

The Korean War G.I. Bill of 1952 first established this new responsibility—it said that veterans could only use their benefits at colleges that were accredited by an agency recognized by what was called the Commissioner of Education, and then after the Department of Education was created in 1979, the Secretary of Education.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 used this same idea when it created federal financial aid for non-veteran college students. Around this time, about 10% of the population had received a college degree.

However, the 1992 Higher Education Act Amendments were the first time the law said much about what standards accreditors needed to use when assessing quality at institutions of higher education.

Today, current law outlines 10 broad standards that federally recognized accreditors must have when reviewing colleges: student achievement; curriculum; faculty; facilities; fiscal and administrative capacity; student support services; recruiting and admissions practices; measure of program length; student complaints; and compliance with Title IV program responsibility.

The law tells accreditors that they must measure student achievement, but it doesn't tell them how to do it.

Colleges and accreditors determine the specifics of the standards—not the Department of Education.

For the student achievement standard, colleges and universities define how they meet that standard based on their mission—the law specifically doesn't let the Department of Education regulate or define student achievement.

And in fact, in 2007, when the Department of Education tried to do that, Congress stopped it.

Still, Congress spends approximately \$33 billion for Pell grants each year, and taxpayers will lend over \$100 billion in loans this year that students have to pay back.

So we have a duty to make certain that students are spending that money at quality colleges and universities.

I believe there are two main concerns about accreditation:

First, is it ensuring quality?

And second, is the federal government guilty of getting in the way of accreditors doing their job?

The Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education, which was commissioned by a bipartisan group of senators on this committee, told us in a detailed report that federal rules and regulations on accreditors have turned the process into federal "micro-management."

In addressing these two concerns, I think we should look at five areas:

First, are accreditors doing enough to ensure that students are learning and receiving a quality education?

A recent survey commissioned by Inside Higher Ed found that 97% of chief academic officers at public colleges and universities believe their institution is "very or somewhat effective at preparing students for the workforce."

But a Gallup survey shows that business leaders aren't so sure—only one-third of American business leaders say that colleges and universities are graduating students with the skills and competencies their businesses need. Nearly a third of business leaders disagree, with 17% going as far as to say that they strongly disagree.

Second, would more competition and choice among accreditors be one way to improve quality?

Accreditation is one of the few areas in higher education without choice and competition. Today colleges and universities cannot choose which regional accrediting

agency they'd like to use. If they could, would that drive quality?

Third, do federal rules and regulations force accreditors to spend too much time on issues other than quality?

Accreditation may now be "cops on the beat" for Department of Education rules and regulations unrelated to academic quality. Accreditors review fire codes, institutional finances (something the Department of Education already looks at) and whether a school is in compliance with Department rules for Title IV. To me, these don't seem to be an accreditor's job.

Fourth, do accreditors have the right tools and flexibility to deal with the many different institutions with many different needs and circumstances?

Some well-established institutions may not need to go through the same process as everyone else, allowing accreditors to focus on those institutions that need the most help.

Finally, could the public benefit from more information about accreditation?

All the public learns from the accreditation process is whether a school is accredited or unaccredited. Even at comparable colleges, quality may vary dramatically, yet all institutions receive the same, blanket "accredited" stamp of approval. Seems to me that there could be more information provided to students, families or policymakers.

We'd better find a way to make accreditation work better.

There's really not another way to do this—to monitor quality. Because if accreditation doesn't do it, I can assure you that Congress can't. And the Department of Education certainly doesn't have the capacity or know-how.

They could hire a thousand bureaucrats to run around the country reviewing 6,000 colleges, but you can imagine what that would be like.

They're already trying to rate colleges, and no one is optimistic about their efforts—I think they'll collapse of their own weight.

So it's crucial that accrediting of our colleges improve.

Our witnesses have a variety of viewpoints on accreditation and I look forward to the discussion.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COUNCIL

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I want to recognize the hard work, dedication, and achievements of the Northwest Arkansas Council, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary. This organization helped transform Northwest Arkansas into an economic powerhouse. In 1990, business and community leaders created a cooperative regional business foundation with a focus on what is best for the region. Now, 25 years later, the council has strengthened partnerships and achieved many successes.

Early on, the council recognized the importance of expanding the region's infrastructure. It planted the seeds for development by pursuing the construction of a new regional airport, an interstate to connect western Arkansas, and a massive 2-ton water system to serve Benton and Washington Counties.

