

ones that can improve our current situation.

We have a responsibility to provide the resources needed to allow our nation's teachers to succeed. We need to increase funding for teacher development programs such as technology teacher training, which helps teachers learn to use technology effectively to improve classroom instruction and enhance student learning. We need to help communities hire 100,000 new qualified teachers to allow schools to reduce their class sizes. We need to reduce the number of out-of-field teachers, particularly for new teachers who are more often assigned to teach subjects outside of their field of training and often do not have the support and mentoring to assist in their development. The First Lady said, "it takes a village to raise a child." I believe that, but I also believe that it takes a village to teach a child. Teachers, parents, administrators, and communities as a whole must be committed to ensuring that our children are provided the assistance they need to obtain a quality education.

Children are wonderful, forthright, and open individuals, particularly when they are young. It is always a treat for me to meet with young students, they often have a very truthful and direct way of putting things into perspective. Just three weeks ago, I participated in a satellite conference with third grade students from Queen Liliuokalani Elementary School and high school students from Radford and Kaimuki High Schools. The high school students are participants in E-school, a virtual school which provides on-line and satellite distance learning opportunities to students and teachers. Hawaii's Department of Education is a national leader in the virtual school concept. Leveraging federal funding through the Technology Literacy Fund and the Technology Challenge Grants, Hawaii students are able to learn and receive over 21 high school credit courses for on-line classes. Yet, even with these wonderful achievements in Hawaii, more needs to be done. The students who participated shared with me their concerns over the lack of more capable computers, the need for greater security for the system, and the desire for more teachers who are able to use the system. Students want to learn, it is our responsibility to ensure that they have the resources available to help them achieve their goals.

We know that children learn better in small classes, particularly in the early childhood years, study after study has proven that class size makes a difference in the achievements of our children. President Clinton has requested \$12 billion over 7 years to reduce the class size in grades 1 to 3. As a former teacher, I strongly believe that the proposal would significantly advance the educational achievements of our students. The average class size in the United States for grades 1 to 3 is

23. In Hawaii, the average class size for kindergarten through third grade is 21.9. How can we expect our children to be able to learn when one teacher is required to teach 21 five- to eight-year-olds. I challenge my colleagues to spend a day, just one day, at an elementary school in their State to experience firsthand the challenges in getting 21 five through eight-year-olds to pay attention to you.

Our responsibility should not stop with the school bell. As many as 5 million children are home alone after school each week. Hawaii was fortunate to have the first state-wide after-school care program. This innovative program began in 1990 under the leadership of Governor Benjamin Cayetano while he was the Lieutenant Governor. Hawaii's A-Plus program provides after-school activities to eligible students in grades K through 6. The program provides supervised enrichment and physical development activities at 171 public schools. It is available to eligible children and fees are based on a sliding scale from \$6 to \$55 per month.

However, many of our children in other states are not as fortunate. Only one-third of the schools in low-income neighborhood and half the schools in affluent areas offer after-school programs. Full funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program would provide 400,000 children in the United States access to safe learning centers, similar to those provided in Hawaii.

First-rate facilities, quality teachers, students ready and willing to learn are important ingredients needed to ensure success for our children, but that success also needs to be based on high academic standards. We must set significant academic standards for our students to ensure that they will be able to compete in the growing global economy. We should increase funding for Goals 2000 to assist states in raising and setting academic standards that challenge and motivate students. We need to expand funding for Title I to provide the means for disadvantaged communities to develop and maintain high academic standards.

Mr. President, our schools are in disrepair, our classrooms are overcrowded, our teachers are overburdened, our children need our help now. We have a responsibility and a moral obligation to provide modern, safe facilities, reduce class sizes, provide the support for children outside of the classrooms, and support and help recruit and retain well-qualified teachers. I urge my Senate colleagues to make a concerted effort to address this vital national problem. The implications of ignoring or delaying our obligation may have ramifications that may not be so easily corrected.

Our nation's children are depending upon us to make the sacrifice and do what needs to be done. We must stand up and meet this challenge, if we do not, we will have failed our nation's children—our nation's future.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks delivered earlier this afternoon by my friend, the senior Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES) regarding the International Religious Freedom Act. I commend him and Senator LIEBERMAN for their leadership in advancing this legislation. I congratulate their willingness to work with the Administration and all interested parties to craft legislation that is inclusive, that preserves many options for the President, yet is strong and effective in addressing religious persecution around the world. The revisions suggested and accepted in the spirit of compromise have not weakened the core purpose or value of this legislation.

This is one of the most important pieces of foreign relations legislation this Congress will consider during this session. It proposes action against religious persecution worldwide, and establishes a structure by which the United States can more effectively investigate, monitor, and address serious violations of religious freedom, an internationally recognized human right, as well as an issue of concern to all people of faith.

