

gave people the information they needed to assess the situation and make decisions based on facts and not rumors. I can't tell you how important it is to have facts at a time like this, when your world is being turned upside down, and anything, regardless of how outrageous it may sound, could be true.

When the history books are written about the Grand Forks fire and flood of 1997, there will be many heroes. This was, in fact, a season of heroes in North Dakota; from the individuals who acted heroically to save lives and property, to all the men and women of the media who faced and passed similar tests.

Of all the heroes, however, none will shine brighter than the Grand Forks Herald, which never missed an edition during the disaster. From the parent company right on through to the local management, administrative staff, news, production and delivery staff; all played a key role in holding the community together. All worked, despite enormous odds and tremendous obstacles, to be sure that as their world turned on its head, one thing would not change: North Dakotans could still pick up the Grand Forks Herald every morning and read the facts.

The Grand Forks Herald has been honored with the most prestigious award in journalism and it is a well-deserved honor. I am immensely proud of what they did and as a North Dakotan, I am also grateful for the service they provided to Grand Forks and our state at their most trying hour.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, if the distinguished Senator from North Dakota will yield for just a moment, I would like to be added as a cosponsor. I commend both Senators from North Dakota for the resolution and will certainly want to work with them to see that it will be adopted unanimously.

As he has noted, the Grand Forks journalistic community stood proud. Grand Forks, I think, perhaps more than anybody else, felt the full force of the natural disasters last year. For this paper to be so recognized, for it to have the opportunity to receive international recognition as a result of their effort is certainly appropriate and ought to be applauded. While many other newspapers did not win the Pulitzer Prize, I think it goes without saying that there are other newspaper efforts that were made last year that also deserve recognition for the tremendous work they did under very, very difficult circumstances.

Again, I commend the Senator from North Dakota for his effort. I hope we adopt the resolution. I certainly congratulate the newspaper.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask the Senator from North Dakota if he will add my name as a cosponsor. I am a journalism graduate. I was fas-

cinated with this Pulitzer award. I am pleased he is recognizing them in this manner.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank my colleagues.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senator DASCHLE and Senator COVERDELL as original cosponsors of the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair also requests that the junior Senator from Nebraska be added to that august list.

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent to add the junior Senator from Nebraska as well, Senator HAGEL, as an original cosponsor.

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

Mr. CONRAD. We will leave it open for other Senators that might also wish to cosponsor it.

Let me just say that the publisher, Mike Maidenberg, and the editor, Mike Jacobs, did truly a remarkable job in having this newspaper produced every single day even though their building was destroyed by flood and fire, and to produce a remarkable product that has won this prestigious Pulitzer Prize. We are very, very proud of what they have done, of what they have done to help hold that community together, and we are especially proud that it bring home this remarkable honor that I think all of us would say is absolutely justified.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate minority leader.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DASCHLE. I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside and I be permitted to speak on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HUTCHISON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I look forward to the opportunity that we now have today and tomorrow to debate one of the most important issues facing our country. I applaud all of those involved, Senator COVERDELL, and others on our side, who have dedicated themselves to finding solutions.

I must say that while we offer solutions and while we mutually recognize the importance of the issue, I do not really know of an issue that probably divides us more philosophically at this point than does education.

Our Republican colleagues, in large measure, believe there is not a role at the Federal level for educational priorities, that it really is an issue that ought to be left to the local level, to public school districts, and to others.

Democrats, on the other hand, believe that there ought to be a role for every level of government, that the people of the United States have an interest and a need to ensure that our educational priorities and our edu-

cational challenges are met with every tool available to us in order to be able to compete effectively in the information age.

So that difference in philosophical approach brings us to the point where we are today, with two very different proposals on how we might best address education. One provides what I would describe as a minimal tax reduction—\$7 per tax return if your children are in public school and about \$37 if your children are in private school—to the parents of children attending school today, a \$1.6 billion plan that does not go very far when you simply spread it out over the many, many families in America who have children in public and private elementary and secondary school today. The other is our approach which allows a more targeted investment in some of the very specific needs that we have in education today.

I do not think there is much difference of opinion with regard to the recognition that a strong public education system is key to America's future. I would even argue that most of our Republican colleagues would share that view even though they are more likely to be more supportive, it appears, of private educational approaches than public.

Economic prosperity, our position as a world leader, our very democracy all depend on providing educational opportunity to children. We know that. We also know that in a new global information economy, knowledge and work force skills have become an extremely important factor in economic growth.

