

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY, EXPORT AND TRADE PROMOTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 16, 1996, at 9 a.m.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMON SENSE ON SCHOOL CHOICE

• Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in today's RECORD an unusually clear article on the complex subject of school vouchers. Ms. Claudia Smith Brinson at the State newspaper in Columbia, SC, has made the case eloquently that the choice of taxpayer funding for private and religious schools is a bad one. Specifically, she points out its history as a means of minimizing desegregation, its lack of results, and its lack of promise compared to other proven education reforms. I commend her for her eloquence and hope my colleagues will benefit from her column.

The column follows:

[From the State, May 15, 1996]

LET'S DECIDE JUST EXACTLY WHAT SCHOOL CHOICE MEANS

(By Claudia Smith Brinson)

The concept of school choice has been around a long time. In the '60s, it was promoted in the South as a means of minimizing court-ordered desegregation. In the '70s, economist Milton Friedman talked up what he called the "free-choice" model. In the '80s and early '90s, as dissatisfaction with public schools grew, experimentation kicked in.

School choice covers an enormous range. At its most basic, parents exercise choice when they buy a house in a certain neighborhood. When a school provides school-within-a-school options, choice is offered. When a school district provides alternative or magnet schools, choice is offered. Some districts allow parents with a need for flexibility regarding work or child care to use intra-district choice.

While, in this state, we have few magnet schools, half of our school districts offer alternative schools or second-chance programs; more than half allow high-school students to take college courses; almost two-thirds permit inter-district transfers. Our governor's schools for arts and mathematics and science increase choice statewide for our brightest students.

Nationwide, choice is often employed to help with the urban suburban desegregation issue. In St. Louis, Mo., inner-city children can apply to attend mostly white suburban schools. To improve schooling for Hispanic students in San Antonio, the Multilingual Program provides a language and cultural focus for academically successful students. In Montgomery County, Md., a magnet school program was introduced to improve integration. In Monicclair, N.J., all schools are magnet schools, and transportation is provided.

In Cambridge, Mass., parents can choose, with the help of an information center, any public school in the district. In Minnesota, the whole state allows open enrollment, although students must supply transportation.

Charter schools, in which parents and teachers contract with the state to provide a particular kind of education, are another option. Just over 100 charter schools are in operation nationwide. Here, the House has passed legislation allowing charter schools; a Senate subcommittee is discussing it.

Vouchers are rare. In Milwaukee, to desegregate schools and improve urban children's schooling, low-income parents were invited to apply for public funds to send their children to private or public suburban schools. An attempt to add church schools is on hold because the state Supreme Court deadlocked on its constitutionality. In Boston, private money is used to send low-income children to parochial schools. In San Antonio and Indianapolis, private businesses pay low-income students' tuition at private schools.

The favorite arguments for using vouchers (sending public money through parents) for private schools rest on three faulty premises. The first is that children make great academic strides in private and parochial schools. When you take out those oh-so-important factors such as parents' income and education, what remains is a very small advantage in scores for parochial and private school students.

The second faulty premise is that education can be compared to car-making. The premise goes like this: Education is just another manufacturing process; vouchers will create competition; competition will automatically improve product quality. But children and learning are far more complicated than autos and welding. Education is a service, and public education is a service with important democratic goals, such as preparing children for full citizenship, minimizing social inequities and promoting cultural unity.

It's not much better an analogy, but compare education, instead, to a service like public hospitals. No one in need is turned away, and yes, those who can afford to do so shop around. However, the patient (both consumer and product, like our students) cannot be cured at any location if destructive behaviors persist. Even with some of the magical pills our technology has created, radical changes in lifestyle are often required. Likewise, poverty, parental disengagement, behavior or discipline problems that many of our children bring into the schoolhouse cannot be quickly and permanently cured by shifting locale. (In Milwaukee, where vouchers are being tried, academic scores haven't improved and attrition remains high.)

So vouchers are not a miracle cure. And that is the third faulty premise, that any one new step, such as increased choice or vouchers, will suddenly remake education. The funding equity issue, raised by 40 of our districts, has yet to be ruled on in court. How much good would intra-district choice currently serve in some of the suing, impoverished counties such as Clarendon, Lee, Williamsburg or Jasper? How much help is a \$1,700 voucher to an impoverished family in a rural community without transportation or in an urban community where private schools cost \$6,000-plus a year? What happens then is not that parents are offered more choice, but that private schools are.

If our community, and our Legislature, want to consider choice, first the conversation has to get honest. It can be a legitimate discussion given public dissatisfaction with public schools and a universal desire by parents to do the best possible for their children.

But if we're going to talk about choice, what are we talking about? Increasing variety? Or resegregating? If our state and national constitutions forbid public money supporting church schools, why on Earth is our conversation about choice starting in forbidden territory?

In a state with limited funds, why begin with vouchers when encouragement for more magnet schools, school-within-a-school programs and inter- and intra-district transfers would offer more choices to more children at no extra cost? With limited funds, why not start small and emulate programs that work, like the language option in San Antonio or the controlled-choice program in Cambridge? Why take giant, expensive leaps into ideas, such as vouchers, that have barely been tested anywhere?

We have a summer to think this out. •

TRIBUTE TO ASTRONAUT RICK LINNEHAN

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the extraordinary accomplishments of Astronaut Rick Linnehan, who will be a mission specialist on the space shuttle *Columbia*, scheduled to leave Cape Canaveral, FL in June.

In 1975, Rick graduated from Pelham High School in Pelham, NH and proceeded to earn a bachelor of science degree in animal science and microbiology at the University of New Hampshire. Later, Rick denied his acceptance to the U.S. Air Force for pilot training and instead opted to attend the Ohio State University College of Medicine to earn his veterinary degree. While Rick's heartening desire to fly was temporarily delayed, his dream never died. Upon finishing his veterinary degree in 1985, Rick applied for NASA's astronaut training program. With the 1986 *Challenger* disaster stalling the program, Rick's dream of space flight was once again put on hold. During this time, Rick worked as a veterinarian before joining an internship with the Baltimore Zoo and Johns Hopkins University from 1986 to 1988. He then joined the military as a captain in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps, and ended up as chief clinical veterinarian with the Navy's Marine Mammal project in San Diego, CA.

Despite Rick's success in his field of study, he still held on to his dream of one day becoming an astronaut. In 1991, Rick again applied for the astronaut program and was selected along with 18 others out of nearly 3,000 applicants.

After 4 years of dedicated training, Rick will embark on his first journey into space this summer as a crewmember of NASA's Life Sciences and Micro-gravity Spacelab mission. During the 16-day flight, Rick will be part of a medical team that will be checking fellow crewmembers for the effects of prolonged space flight as part of NASA's testing program for the space station.

In memory of another New Hampshire astronaut, Christa McAuliffe,