartedly support these efforts through my work in the U.S. Senate.

#### OBJECTION TO FCC NOMINATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Jessica Rosenworcel and Ajit Pai to be commissioners on the Federal Communications Commission.

I will object to proceeding to the nomination because the FCC continues to stonewall a document request I submitted to the FCC over 6 months ago on April 27, 2011, regarding their actions related to LightSquared and Harbinger Capital. Since then, I have repeated my request to the FCC through letters I sent on July 5 and September 8 and the FCC continues to deny my request for documents.

During the course of my correspondence with the FCC, the FCC has made it clear that it will not voluntarily turn over documents to the 99.6 percent of the Members of Congress and Senators who do not chair a committee with direct jurisdiction over the FCC. As I said in my September 8, 2011, letter their actions are misguided and unsupportable.

It not only sets a dangerous precedent for Federal agency to unilaterally set the rules on how it engages with