So at the dawn of the global information economy, it is appropriate to give opportunities to communities facing conflicting pressures from rising enrollments and aging infrastructure and demands by taxpayers for State and local relief. It is appropriate to find ways in which to provide communities with new tools to manage these conflicting pressures. We recognize that managing these pressures better would be good for society, good for the economy, and good for national security.

We have heard a lot about what is wrong with public education. For example, our 12th graders are behind the rest of the world in math and science. We all agree that is unacceptable. But there are some signs of progress. Our fourth graders are well above the average in mathematics and near the top in science.

Innovative programs are being implemented around the country today. Chicago has implemented a broad, districtwide reform program that ends social promotions, that raises standards, and that provides extra help through weekend and summer school programs. Parents and other individuals and communities all over the country are more involved in many aspects of schools than they have ever been before. So there are some good signs. Schools in low-income neighborhoods in New York

and other places are implementing programs like Success for All and are getting some dramatic results.

The bottom line is that, with all of the effort underway at the local level, do we abandon our public schools? Do we abandon the partnership that the people of the United States have had in ensuring, from a national perspective, that our public schools have the opportunities to meet the challenges of the information age? Do we all agree that it should be a fundamental right that all children have the opportunity to develop their God-given talents, that our country's future depends on it? I hope we can.

We all know the reality. The reality is that student enrollment is at a record level and expected to grow dramatically over the next decade. The second reality is that the teacher core is aging; we may not be able to keep up in recruiting what needs there will be in every classroom in the country—a qualified teacher—to keep student-teacher ratios somewhere close to where they are today. The reality is that schools will need to hire more than 2 million new teachers over the next decade.

The reality is that school buildings are aging. The reality is that the General Accounting Office has now reported to the U.S. Senate and to the American people that there is a \$112 billion backlog in construction funding needed to address deteriorating buildings—\$112 billion. And this does not include funds to provide additional classrooms for enrollment growth, reduce class sizes, or put more technology in classrooms. This just says, given where we are right now, given the current enrollment—let us not talk about increases in enrollment, let us not talk about what it is going to take to put technology in classes—given current enrollment, we have a \$112 billion backlog in construction.

We talk about infrastructure backlogs. We talk about the deficits we have—our trade deficit, our infrastructure deficit in highways and bridges and roads, the deficit that we have had for so long with regard to our budget—now fortunately resolved, at least for now—but could there be a more important deficit for which this country needs to be concerned than the deficit we have in our schools and in the educational system that directly affects the quality of education our students get?

Addressing these problems demands a cooperative and concerted effort at every level of government. I have too many communities in rural South Dakota that recognize everything I have said. But they say to me directly, "We simply can't acquire the resources necessary to meet the challenges that we know are out there. And, frankly, we don't know what we're going to do." They tell us that this is a national concern and ought to be addressed as a national issue. If it is addressed as a national issue, the people of the United

States have to be concerted in their effort to find ways to deal with these problems more effectively.

The American people want action. You name the poll, conservative or liberal—the polls will tell us that education is one of the highest priorities in our country today. Only 1 percent of the Federal budget is spent on primary and secondary education, and that includes special education—1 percent.

So, Madam President, it isn't that we are breaking the budget with what we spend. It isn't that we simply have taken money away from other things to put in education. When you have a \$112 billion deficit on just infrastructure for education, and are only spending 1 percent of the budget, the question is, what should we do? What opportunities can be afforded to address this in a more balanced and more prudent way?

As we contended with that question over some period of time and with virtual unanimity, Democratic Senators have introduced S. 1708, the bill we call the RESULTS Act, to show what we think should be done to improve public education. Our bill does a number of things, and I want to outline them very briefly.

First, it reduces the class size in the early grades and helps communities hire 100,000 qualified teachers. We have already seen what hiring more cops does in neighborhoods. I was just in South Dakota for virtually 2 weeks, and I was amazed at the reports that I am getting, at the tremendous effect community police have had. We have added new community police to the work force in so many communities in my State. If it is so good for preventing crime and dealing with crime in neighborhoods, what could be better than to say we have also got to do it in education? We have to find a way to ensure that this dramatic shortage we are going to have with teachers all over the country can be addressed in an effective way.

Let's hire 100,000 qualified teachers over the next couple of years. Once we have hired those teachers, the second thing we do is to say let's build and modernize 5,000 public schools. We have a series of charts, that I will get to in a minute, that help us address these things. But let's modernize some schools, 5,000 of them; set that as our goal.

Let's provide after-school care for half a million children. Let's provide more computers for classrooms across the country and training for teachers who were just hired. Let's establish an educational opportunity grant program for high poverty urban and rural areas that are serious about bringing about real reform.

