

it is early childhood education. These children who are in childcare will do better later in life. There have been many studies that verify this.

This is a win-win situation, providing a safe environment for children so their parents can work and educational opportunity for the children at the same time. It pays off big-time for the workforce. A TANF study showed that parents who had their children in childcare for 2 years or more were more likely to remain in the employment field. So it provides stable employment, help for the child, and a win-win situation.

The eligibility for the program is it cannot exceed 85 percent of the State median income, to give you an idea of the type of people we are talking about who benefit from this program.

In Maryland, for a family of two the maximum income is \$24,000 and for a family of four the maximum income is \$35,000. In my State, Maryland, the average cost for childcare for an infant is about \$12,000 a year. For a child over 4 years of age, it is about \$9,000 a year.

We heard about the income levels and how a family is eligible for this program. It is clear that low-wage families cannot afford childcare on their own. We need to help, and that is what this program does, so that they can move up the economic ladder and not be a burden on the cash-assistance program.

Today, as we did prior to 1996, we have combined discretionary and mandatory programs for our childcare. Today discretionary spending is at \$2.36 billion and \$2.9 billion in mandatory spending.

The legislation before us also makes improvements, as it should. It allows the States to develop 13 specific health and safety standards, such as first aid and CPR, and SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome. It is keeping our children safer in childcare by having safety standards that are developed. It requires the States to do inspections of childcare centers, comprehensive background checks for those who are involved in childcare, online information, more transparency in the program, and additional State flexibility on how they can set priorities within the childcare program. That is exactly what federalism should be.

The Federal Government establishes a broad policy that we want to see families self-sufficient, we want to make sure there is a safe environment for children, and we want to make sure we do this in a way that is consistent with our national priorities. We also need to give flexibility to the State and local governments to be able to set their priorities to meet the needs of their citizens, and that is what this bill does.

I will take a moment now to give real-life examples of how this program is critically important to our community. A great example is the Judy Centers of Maryland. We have 25 Judy Centers in Maryland. They are named after Congressman STENY HOYER's wife Judy, who died of cancer in 1997. Judy was a

longtime advocate for quality early childhood education and comprehensive family support services. I knew Judy very well, and she was an incredibly dedicated leader and advocate for our children.

I have a couple of specific examples from the Judy Center as to how the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program is critically important to their existence. According to the testimony given before a committee, Judy Center employees discovered a dad who lost his job and a mom who only worked part time. They could not make ends meet or look for jobs or go on interviews because they had no childcare for their 2- and 3-year-old children. The Judy Center enrolled them in KinderCare, a childcare partner, and provided tuition assistance.

Since they lost their health insurance when their dad became unemployed, they were given an application for the Maryland CHIP program, the health insurance program. The 3-year-old had a behavioral issue and was referred to the Judy Center behavioral specialist, who worked with her extensively. She also received tutoring services.

Dad is now employed full time. Thanks to safe childcare, dad is now employed full time. After much encouragement, mom enrolled in adult education classes and received her GED. She has also completed a medical assistance program and is now enrolled in the College of Southern Maryland to pursue an associates degree. The children are now in elementary school and are doing well in school.

I could give many more examples like this family. I could talk about many other success stories that would not have been possible without the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, and that is why it is critically important that we reauthorize the program.

I see my colleague from Maryland is on the Senate floor. I congratulate her for her leadership in getting this bill to the floor—not just getting this bill to the floor, which is important, but doing it in a way that we can get it passed in the Senate and accomplish our objectives so we can get women into the workforce and have early childhood education to help children succeed in life. We can help American families and strengthen America.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before my colleague leaves the floor, I want to express my appreciation for his statement today and in particular when he spoke about the Judy Center, which has meant so much in Maryland to show the way childcare should be addressed. The Judy Center is a family-oriented organization that is focused on children. Their so-called wrap-around services help the child not only

with all that is necessary in a well-run childcare facility, but they also work with the family, strengthen the family, and help the family by giving them information about other opportunities to improve their life, such as educational benefits. I think it is a national model. If I had my way, I would like to adopt the Judy Center model throughout America.

Again, I thank the Senator for speaking about the Judy Center.

I also thank my friend for his steadfast advocacy for children, the way he has worked for the children's health program, particularly focusing on the dental services for that little boy Deamonte, the child who died. He is a real fighter.

Senator CARDIN is also well known for getting rid of lead paint poisoning in Maryland. So now he wants the lead out of bureaucracy and the lead out of the Senate. Again, I thank him for his comments.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the bill.

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#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

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#### CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1086, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (S. 1086) to improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin amendment No. 2811, to include rural and remote areas as underserved areas identified in the State plan.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am going to give a recap of where we are and then note the absence of a quorum as we sort through our amendments.

This is the second day of the Senate's consideration of S. 1086, the child care and development block grant reauthorization on which 1.5 million American children depend, including 20,000 children from the State of Maryland. We have been working on this bill for over 2 years, and now it is our second day of moving this legislation.

We have made an impressive amount of progress. Yesterday the Senate agreed to nine amendments—three by rollcall vote and six by voice vote. We had a great group of bipartisan amendments. Of the nine amendments that were adopted, three were sponsored by Republicans, two were sponsored by Democrats, and four amendments were bipartisan. The amendments yesterday improved the underlying bill. They streamlined Federal early learning programs; made sure tribes get the funding they need; required States to develop childcare disaster plans; and ensures that CDBG, as it is known, also