These priorities laid the foundation for the expansive growth and development of the region. Northwest Arkan-

sas continues to flourish under the council's encouragement and vision. By focusing on the future and on mutually beneficial goals, the council is a leader in visualizing and promoting investments that meet the needs of citizens and local businesses. In recent years, the council's goals have expanded toward growing the region's workforce, including increasing the number of high school and college graduates and attracting top talent.

This unique partnership encourages communities throughout the region to think about long-term goals and creates a strategic plan to accomplish them. What is impressive is that the council consistently achieves most of its goals, often ahead of schedule.

The council is a model for success. Economic development regions across Arkansas and throughout the country use the council as a model, with hopes of achieving similar success. The council has demonstrated the value of cooperation and collaboration, as well as the importance of keeping attention focused on common ground and shared interests.

I congratulate the Northwest Arkansas Council on its 25-year commitment to growth and development and for continuing to make the region better through infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and regional stewardship. I look forward to continuing to work with the Northwest Arkansas Council and seeing its future achievements.●

REMEMBERING SHERIFF RALPH LAMB

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today we honor the life and legacy of former Clark County Sheriff Ralph Lamb, whose passing signifies a great loss to Nevada. I send my condolences and prayers to his wife Rae and all of Mr. Lamb's family in this time of mourning. He was a man committed to his family, his country, his State, and his community. Although he will be sorely missed, his legendary influence throughout the Silver State will continue on.

Mr. Lamb was born on April 10, 1927, in a small ranching community in Alamo. He was one of 11 children who helped on the family farm and worked in the local schoolhouse to support the family. At 11 years old, his father was killed in a rodeo accident, and he was taken in by his oldest brother Floyd Lamb. Mr. Lamb served in the Army during World War II in the Pacific Theater, later returning to Nevada. He became a Clark County deputy sheriff and soon after was named chief of detectives. In 1954, he left the Clark County Sheriff's Department to form a private detective agency.

It wasn't until 1958 that Mr. Lamb showed interest in returning to the department. He was named Clark County Sheriff in 1961 and served under this title for 18 years, an unprecedented amount of time that continues to be

the longest anyone has held the job. His unwavering dedication to the department and the community will always be remembered.

Mr. Lamb truly strived to make the department the absolute best it could be. Throughout his tenure, organized crime was prevalent in the Las Vegas community. Mr. Lamb worked with the county commission to pass the “work card law,” requiring anyone working in the gaming industry to be fingerprinted, photographed, and to notify the sheriff if he or she moved jobs. This important piece of legislation helped significantly in fighting organized crime.

He was also a key contributor in transitioning the Clark County Sheriff’s Department into a more sophisticated force and in helping in its consolidation with the Las Vegas Police Department, creating stability in the law enforcement community with the present Metropolitan Police Department, Metro. His administration created the city’s first SWAT team and brought the Las Vegas metropolitan area a modern crime lab, including a mobile crime lab. Metro was one of the first police agencies to utilize semi-automatic pistols and in-car computers, all driven by the hard work of Mr. Lamb. His many accomplishments will benefit future Metro officers for years to come.

I extend my deepest sympathies to his family. We will always remember Mr. Lamb for his invaluable contributions to the local community. It is the brave men and women who serve in the local police department who keep our communities safe. These heroes selflessly put their lives on the line every day. Mr. Lamb’s sacrifice and courage earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe, and his service will never be forgotten.

Mr. Lamb fought to maintain only the highest level of excellence for the Clark County Sheriff’s Department. The Southern Nevada community remains safer because of Mr. Lamb. I am honored to commend him for his hard work and invaluable contributions to the Silver State. Today, I join the Las Vegas metropolitan community and citizens of the Silver State to celebrate the life of an upstanding Nevadan, Sheriff Ralph Lamb. ●

RECOGNIZING HOTEL NEVADA’S 86TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 86th anniversary of Hotel Nevada, a historic landmark and important piece of the Ely community. I am proud to honor this hotel that serves as a symbol of Nevada’s history and continues to offer quality services to guests and locals alike.