I was never so pleased as when I saw this morning in the Washington Post where a school in Fairfax County has decided to use the multimillion-dollar investment they have, 12 months a year, to improve education in ways they are not doing today. The article

went on to say that there are about 2,700 schools around the country that are doing the same thing. I say it is about time.

Unfortunately, our Republican colleagues have chosen not to address those issues. They don't deal with these problems. The Republican budget resolution states explicitly that no funding for any of the President's education initiatives shall be authorized—that's explicitly in the budget. It provides \$2 billion less than what the President has proposed for education and training in next year's budget. It actually denies help to reduce class sizes and hire the 100,000 teachers I mentioned a moment ago. It actually denies help to communities to build or modernize public schools. It denies additional after-school care to help children learn more and reduce juvenile crime. It denies the incentive to help high poverty communities adopt serious comprehensive reform.

Instead, unfortunately, my colleagues continue to insist that vouchers to private schools and block grant proposals that absolutely remove any opportunity for the entire country to be engaged in a national investment in education be provided. In short, they do virtually nothing, to improve public education today.

I reiterate, you can make the case that all this ought to be done at the local level. You can make the case that somehow Rochford and Ipswich and Rosholt and Warner and Buffalo and Faith and Wall, SD, don't need any help from the people of the United States as they try to figure out ways in which to address the incredible array of problems that they have. But we are not willing to admit that. We believe strongly that we have to have a comprehensive agenda in education. We have to address this terrible problem we have in infrastructure. We have to recognize that this teacher shortage is real. We have to find ways with which to acknowledge the information age and access better technical innovation. We can do that. We can pass the RESULTS Act. I hope we will do that.

Of all the things I hope we can talk about in some detail, I want to focus on one of those today, with the hope that maybe we can come back and address some of the others at another time. I want to talk briefly about this matter of infrastructure, because I do believe that when it comes to the array of priorities we have, perhaps the biggest concern I have right now, as we look at the challenges we face, is infrastructure.

We are proposing in our legislation—and we will offer an amendment tomorrow—to provide interest-free school modernization bonds to improve public education across the country. It is a new, cost-effective financing option for communities. And I emphasize "option." There are no mandates. Schools don't have to use this. But as they contemplate whether or not they can afford a new school, a new facility, modernization, they will now have the

knowledge, if this legislation passes, that we will assist them, we will reduce their tax load, we will reduce the amount of exposure they have as they make their commitments. We will do that with them. So this is really a tax reduction effort of a different kind.

The way we do it is pretty simple. We simply say, if you make a commitment to new infrastructure, we are going to help you make it more cost effective. We will make it more cost efficient, more palatable from a cost point of view, by paying the interest. You pay the principal; we will pay the interest. The interest is sometimes up to half of the overall cost.

The overall bonding authority is about \$22 billion. To take a typical scenario where you have conventional bond financing, a \$15 million project would require an additional \$7.5 million of interest. In this typical project, we would be paying \$7.5 million, or about one-third, as a national commitment and the local communities would pay \$15 million. So the interest-free school modernization effort would have a profound effect on a local decision.

Now, as most people know, local decisions involving bond issues sometimes require a 60 percent vote, and in many cases even a 67 percent vote, or two-thirds, is required. I can't tell you how many times bond issues in South Dakota have failed on the basis of 1 percent or 2 percent. An overwhelming majority have passed them, but they have fallen short of the 60 or 67 percent required in order to meet the local legal requirements. I am convinced this would put us over the top in many of those cases.

Why do we even worry about it? Why should we be concerned about whether the bond issues go over the top? This chart lays it out fairly well: 74 percent of the Nation's public schools today are more than 25 years old; nearly a third are more than 50 years old.

We have modern businesses, modern Senate office buildings, and we have schools in which our children are expected to learn that are today more than 50 years old. Now, they don't have the resources we have in the U.S. Capitol, a building that is 200 years old. If they did, I would not be concerned. It isn't the age of the buildings, if they are well built, but what kind of buildings are they? Well, this second line answers that question:

Fourteen million kids today are in schools needing major renovation or replacement—14 million; 12 million children are in schools with leaking roofs and/or ineffective or defective plumbing; 10 million kids are in schools with inadequate lighting; 7 million kids are in schools with safety code violations, such as the presence of asbestos, lead paint, and an array of other environmental problems.

We want our kids to learn and we say that education is a priority. We say we are willing to make the investment. We say that there can't be anything more important than our children. But then

we tell our children that we want you to learn in a building that is out of date, that needs renovation, that may have toxic chemicals in the classroom, that has poor lighting and, God forbid, poor plumbing. But we want you to learn because you are important to us.

