

The Gorton amendment would also fully by-pass State education agencies that in New Mexico help coordinate and monitor programs. Some people think block-granting education funds might give local school districts more control or more funding. The reality is that if we block grant these programs and bypass the our entire State education network, we actually put a huge administrative burden on school districts that very few will be able to handle. And in fact, only about 6 percent of Federal funding is taken off the top by States for administrative and technical assistance. It simply isn't cost-efficient for small districts to provide the specialized training or diverse course offerings that can be provided economically at a state and regional level.

It's also entirely unclear how New Mexico would fare under such an arrangement—there is no real way of telling from the amendment, which proposes an entirely untried approach that has never really been debated before. Funding levels would basically be determined by having each individual district conduct a self-reported census on its own of all the school-aged children in the district, and then weighting each district's funding according to each State's average per capita income level. However it's not too hard to guess that we won't do nearly as well as some may think, since current formulas already awarding money directly to districts based on individual community need would be scrapped—and many communities would be left to fend for themselves.

For these reasons, it is my hope that this ill-conceived amendment will be dropped in conference, and left out of the final bill that is made into law. If necessary, I would likely join my colleague Senator DODD in filibustering the fiscal year 1998 appropriations bill if the Gorton amendment is kept in the final version.

THE CRISIS IN SIERRA LEONE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to light recent events in Sierra Leone. This has been a challenging year for democracy on the African Continent, and no where has it been more seriously challenged than in this West African nation. On May 25, 1997, mutinous soldiers overthrew the democratically-elected government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Lawlessness reigns throughout the country, as jail doors throughout Sierra Leone have been thrown wide, and judges and lawyers who once worked to ensure the rule of law have been forced to flee the country for their lives.

Ironically, it was only a year and a half ago that Sierra Leone held its first multiparty elections in 30 years, resulting in the transfer of power from the military to the civilian government of President Kabbah. With the conclusion of Sierra Leone's 5-year civil war last November, Sierra Leone was hailed by many in Africa and the

West as a model for other African nations. The bloody military coup d'état that ousted President Kabbah almost 4 months ago is not only an affront to the expressed will of the people of Sierra Leone, but is a direct challenge to the cause of democracy in Africa. I strongly condemn this deplorable action, and call upon the military to return power to the democratically-elected government.

Now, as a result of the spring coup, the Sierra Leone is largely isolated from the world. Foreign embassies have closed their doors. Foreign aid has been suspended. There is virtually no humanitarian assistance to speak of left in Sierra Leone. Every day that the military junta remains in power more men, women and children needlessly fall victim to senseless violence.

Meanwhile, the military junta continues its rapacious looting of the country, oblivious to the dire consequences of its actions. Freetown, the capital city, without electricity, sits in darkness. Schools are closed. Most doctors have fled the country and hospitals have been looted. Those who have not already fled the country face both a dwindling food supply and the military leaders' seemingly abject disregard for human life.

Mr. President, Sierra Leone's West African neighbors have courageously taken the lead in responding to this humanitarian crisis. Upon the outbreak of the coup, regional leaders quickly condemned the coup and imposed regional sanctions. At a recent meeting of West African heads of state those who called for the use of force to end the standoff were resisted, and it was resolved to strengthen the sanctions regime already in place.

I strongly commend this decision. Although attempts at negotiation with the junta in July were unsuccessful, I strongly believe that the successful road to peace and stability in Sierra Leone leads to the negotiating table instead of the battlefield. Sanctions must be given more time to pressure the military junta to give up its quixotic lust for power.

While the United States was among the first to condemn the coup, I urge our Government to continue to seek every opportunity to publicly support democracy in Sierra Leone. Those who would subvert the will of the people in Sierra Leone should have no illusion about the United States position.

The United Nations has already added its voice to international condemnation of the military junta in Freetown. Moreover, the Secretary-General has just appointed a special envoy to Sierra Leone in an attempt to resolve the crisis. I applaud these efforts. I urge the administration to use its influence at the United Nations to initiate a multilateral effort to severely restrict the military junta's ability to purchase arms and fuel. At the same time, I believe it is necessary to try to find a way to address the humanitarian needs of the innocent.

Mr. President, these are very troubled days for democracy in Africa. Although democracy is beginning to blossom in other parts of the world since the end of the cold war, it has yet to firmly take root in the fertile soil of many African nations.

Mr. President, as the rest of the world moves toward integration into the global economy, embracing democracy and liberal economic principles, we must not leave Africa behind. It is imperative that we who have fought for our own freedom, and who enjoy the fruits that democracy offer, continue to support others in their fight for the same. I thank the chair and yield the floor.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

MR. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, September 10, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,410,105,013,993.47. (Five trillion, four hundred ten billion, one hundred five million, thirteen thousand, nine hundred ninety-three dollars and forty-seven cents)

One year ago, September 10, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,217,211,000,000. (Five trillion, two hundred seven billion, two hundred eleven million)

Five years ago, September 10, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,035,342,000,000. (Four trillion, thirty-five billion, three hundred forty-two million)

Ten years ago, September 10, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,355,393,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fifty-five billion, three hundred ninety-three million)

Fifteen years ago, September 10, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,110,901,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred ten billion, nine hundred one million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,299,204,013,993.47 (Four trillion, two hundred ninety-nine billion, two hundred four million, thirteen thousand, nine hundred ninety-three dollars and forty-seven cents) during the past 15 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1866. An act to continue favorable treatment for need-based educational aid under the antitrust laws.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills, previously received from the House of Representatives for the concurrence of the Senate, were read the first and second times by