

clear answer that will adequately address our concerns. The studies will continue, but some of our difficulty in answering questions about veteran populations has to do with our poor understanding of birth defects. This legislation will help with these issues by increasing our scientific understanding of birth defects and increasing current prevention efforts in all populations. Therefore, I am proud to cosponsor this important bill.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, unless someone else wishes to speak, I think the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts and I are prepared to yield back.

I express my sincere thanks to Senator KENNEDY, who has long been a champion in this area. His very excellent statement does indicate the tremendous and compelling nature of this problem. This is a problem, unfortunately, that affects 150,000 children a year, but it never seems to get up on the radar screen.

Now, the fact that we are going to pass this on a voice vote—we had 33 sponsors. Actually, I ask unanimous consent that Senator HUTCHISON be added as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. BOND. That brings it to 34. I hope that will make the point that we are serious about it. That this is the fifth year, Mr. President, this has got to be passed is an outrage; this is a bill that nobody objects to. I think anybody would think it is common sense. But it just gets crowded off the agenda. I do not intend to let it get crowded off.

I thank the Senator from Massachusetts, the distinguished chairman of the committee, the Senator from Vermont, and their staffs. We included as a substitute the measure as originally passed last year, and I know that we can count on the committee to insist upon it. I cannot believe we will fail this year once again to pass a measure which can do so much to reduce hardship and suffering and needless heartbreak throughout America.

Mr. President, I am prepared to yield back my time.

Is there anyone else seeking time?

Mr. President, I yield back my remaining time and would not ask for the yeas and nays per the previous agreement. I ask it be adopted by voice vote.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 371) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. KENNEDY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (S. 419), as amended, was passed.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. SANTORUM. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I will take only 1 minute and say a sincere thanks to Joe Pierle of my staff, who has worked on this measure and has had great cooperation with the Labor Committee. I also would thank previous staffers, Mark Hayes and Leanne Jerome, who have worked on this for 5 years now. And we hope this is the last time we have to do it.

Again, as I mentioned in my remarks, we very much appreciate and thank the leadership of the March of Dimes and the 3 million dedicated volunteers across this Nation.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Since this is the time for commendation, I would just, if I could, note that Governor BOND, then, in 1981, was effective in developing a long-range prevention, screening and health care initiative in response to Missouri's infant death rate being among the highest in the Nation, and in the 1989-90 period the Better Child Care Act that was developed here in legislation. Just looking through the Senator's achievements—and, as I mentioned earlier, his work on family and medical leave—it is a very clear indication of the Senator's very strong commitment to children. It is something all of us know here, but I think it is well worthwhile having that referenced at the time that we pass this very important piece of legislation.

Again, I commend him and will try to find, if we can, other ways of working on children's issues as well.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts. It is always a pleasure to work with him in the many, many areas in which we agree. It is not all of them, but when we do agree it is a real pleasure to work with a champion of children's health and well-being.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to be speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

1997 SPRING PAGES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell to a wonderful group of young men and women who have served as Senate pages over the last 5 months.

This particular group has served with great distinction and has done a marvelous job maintaining a high standard of excellence in both the academic arena and the contributions they make to the day-to-day operations of the Senate.

Page life is not easy. In fact, most people may not fully appreciate the rigorous nature of the page's work. On a typical day, pages rise early and are in school by 6:15 a.m. After spending several hours each morning in school, the pages then report to the Capitol to prepare the Senate Chamber for the day's session. It is the responsibility of the pages to ensure that each Senator's desk has a copy of: The Senate Legislative and Executive Calendars; the legislation under consideration; and the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, as well as any other document that a Senator might want to have available to colleagues.

Throughout the day, pages are called upon to perform a myriad of tasks. These tasks might include obtaining copies of documents for a Senator's use during debate; ensuring that copies of relevant documents are available for Senators and staff; running errands between the Capitol and the Senate Office Buildings, as well as providing assistance at the regularly scheduled conference luncheons.

Once the Senate has concluded business for the day, no matter what time, the pages return to the dorm and prepare for the next day's classes and Senate session and, we hope, get some much-needed sleep. Even with all of this, the Senate pages continually discharge their tasks efficiently and cheerfully.

Mr. President, it is my hope that we have given the pages some insight into the need for individuals to become involved in community and civic activities. The future of our Nation strongly depends on the generations who will