

other city in America, including kids whose opportunities seem severely limited, the chance to be part of the new high-tech economy.

Our young people have what it takes to be valuable employees in our high-tech age. But our educational system is not giving them the skills they need to succeed. The National Research Council estimates that three quarters of American high school graduates would fail a college freshman math or engineering course. Most don't even try. Only 12 percent of 1994 college graduates earned degrees in technical fields.

This is not acceptable. In a highly advanced economy like ours we cannot continue to function without highly skilled workers. And our workers cannot continue to prosper unless our educational system gives them the skills they need to succeed.

To begin, I propose we invest \$1 billion per year, the balance of the surplus, to annually provide at least 100,000 more Americans with scholarships for study in scientific and technical areas. Let's start training unemployed Americans in skills needed in the information technology industry. Combined with approaches to increase parental choice in determining their children's schooling and to move resources out of Washington and back to the school districts, local school boards and parents, I believe that this investment can increase the skill levels of our workers, to everyone's benefit.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Well, these are some of the ideas I am considering, one possible blueprint for our entry into the age of surplus.

In closing let me say I believe we have a golden opportunity. As we stand on the edge of a new century, possibilities are opening up for all Americans. We remain the world's richest nation, and we are richer than we have ever been. Now, after decades of overtaxing and overspending, Washington finally has managed to balance the budget and, provided we institute policies that make sense, soon will produce a surplus.

But this opportunity will not be with us forever. If we do not plan out how we should use the impending surplus it will disappear into more "Washington-knows-best" programs that will simply trap more Americans into lives of dependency and desperation.

But if we are creative we can forge a new path. We can move forward, with optimism, secure in the knowledge that our people want opportunity, not handouts, that our economy can continue to produce prosperity, if only we will let it, and that the entrepreneurial spirit remains alive in America.

We can move toward growth and prosperity for the next century if we are willing to use the surplus as a tool to increase savings and investment, to get the Social Security system back on a sound footing through individual choice, to overhaul our tax system, giving greater control over their money back to our taxpayers, and to rebuild the infrastructure and human capital so crucial to our economy.

Responsible, limited government, combined with the spirit of the American people, can lead us into a new century of unprecedented growth and opportunity, in which the American dream can become a reality for everyone fortunate enough to be an American.

I would welcome your input, here and now or in the future, whether regarding these principles or regarding the reforms I have talked about today. I hope that we will have a chance to discuss these issues, which will be so much a part of public debate in Washington in the coming months, and I thank you for having me speak today.●

CONFIRMATION OF RICHARD YOUNG

● Mr. COATS. Mr. President, yesterday the senate voted to confirm Judge Richard Young to be U.S. district judge for the southern district of Indiana. I rise today to express my strong support for the senate's actions. Judge Young has distinguished himself both professionally and in community service, and it is my honor to commend him to the senate as an excellent choice for the federal bench.

Judge Young has earned an outstanding reputation through his eight years as Vanderburgh circuit court judge, and as a trial attorney for 10 years before that. He has broad legal background, both in his job as judge, and in professional organizations. Currently a member of the board of directors of the Indiana judicial conference, Judge Young also is the former president of the Evansville Bar Association. In addition, it is significant to note that Judge Young has worked in the Department of Justice, and has served as a public defender in Vanderburgh county.

During his time as judge, Judge Young has shown himself to be a diligent worker, handling in a recent year 79 jury trials.

However, it is not only Judge Young's extensive experience and excellent work ethic that make me confident he will bring sound, solid hoosier values to the federal bench. Judge Young also has a proven record of dedication to community service. Before he took the bench, Judge Young served on the board of trustees of the museum of arts and science of the community foundation, and the community corrections advisory board. Judge young has also served in the Easter Seals Society and has had a role in supporting the Evansville rehabilitation center.

Clearly, Judge Young is a dedicated practitioner of jurisprudence and dedicated servant of his community. I am confident he will be an excellent judge and a credit to the state of Indiana, and it is for this reason I offer my support of his nomination to the federal bench.●

THE READING EXCELLENCE ACT

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, over the weekend, President Clinton used his radio address to call for Senate action on the Reading Excellence Act which seeks to address our Nation's literacy crisis. Under the leadership of House Education and Workforce chairman, BILL GOODLING, this bill passed the other body unanimously in November 1997. I have introduced similar legislation in the Senate as S. 1596. The Reading Excellence Act is also a key component of the Senate Republican leadership's education package, the Better Opportunities for Our Kids and Schools Act, or "BOOKS". While I am pleased that the President has urged passage of our legislation, it

should be clear to everyone that our approach represents a clear contrast to the literacy initiative the President had initially proposed. Having said that, we welcome President Clinton to real education reform—you've come a long way.

We clearly have a literacy crisis in this Nation when four out of 10 of our third-graders can't read. Without basic reading skills, many of these children will be shut out of the workforce of the 21st century. According to the 1993 National Audit Literacy Survey, more than 40 million Americans cannot read a phone book, menu or the directions on a medicine bottle. Those who can't learn to read are not only less likely to get a good job, they are disproportionately represented in the ranks of the unemployed and the homeless. Consider the fact that 75 percent of unemployed adults, 33 percent of mothers on welfare, 85 percent of juveniles appearing in court and 60 percent of prison inmates are illiterate.

Although over \$8 billion is spent by the Federal Government each year to promote literacy, little progress has been made. Last year, President Clinton recognized this problem, but his "America Reads" proposal offered more of the same. Under the President's plan, the government would recruit one million volunteers to teach reading, under the direction of AmeriCorps. Rather than relying on a million untrained volunteers to teach reading to our young children, we offered a better approach which the President has now endorsed: Let's help our reading teachers do a better job. Our legislation, the Reading Excellence Act, would accomplish the following:

First, our bill would focus on training teachers to teach reading—less than 10 percent of our teachers have received formal instruction on how to teach reading. Moreover, we would ensure that teachers are taught in methods proven by sound scientific research to be effective, such as phonics.

Second, the Reading Excellence Act authorizes grants for extra tutorial assistance for at-risk kids. Parents with children experiencing reading difficulties could apply for funds to purchase extra help from a list of providers supplied by their school.

Third, our bill provides literacy assistance for parents so they can be their children's first and most important teacher. It also ensures that 95% of the literacy funds are driven to the classroom where they will help kids the most.

In last year's appropriations process, \$210 million was appropriated for a literacy program, contingent on passage of an authorization bill by July 1, 1998. As I stated, the House has already unanimously passed this bill. It is now up to the Senate to act on similar legislation before the schools let out for summer. The Reading Excellence Act will provide today's children the tools to be successful in tomorrow's workforce. Helping to ensure every child can