

a result, most of the prisoners who are brought there spend most of their time in their cells. In fact, the only prisoners there have, first, committed a violent crime to get into prison, and second, broken a law once they were in prison. So these are a pretty tough bunch of characters.

Listen to what they do when they come to the Marion Federal Prison. The first year of their life there is very predictable. The first year of their life, out of a 24-hour day they will spend 23 hours of that day in a cell alone. They get 1 hour to come out of their cell, but with no socialization. They don't speak to anyone. The guard watches them as they walk around the yard. If they get through that year and they have not broken the rules, then they start bringing them out and giving them a chance to take a little course here on this, or go to a prison industry, or maybe eat in a room with some other prisoners.

They have a dramatic success rate. You can imagine this is pretty tough. It is one of our toughest Federal prisons.

As I talked to the warden and the officers there—and I want to give high praise to them because I think they run a very good operation—and talked to people in other prisons about who these prisoners are and whether they are likely to come back, there is one factor that just comes roaring through at you. That factor is this: If you invest in educating these prisoners while they are in prison, the likelihood that they will return to prison is cut dramatically. There is one in four chances that they will be recidivists, commit another crime and come back, if you educate them.

Unfortunately, we as a nation for whatever reason, budgetary or otherwise, have not made this commitment to education. We somehow think that we are punishing the prisoners by not making education classes available so that they can become literate, so that they can develop a skill. I am not so sure we are punishing the prisoners as much as we are punishing ourselves. These prisoners, most of them, will be back on the street and without an education and without basic skills, I am afraid they are destined to commit crimes. In fact, statistically we know they are, by a rate of 4 to 1, from those prisoners who pick up education and skills. We have not made that commitment in our prison system and we should. It is absolutely essential that we do it.

I went to the juvenile maximum prison in Illinois and met with the principal of the high school there. And I looked at all of the young men who were in the classrooms at this prison, and I said, "How is this working out?" He said, "Well, amazingly well. Most of these young men"—all men at this prison—"missed something in their basic education and became so frustrated that they basically dropped out; they stopped paying attention and fell behind." He said, "We test them to find

out what they missed. We go back," he said, "and fill in that gap and they come roaring forward toward a GED." To many of them, it is sad that it took this track for them to reach this fulfillment, but it is a fact and one that we should reflect on, how time spent in prison, if it is done constructively, can start to turn a life around, can make this a safer America and reduce the number of victims that we might see.

People think that in an age where all we talk about is balancing the budget many of us in Washington really don't reflect enough on some of the important social goals we should have in this country. I don't think there is anything more important than our children, and if it means making certain that we have quality day care for childhood development, if it means making certain that we are committed to a school day that reflects the reality of our families, if it means making certain that the kids who need someone to talk to have an opportunity, whether it is through Big Brother, Big Sister, the Boys and Girls Clubs, whatever it happens to be, if it means making certain that our prison system now starts to be more responsive to real human needs, I think those are things we as a Senate and a House should address.

I hope that next year, even in a busy election year, we have the time to do just that.

I want to address two other topics very quickly. I see my friend from Minnesota is here. I just want to address them very quickly because they are important and I hope somewhat timely.

NOMINATION OF BILL LANN LEE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, late this week we will have an executive committee meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee. We will return to a nomination made by President Clinton, one that I think has become a source of major controversy. The gentleman's name is Bill Lann Lee. Mr. Lee has been named by the President to be head of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

I had never met Bill Lann Lee until about a month ago when he came by my office. He made a very positive impression in the short time we had to speak to one another. Then I read his background and sat through his confirmation hearing, and I want to say that I hope Mr. Lee will get the chance he deserves.

Bill Lann Lee is the son of Chinese immigrants who came to this country to New York virtually penniless. His mother and father started a hand laundry. He and his brother, who is now a Baptist minister, worked in that laundry with their parents. His mother sat, as he said, in a front window of the laundry every day at a sewing machine. His father was back doing washing and ironing, refusing, incidentally, to teach his sons how to iron. That's the major skill in a hand laundry. He

didn't want his sons to know how to iron. He didn't want them to work there. He wanted them to think beyond the laundry.