The real problem is that, in the future, this is going to be exacerbated dramatically. Public school enrollment will increase by 13 percent in the next 10 years. And 6,000 new schools are going to need to be built at an estimated cost of \$73 billion just to maintain current class size, just to say that if we are going to keep the 25-to-1 student-teacher ratio, we have to build 6,000 new schools. The question comes, if we need a 60 or 67 percent vote at a local level and we say it is all your responsibility, we don't care whether you have the resources or not, this just isn't going to happen, Madam President. Forty-five percent of the school districts are already using 3,621 trailers and makeshift classrooms. If you have not been in one of those classrooms when it is 85 degrees outside, I invite you to participate. It is as dramatic a lesson in the extraordinary problems our teachers and students are facing as they try to learn as anything I have seen.

The enrollment here is pretty clear. All of the blue we see on this map shows where we see dramatic increases in enrollment. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that in every one of those States we have some very serious educational infrastructure problems that we have to address.

Madam President, it really comes down to this. State and local taxes as a share of income have already risen 10 percent in the past two decades. The estimated \$112 billion backlog and the \$73 billion cost of new schools will place an increasing burden on State and local taxpayers, even though these taxes have gone up. By dramatically cutting the cost of school repairs and construction to communities, interest-free bonds will provide badly needed property and sales tax relief to working families.

This isn't just an education proposal, this is a tax relief proposal. If you think property taxes are too high, if you think local taxes are too high, then you are going to want to support this amendment because this is a way to reduce local property taxes, local taxes to fund the educational demands that we are going to have in virtually every State in the country.

The State courts are already mandating new infrastructure. They are requiring that we remedy the financing inequities. Courts in 11 States have ruled that the school financing systems are unconstitutional. In nearly every case, States have complied by raising property or sales taxes to finance school improvements.

What does that tell you if the courts are already mandating what we are trying to do voluntarily? They are saying that you have to find a better way

to finance schools because what you have is not working. Litigation is pending in 16 other States already.

Madam President, it is pretty simple. Americans have looked at this proposal. Three-fourths of the voters in this country—75 percent—favor Federal aid to communities for school repair and modernization. Fifty percent of the voters consider overcrowded schools a major problem. Almost 80 percent believe public school renovation and modernization is a higher Federal priority than highway construction. I supported the highway bill, and I continue to do so. I think it was a good piece of legislation. But if we are going to make a commitment to highway infrastructure and transportation infrastructure in this country, where is the same enthusiasm for ensuring that we have the educational infrastructure?

Madam President, 73 percent of Republicans and 65 percent of independents strongly support a Federal commitment, a commitment by the people of the United States, to education and infrastructure modernization. We will have an opportunity to have more debate and further discussion and consideration of these Democratic proposals. I do hope that, as these votes are presented to our body tomorrow, we will see the wisdom of making these investments, and that we will put our money where our mouth is when we make the commitment and tell our children that we are going to help you be educated, that you are our highest priority, that you truly deserve to have the kind of opportunities to learn in an environment that is conducive to learning. That is what this is about. I just hope our colleagues will weigh it carefully and support these Democratic amendments as they are offered during this debate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, it is my understanding that there are no more amendments that are ready for offering this evening. So, very shortly, we will move to closure.

I did want to take a minute or two to reiterate that the proposal currently before the body that is authored by myself on this side of the aisle, and Senator TORRICELLI on their side of the aisle, is a bipartisan effort to bring about substantial change in education.

The minority leader and I have a different view on the data coming out of our elementary schools. He suggested that we are doing pretty well in math among fourth graders, and near the top in science. I just haven't seen any data that suggests that. The data I am seeing suggests that only 4 out of 10 students in our big city schools are able to pass a basic exam. If you lump them all together, it only gets up to 6 out of 10, which is hardly something that America can count on to get ready for the new century.

The Senator from South Dakota spent considerable time talking about the school construction proposal. I want to point out that there is a school construction proposal offered by Senator GRAHAM of Florida that is in the proposal that is on the floor. It loosens, or makes more easy, the opportunity to finance school construction. It is not nearly as expensive as the proposal being talked about here.

Just to take a moment or two, the proposal that was just outlined by the minority leader does raise some questions. I know in my State—I don't know about the State of the chair—billions of dollars are already being spent to build schools, to modernize schools, and that is because it is a State responsibility.

As I was listening to the presentation, it was sort of running through my mind, well, are we headed toward a situation where those States that accepted their responsibility and built their schools and kept them modern are now going to have to subsidize States that have not? It is a curious question. As we have time to debate their proposal, I am sure it will clarify itself somewhat. But it certainly raises a question in my mind. I would not want a situation to occur where Georgia had fulfilled its responsibilities and some other State didn't, so now we are going to step in with a new proposal to make right something that perhaps is not.

