SENATE RESOLUTION 189—HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Mr. TORRICELLI (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. SNOWE, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. DASCHLE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 189

Whereas 1998 will mark the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement in the United States, a valiant civil rights movement that began in 1848 when the Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York;

Whereas the Declaration of Sentiments, the document issued by the Women's Rights Convention, is a strong reflection of this country's commitment to liberty and personal freedom;

Whereas the Women's Rights Movement has had an irreversible effect on the opportunities open to women in all areas of life, including business, education, religion, the arts, science, and athletics;

Whereas the history surrounding the fight for women's equality over the past century and a half is still greatly unknown and unrecognized by many of our Nation's citizens and demands more acknowledgment in our children's curriculum;

Whereas there is an ever-increasing need for both women and men to share in the fundamental responsibilities of our national life with a full and equal participation in society; and

Whereas March 1998, is National Women's History Month, celebrated with the theme of ''Living the Legacy of Women's Rights'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and celebrates 1998 as the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement and March 1998 as National Women's History Month under the theme ''Living the Legacy of Women's Rights''; and

(2) calls on educators, government officials, and businesses to celebrate the legacy of the Women's Rights Movement and remember the struggle that began 150 years ago.

SENATE RESOLUTION 190—REGARDING REDUCTIONS IN CLASS SIZE

Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources:

S. RES. 190

Whereas long-range projections by the Bureau of the Census indicate a rising number of births, rising to 4,200,000 in 2010 and 4,600,000 in 2020;

Whereas in the coming years the population of school-aged children is expected to increase to a record 52,200,000;

Whereas academic achievement for all students is one of our Nation's highest priorities;

Whereas increased enrollments have resulted in a further increase of the average class size;

Whereas research has shown that children in small classes in the earliest grades achieve better academically than the peers of such children in larger classes;

Whereas research has shown substantial lasting benefits for children who were in small classes during the earliest grades;

Whereas smaller classes allow students to receive more individual attention from their teachers, and reduce teachers' burden of managing large numbers of students and the other work of the teachers; and

Whereas several States have been forward thinking in trying to address this classroom size problem: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) experiments in reducing class size have had an effect on academic achievement in the earliest grades; and

(2) the Senate should seek to assist States in the efforts of States to reduce class size and access the benefits of such a reduction.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a Senate resolution regarding smaller classes in our public schools.

This resolution expresses the Senate's strong sense that experiments in reducing class size in the earliest grades demonstrate a proven educational benefit. Accordingly, the Senate should assist States in their efforts to reduce class size and assess the benefits of such reductions.

Mr. President, yesterday I visited the Parkview Elementary School in Cudahy, a community near Milwaukee, where I had the chance to read Dr. Seuss' classic children's story, ''Green Eggs and Ham,'' to a group of 15 first-grade students. It was exciting to watch their faces come alive with curiosity as they listened.

Parkview Elementary is a special school because it is one of 30 Wisconsin schools in 21 school districts that are participating in the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education program, or the SAGE program. It is a very popular pilot program and, according to an independent evaluation being conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's, Center for Urban Initiatives and Research, it's been very effective at reducing the size of elementary school classes. SAGE is a very appropriate acronym, for a sage is a teacher who imparts knowledge and wisdom through direct interaction with his or her students, and the SAGE program in Wisconsin is trying to give students and teachers more opportunities to interact directly, which improves learning.

SAGE is a pilot program created by the Wisconsin legislature in 1995. The specific objective of the program is to improve student achievement through four reform strategies: (1) reducing student/teacher ratios to a maximum of 15-to-1, which was the size of the first-grade class I visited yesterday; (2) increasing cooperation between schools and their surrounding communities; (3) implementing a rigorous academic curriculum stressing achievement; and, finally, (4) improving staff development and evaluation. A modest amount of state aid is available to schools who adopt the SAGE program, which currently covers kindergarten through the second grade, and which is scheduled to be expanded to cover third grade in the near future.

SAGE has proven to be very popular with parents, teachers, school administrators and students. Reports from Wisconsin educators indicate improvements in classroom environment and academic performance in schools participating in this program. A December 1997 study found that first-graders participating in SAGE scored higher on standardized tests than other students in comparison schools. The SAGE program has demonstrated again what we know instinctively: students in smaller classes benefit from more attention from teachers, and teachers with fewer pupils will have more time and energy to devote to their jobs. Class size has been proven to be one of the crucial factors in the quality of a child's education, along with teacher quality and parental involvement.

The SAGE program and this resolution will reinforce what should be good, common sense. If you have smaller classes, children get more attention from teachers, and it stands to reason that more attention will translate into more learning.

Mr. President, I think the Wisconsin experience with this kind of common-sense educational reform is instructive.

That is why, last fall, I included an amendment to the Labor and Health and Human Services Departments' 1998 appropriation bill requiring the Department of Education to study the costs and benefits of reducing class size in the earliest grades. My amendment also required the Department to prepare cost estimates of growing enrollments and to follow-up with policy recommendations. In addition, I wrote earlier this year to President Clinton in January requesting that he make reducing class size a priority in his FY 99 education budget. I was pleased that the President's FY 99 budget includes an initiative to help schools provide small classes with qualified teachers in the early grades. Mr. President, in an effort to spread the message of the successful SAGE pilot program, I recently invited Education Secretary Richard Riley to come to Wisconsin for a tour of several SAGE schools.

And, finally, most recently, I have written to the chairman and ranking member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee requesting that the committee hold a hearing to examine the options available to schools as they plan for smaller class size with higher anticipated student enrollment looming.

A recent Department of Education report states that this year's elementary and secondary student enrollment will soon be at record levels. School districts are going to need to adapt to these increases while many of them rightly will be investing as much as they can in the creation of smaller classes for early elementary students.

Addressing the problem of increasing enrollment and the desire to reduce class size presents a great challenge to our communities, our States and our Nation. As I say that, I want to be very