The city of Ely was originally established as a stagecoach stop and post office along the Pony Express’ Central Overland Route in 1870 and was des-

ignated the county seat in 1887. The city expanded its growth in 1906 when copper mining dominated the area. The necessity to accommodate numerous miners who worked in the area drove the development of the city and kindled the construction of many buildings. The Hotel Nevada was built during this time of the Prohibition era in 1929 and was deemed the tallest building in the State with six floors in the 1940s. It is one of a kind and continues to maintain its authenticity with its original structure, bringing a distinct rural West feel. I am grateful this remarkable site provides visitors and residents a glimpse into Nevada’s past. It is truly a staple for the Ely community.

The hotel and gambling hall offers 67 updated rooms to guests. It also provides the only 24-hour restaurant and full-service hotel and casino in Ely. Since its opening, it has received many well-known guests, including Wayne Newton, Mickey Rooney, and Lyndon Johnson. Each time my wife and I travel to the city of Ely, we stay at the Hotel Nevada. I can say from first-hand experience Hotel Nevada offers an unparalleled historic experience to its guests. It gives me great pleasure to see this business celebrate 86 years of success.

Hotel Nevada has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and true dedication to authenticity since its opening. After 86 years, it stands a true testament to the City of Ely. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Hotel Nevada on its 86th anniversary. ●

TRIBUTE TO DR. WILLIAM “BRIT” KIRWAN

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to honor the extraordinary Dr. William “Brit” Kirwan, who recently left the post of chancellor of the University System of Maryland, USM. Not only am I honored to know him professionally, I am proud to call him a dear friend.

Dr. Kirwan will be greatly missed. He has devoted himself to higher education for the past 50 years. How amazing is that? Not only is he an accomplished individual, he also throws the coolest Derby parties. I love Dr. Kirwan, and I know Maryland loves Dr. Kirwan.

Prior to becoming chancellor of USM, Dr. Kirwan served as president of the Ohio State University for 4 years. Before that, he served as president of the University of Maryland, College Park, UMCP, for 10 years. Before becoming president of UMCP, he was a member of the University of Maryland faculty for 24 years—where he served as an assistant professor, department chair and Provost. Until last month, Dr. Kirwan served as the chancellor of USM for 13 years.

Under his leadership, USM roared into the 21st century. He led 11 universities, with more than 40,000 under-

graduate and graduate students. He boosted graduation rates while winning lacrosse and basketball games. He made sure that no campus was left out or left behind. He made sure to support the University of Maryland flagship, our schools out in western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore—Frostburg and Salisbury—and our Historically Black Colleges and Universities, HBCUs. He also worked to make sure our professional schools in downtown Baltimore remained strong. In fact, downtown Baltimore has some of the best medical, law, nursing and social work schools in the world. Students knew they could count on Dr. Kirwan. He made college more affordable by freezing tuition for 4 years. Even faculty knew they could count on him.

Dr. Kirwan has so many more accomplishments that it is difficult to know where to begin. Particularly, the accomplishments I am most proud of were the ones where we worked together. When Senator ALEXANDER and I worked together on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2008, we looked at two things: how can we make sure young people get a quality and affordable education, and how can colleges and universities control their costs. What emerged was the recognition that we needed to do something about burdensome regulations. That is why Senator ALEXANDER and I, along with Senators BENNET and BURR, created a task force to look at the issue of duplicative, burdensome higher education regulations.

Because of Dr. Kirwan’s wealth and knowledge of higher education, I knew he was the right man for the job to lead this particular task force. What he was able to accomplish is astounding. The task force, under his leadership, put together a comprehensive report that identified the 10 most onerous regulations institutions of higher education were faced with. The report also provided recommendations on what Congress and the administration could do to streamline regulations. As a result of Dr. Kirwan’s work, my colleagues in the Senate are using his recommendations to make sure our laws are about smart regulation, not strangulation.

While being a national leader in futuristic things like cyber technology, training the next generation of cyber warriors, making our economy stronger and our country safer, Dr. Kirwan helped changed higher education. He helped change the world—literally changing the global economy. I would venture to say that we would not have Google if it were not for Dr. Kirwan. Now some of you may say: “Senator BARB, where does this come from?” Let me tell you a story.

Dr. Kirwan, is not only an able chancellor, he really is a gifted mathematician. And in his work as a mathematician, he had the opportunity to travel to conferences around the world. At one of those conferences in the 1970s, Dr. Kirwan met someone from the Soviet Union by the name of Dr. Michael Brin.