

Family Literacy Program. Her testimony was very moving and she is a success story for others to emulate.

Mr. President, I ask that Ms. Brumfield's testimony be printed in the RECORD.

The testimony follows:

TESTIMONY OF RAYNICE BRUMFIELD, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEAD START "TOYOTA FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM"

Ms. BRUMFIELD. Thank you Senator Jeffords and members of the Senate Committee, for inviting me to share my story with you. By virtue of the fact that I can sit before you to take part in this occasion, proves that without a program like the Toyota Family Learning Tree, I would still be just stuck in the house, taking care of my two small children, faced with a future that didn't look bright.

I am Raynice Brumfield. I am a 25 year old single parent with four children; James 10, Delonte 8, Kiara 5, and Tyrone, age 4. I was born in Washington, D.C., and attended the public schools there. When I was 15 years old I became pregnant with my first child. Between the ages of 15 and 17, I worked at various jobs. I soon found that I could not make enough money to afford food, clothing, baby supplies and living expenses. At age 17, I became pregnant with my second child. By 19, I enrolled in one of the District of Columbia's public vocational schools. I dropped out of that school because the staff was not sensitive to the needs of young mothers, and I did not feel safe in that environment. I started to receive Public Assistance when I was 19, and soon became pregnant with Kiara, and the next year, Tyrone.

The opportunity to further my education, while being close to my children, seemed like a dream come true. On September 30th, 1996 my children and I started school. The adult education teacher (Mrs. Grace Blackwood), and the parenting instructor (Mrs. Irene Ball), greeted me warmly. I was quiet, scared, and very unsure of myself.

When I entered the program my reading and math levels were at a second grade level. My teachers, and the program's coordinator, Mrs. Peggy Minnis, made the other parents and me feel like we could accomplish anything. They made sure that we maintained a positive self esteem. We were encouraged to set goals, and they helped us work to meet each goal. The work was hard, but soon it became a daily routine, for my children and I to sit at the kitchen table, learning together. As my reading skills improved, I began to enjoy reading stories to my children at home, and going into their classroom to practice and share my new skills with any child who wanted to crawl up in my lap, to hear me read. The harder I worked, the easier it became to help my older children with their homework. I began taking part in the activities at their school. My children's home library grew from 2 or 3 books, to over 40. Reading stories or telling stories to my children has helped in their language development and provided me with practice in reading.

The parenting course helped me understand child development. Understanding the stages that my children were going through, helped me to be patient, understanding, and able to predict their behavior. I learned that there are whole new worlds that my family and I can explore for free. We visit these new worlds every weekend inside the public library. I tell my children that even though we don't have a lot of money, we can still visit far away places and people. Most importantly, we enjoy these adventures as a family. All of my children have their own library cards. I've become a responsible citizen who has a voter registration card and I vote.

As a result of being in the Toyota Family Literacy Program, new worlds have opened up for me and my family. Worlds that were once just part of my day dreams. . . . are now a reality. I am proud to tell you that I now read on a 10th grade level, and my math skills have increased to a 9th grade level. I received an award from my children's school, which honored me as being, "Most Active Parent in Schoolwide Activities." I have volunteered more than 200 hours in my children's school. My children's report cards and teacher comments are no longer negative, but positive. I was invited to speak at last year's 27th Annual Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, by New Jersey's Representative Donald M. Payne. I shared how Toyota through the National Center for Family Literacy and the Head Start Program are helping to improve literacy in the African American community by focusing on young children and their parents. That speech was placed on the E-mail system of every congressman and representative in Congress. Now the most powerful people in the United States have heard about the wonderful work that all of you in this room have dedicated your lives to.

In January, the Head Start Program invited me to be a guest speaker at their staff development activities. Again, I told how family literacy programs make futures bright. I just took the GED examination on the 16th.

My adult education teacher encouraged me to apply for an intensive training program through the YWCA's Non-Traditional Jobs For Women Program last school year. I was accepted into the program, and have completed the training, which prepared me to be trained as a carpenter, plumber, mason, or electrical worker.

Upon notification of having passed the GED, I have been promised priority consideration for a non-traditional job at George Washington University (in the District of Columbia) through a partnership that has been set up between our program and the university. I will have the opportunity to work for no less than \$12.00 per hour, have paid leave and benefits for my entire family.

I will gain experience, meet new people, and most importantly, the opportunity to continue my education free of charge. Upon advancement in my job, my children will be able to attend George Washington University and get their college education for free.

The partnership between Head Start, the National Center for Family Literacy and the Toyota Corporation have made my future look bright. By nurturing the promise of providing a quality education to my children and me, they have given me empowerment through Literacy.●

#### APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES— H.R. 2646

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the order of March 27, 1998, the Chair appoints the following Senators to serve as conferees to H.R. 2646, the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. ALLARD) appointed Mr. ROTH, Mr. MACK, Mr. COATS, Mr. GORTON, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. BINGAMAN conferees on the part of the Senate.

#### APPOINTMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro

tempore, and upon the recommendation of the Republican leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 208 of the 105th Congress, appoints the following Senators to the Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem: The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH), and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 208 of the 105th Congress, appoints the following Senators as ex-officio members of the Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem by virtue of their positions on the Committee on Appropriations: The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS); and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), Ranking Minority Member.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination on the Executive Calendar: Calendar No. 578.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nomination be confirmed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements relating to the nomination appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then return to legislative session.

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

The nomination was considered and confirmed, as follows:

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Togo Dennis West, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, on February 24, 1998, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on the nomination of Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Togo D. West, Jr. to be the permanent Secretary of that agency. The committee carefully evaluated the nominee and his statements before the committee. It reviewed Mr. West's submissions of his background and financial interests and the investigation completed on all Presidential nominations and conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As a result, the committee voted unanimously on April 21 to report favorably to the full Senate the nomination of Togo D. West, Jr. to be the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has been without a permanent Secretary since Jesse Brown resigned in July 1997. This is too long a period for any department of the Federal government to be without its senior leader and manager. It is especially true for the Department of Veterans Affairs which is in a period of major transition