When World War II started, Bill Lann Lee's father, who was 36 years old and could have escaped the draft just by claiming an age deferment but did not do it, volunteered and went in the Army Air Corps and had a very interesting experience because he came back from the war to his family and said, "That was a good thing to do, not just for the Nation but good for me."

For the first time, Bill Lee's father said, he was treated like an American, not like someone from China living in America. But when he came back from the war, as a returning veteran after World War II he found that job discrimination and housing discrimination was still very, very strong against Chinese-Americans. So he returned to his hand laundry but more determined than ever that his sons would have a better chance.

When Bill Lann Lee reached college age, it happened that Yale University decided they wanted to diversify their student body. They gave him a chance and said come to Yale and see if you can prove yourself. Well, he sure did. He graduated from Yale with high honors and then went to Columbia Law School and graduated with high honors.

With that kind of background, Bill Lee could have easily gone with a major law firm in New York, Los Angeles, wherever he happened to want to live, but he didn't. Bill Lee had learned a lesson in life, a lesson from his parents, and he decided that he wanted to fight discrimination. So for 23 years he has worked for the NAACP legal defense fund filing lawsuits when people are discriminated against.

The interesting thing about it is, when you think of these lawsuits, many times they are the most controversial lawsuits you can imagine. You know the headlines in the papers when they start talking about housing questions and school questions and questions involving gender or race or religious persuasion. Those are tough cases. But out of 200 cases that Bill Lee handled, only six ever went to trial. He was able to work out agreements in all the other cases.

In fact, one of his leading opponents, Richard Riordan, who is the Republican mayor of Los Angeles, wrote a letter about Bill Lee and said, "I was on the other side of a lawsuit, and I want to tell you something. We never would have settled it without Bill Lee there. He practices mainstream civil rights law."

I tell you, my friends, he is exactly the kind of person we need serving in the Department of Justice as the representative of the Office of Civil Rights. But I am sorry to report to you that in the last week some extreme political folks have set their sights to try to nail Bill Lee. They are trying to stop his appointment as the head of the

Civil Rights Division, and that is an unfortunate development. It is unfortunate because, first, all he is asking is to be judged fairly. That is all he has ever asked in his life. And second, the things they are saying about him really do stretch the truth.

One of the leading conservative columnists in America, George Will, a man whom I really respect not just because he was raised and went to school in Illinois but because I think he is a pretty bright fellow, wrote a column in the middle of October and said we should turn down Bill Lee as "a payback"—his words, "a payback"—because the Senate Democrats, when they controlled the Judiciary Committee, turned down one of the civil rights appointments of a Republican President 10 years ago.

Please, let us not do that to Mr. Lee. Let us not do that to the Senate. Let us give him his chance to stand on his own feet and have an opportunity to serve this country. And so I hope those of you who think that when the Senate goes home and the House adjourns our work is done will realize there are still many men and women waiting for confirmation and one of the most important and highest is Bill Lann Lee. He would be the highest-ranking Asian American ever appointed, and I am glad that the President has named him and I hope that we can find just two, just two Republican Senators on the Judiciary Committee who will join the Democrats in supporting his nomination.

CONSOLIDATION OF FEDERAL FOOD INSPECTION SERVICES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday I introduced with Senator TORRICELLI a bill, which I hope the Senator from Minnesota will join me in sponsoring, that would consolidate all of the food inspection services of the Federal Government in one independent agency.

Mr. President, 33 million Americans each year have some sort of a foodborne illness, and out of that number some 9,000 will die. You read about the cases, whether it is E. coli or salmonella. We have a good food inspection system but it can be much better. Our food inspection system evolved from Upton Sinclair's novel "The Jungle," when we decided the Federal Government had to step in and make sure the food, meat in particular, that came to our table was safe for our families. But now I am afraid we have gone overboard. We have 12 different Federal agencies involved in food inspection—12—6 in a major way.