I think you have to remember that construction has traditionally been a State responsibility. However, Senator GRAHAM's proposal does broaden the ability and make it more accessible for States to construct in this case immediately some 500 schools across the Nation.

Madam President, I want to clarify one statement just before we yield for the unanimous consent requests.

The minority leader said that our side of the aisle did nothing for public education. That is a pretty far-reaching statement considering that the proposal in front of us would help 14 million families finance education, 10 million of which are in public education, that would accumulate in the first 5 years \$5 billion of new resources, \$2.5 billion of which would go to support public schools. It would help 21 States plus 17 additional States that are considering prepaid tuition. It would help employers in the continuing education of 1 million employees. It would help 250,000 graduate students and would provide up to \$3 billion in school construction over the next 5 years—public school construction.

I not only consider that something; I consider that a lot, an enormous beginning in making the Federal Government a good partner in terms of improving education in our country—public, private, home, wherever it is occurring.

Tomorrow we will have an opportunity to debate an amendment offered by the Senator from Washington that

removes the Federal constriction, or constraints, or oversight on about \$15 billion, that would allow local school districts to hire teachers, build schools, provide buses, or whatever the Governors of those States and local communities thought necessary. It wouldn't have the Federal mantra over it that says you only get these benefits if you do these things the way we say. That will be an interesting debate that we will get into tomorrow.

AMENDMENT NO. 2290

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the second-degree amendment No. 2290 be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The Amendment (No. 2290) was agreed to.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately following the 10 a.m. vote on Tuesday relating to the international shipping bill, there be 4 minutes equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the motion to table the Kennedy amendment No. 2289 to House Resolution 2646, the Coverdell A+ education bill.

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

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday the Senate proceed to a vote on or in relation to the Glenn amendment No. 2017, to be followed by a vote on or in relation to the Mack-D'Amato amendment No. 2288, as amended.

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

Mr. COVERDELL. I further ask unanimous consent that no amendments be in order to the above amendments; and, finally, that prior to each of those scheduled at 2:15 there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

PROTECTING PUBLIC SAFETY BY PREVENTING EXCAVATION DAMAGE

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, recently, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) held a public meeting in Washington, D.C. to discuss the findings of a comprehensive study it conducted to assess the safety initiatives undertaken by industry and government and private organizations to prevent excavation damage to under-

ground pipelines. As a result of the study, the NTSB adopted twenty-seven safety recommendations to reduce the risks posed by excavation damage. I want to take this opportunity to commend the NTSB for its proactive stance on this important safety issue.

Excavation damage poses serious safety risks to our Nation's critical infrastructure. This infrastructure, among other things, transports natural gas, petroleum, and other chemical products through pipelines and enables telephone and Internet access through a vast network of fiber optic cables and communication lines. Damage to this infrastructure not only exposes people and the environment to safety risks, but impedes economic development.

The NTSB agrees. In a press release issued on the study, the NTSB states "a single pipeline accident has the potential to cause a catastrophic disaster that can injure hundreds of persons, affect thousands more, and cost millions of dollars in terms of property damage, loss of work opportunity, community disruption, ecological damage, and insurance liability. Excavation and construction activities are the largest single cause of accidents to pipelines." The Safety Board goes on to say that in "addition to being expensive and inconvenient, disruption of the telecommunications network can have significant safety implication, such as impact on traffic control systems, health services, and emergency response activities."

The NTSB further found that "damage from outside force is the leading cause of leaks and ruptures to pipeline systems, accounting for more than 40 percent of the reported failures." Excavation damage, the NTSB determined, "is also the single largest cause of interruptions to fiber cable service."

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, I would like to stand with the Majority Leader not only in affirming the importance of pipelines to our national transportation infrastructure, but also as a personal witness to the damage that a pipeline accident can have on victims of pipeline eruptions, and particularly to the community.

Four years ago, around midnight, on March 24, 1994, a major natural gas pipeline ruptured in Edison, New Jersey, a densely populated, urban environment. This rupture caused a deafening boom, awakening residents of the Durham Woods apartment complex. Seconds later, a plume of fire and gas shot hundreds of feet above the ground. Thankfully, the more than one thousand residents fled their homes, all leaving before the explosion leveled the Durham Woods apartment complex. I visited the site after the blast. I saw how the explosion incinerated cars, playground equipment and trees. Over one hundred people suffered injuries from the fire. One woman died from a heart attack. It was a miracle that nobody else died from that disaster. Four years later, the victims still suffer emotionally and physically. Some are