I am joining with Congressman VIC FAZIO of California to consolidate these into one independent agency which will be guided by the best science in keeping food safe for Americans. I hope that this, too, will be part of our agenda next year when we return to Washington, DC. It is an important issue, not just for the industries that are affected

but for every family that wants to be certain when they buy that meat or poultry, fish or whatever product it might be, fruits and vegetables and beyond, it is safe for their family to consume.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Might I ask what the parliamentary situation is?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is the Chair's understanding we are in morning business. Senators are allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Before I start, I also wanted to find out how long we will be in morning business and whether or not there will be opportunities to introduce amendments to the fast-track bill?

In other words, I understand the amendment will be laid aside, but I want to know whether there are opportunities to introduce the amendments to fast track.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is a parliamentary issue that will be handled by the majority leader. We are not prepared to answer that question.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will just say in the Chamber and I will check with the leader, I do have an amendment on human rights that I would like to offer. We may or may not get to fast track, but this would be an opportunity I think to have the discussion.

WELFARE, HEALTH CARE, AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I wanted to take this time Sunday afternoon as we approach the end of this session to talk about some unfinished business for the Congress and I think for the Nation. I really was moved, and I do not usually use that word, by the eloquence of my colleague, Senator DURBIN, from Illinois. As I came in, I heard Senator DURBIN talk about children and talk about early years and talk about early childhood development and talk about whether or not we as a nation are going to make a commitment to affordable child care.

I want to talk about a really difficult issue for the Senate, for the Congress, and I think for the White House, and when we come back for me this will be one of the first items of business. I want us to have discussion and I would like to see whether or not we would be willing to perhaps take some important action.

I am talking about the bill that was passed which was called welfare reform. Mr. President, some of what was in that bill represented over \$50 billion

of cuts in the name of deficit reduction in the major food nutrition program in the country, food stamps—20 percent cut for families, most of them working families, most of the recipients children. And the other part was the cuts in benefits to legal immigrants, some of which has been corrected, some of which has not.

What worries me—and I have traveled the country and spent quite a bit of time in low-income communities. I haven't just focused on welfare, but I have been to the delta in Mississippi with Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON; I have been to eastern Kentucky, to Letcher County, Whitesburg, KY; I have been to Chicago in housing projects, and, of course, I have been in Minnesota, both urban and rural, and I have been to L.A., East L.A., and Watts. One of the things that worries me is that I see in many articles and too much of the media coverage and certainly too much of what I hear from both Democrats and Republicans in Washington that welfare reform has been a success as defined by reduction of caseload. Any Democrat, any Republican, or any fool can knock people off the welfare rolls. That has nothing to do with reform. The only way reform can be defined is not by reduction of caseload but by reduction of poverty. Are these families, in the main headed by women and children, better off?

I heard my colleague from Illinois talk about child care, and if my colleague was here I would tell him about some just very emotional experiences that I have had, meeting with some of the women who have now been told they are to work, and they work. But their concern is about what happens to their children. You know, just because they are poor, just because they are welfare mothers, doesn't make them, or doesn't make their children, any less worthy, any less important.

In Los Angeles, for example, in L.A., one city, they have a waiting list of 30,000 families for affordable child care. That is before the welfare bill. The question I ask colleagues is, where are these children? Fine, the mothers are now working. Do we know where the children are? Where are they? Who is taking care of them? Is it developmental child care? Is it just custodial? Or are they even in harm's way? We don't know. But we should know. We passed the legislation.

I met a woman, and this story of this one mother unfortunately is the story of other mothers. She said to me, "I want to work." By the way, almost all the people I meet want to work. That's a big thing to people in our country, to be able to work and make a decent wage and support your family. And also to be able to give your children the care you know they need and deserve. But I am meeting some of these mothers. We told them we would sort of delegate this to the States and they would work.

Here is what they say to me, what this one mother in L.A. said. I then visited actually where she lived, public