The International Religious Freedom Act is a necessary step to ensure that religious persecution will not be tolerated in our conduct of foreign policy. S. 1868 seeks to promote religious freedom by establishing an Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Liberty, a Special Advisor within the White House on Religious Persecution, and a bipartisan Commission on International Religious Liberty. It also provides the President with an array of options, including economic sanctions, which he can use to respond to countries that engage in or condone religious persecution. The measure in no way constricts or mandates the conduct of American foreign policy.

This is not a Republican bill or a Democratic bill, a conservative or liberal proposal, or an effort to protect or promote any one faith. It is supported by the Episcopal Church, the Christian Coalition, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Catholic organizations, and other religious and human rights associations across the country. Indeed, it is an ecumenical effort supported by a bipartisan group in Congress, and it enjoys wide support among all people of faith and supporters of human rights. This is why I was honored to join Senator NICKLES, LIEBERMAN, SPECTER, and COATS, Congressmen WOLF and CLEMENT, and a diverse coalition of religious leaders this morning to urge Congressional action on the International Religious Freedom Act before adjournment.

As a longtime supporter of human rights, the defense of the right to religious freedom is as significant as IMF funding and our ongoing efforts to deal with the international financial crisis. Sadly, many of the conflicts we are

witnessing today have religious intolerance at their core. It is my strong belief that if we in the United States, our allies in other nations and people of faith around the world speak out about religious liberty and call attention to religious persecution, and bring positive forces to bear in defense of religious freedom, we can advance understanding and respect for this basic human right and prevent religious intolerance from festering and exploding into conflict and violence.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGEL). The Senator from Illinois.

THE QUESTION OF IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I had the opportunity a few moments ago to hear the distinguished Senator from Delaware talk about his views and his analysis and his historical perspective from his extensive research on the question of impeachment. I found it instructive, full of much good insight and food for thought, and I agreed with the vast majority of it.

We ought to be respectful and responsive as we go through this process. It may be that it will never even get to this body. I certainly don't hear many Senators making speeches about it. We don't have any hearings going on in this body concerning impeachment. It is solely a decision to be made by the House first, and only then would we begin to focus on it. And I think that is the way it should be.

So far as I can tell, our attention in this body, the U.S. Senate, has in fact been on appropriations bills and other legislation that is important for the American people, and I am glad that is what has been happening.

I agree that the founders were concerned about the abuse of the impeachment process, and well they should be. They were wise people. They knew there were dangers and they discussed whether or not to have impeachment. But the important thing is they did adopt an impeachment process and they set it forth in the Constitution with good clarity, and it requires a majority vote in the House to impeach and a two-thirds vote of the sitting Members of the U.S. Senate, with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presiding, I assume in the President's chair. He would preside and manage the action on the floor. It would be a controlled environment with the case being presented by managers from the House following the historical rules of procedure. I believe impeachment proceedings would be handled in a dignified and proper manner. Certainly, that process is part of our Constitution and it is something we ought not to treat lightly.

Now, as to the question of politics, I, and I think every Member of this body, would be careful and very diligent to ensure that any decision they made concerning such a momentous subject

as impeachment would be made on the law, on the facts, and on what is fair and just.

I do not believe politics will control this process, but, of course, to get the 67 votes, the necessary two-thirds, a substantial number of Democrats would have to vote for conviction before such an event could occur. So I think the framers thought it out carefully, and they have done a very good job in planning it out.

I hope that we do not talk politics in such a way that we create a political situation. I know the House is dealing with procedure: Some want to do it this way; some want to do it that way and some want to do it another way. Often these are legitimate debates. Who knows precisely how some of these procedural steps should be accomplished? Now, if every time you lose a vote you say it is politics and accuse the other side of politics, the charge of playing politics can be thrown back on the person making the accusation.

I think both groups—the people who are supporting the President and want to see him succeed, and those who are politically opposed to him—both need to be careful to ensure that what they do is fair and is perceived as creating a positive environment, as was done by Senator Howard Baker during Watergate. He didn't always agree with everyone, but he conducted himself in a way that brought respect to the system.

I think both parties, the Republican and the Democratic Parties, and Members of the House and Senate need to be careful about how we conduct ourselves and avoid politics and try to decide these matters on what is right and fair and just.

I don't know what others might say, but I was a Federal prosecutor. I had the opportunity over the years to be before grand juries hundreds of times. Perhaps, I have presented a thousand cases to a grand jury. I have seen people testify and tell the truth at great pain to themselves.

I would agree with Senator BIDEN that it just may be that as a matter of law, we are not in this body compelled to any conclusion because the President may have committed perjury. At the same time, I want us to not denigrate, not to too lightly respect the obligation of every citizen, when they are called in a civil case or a criminal case and placed under oath, to tell the truth, because when we do not have truth-telling in the judicial system, then the whole legal system is corrupted and can be undermined. That is so fundamental.

I have seen witnesses sweat drops of blood, but they told the truth. A businessman lately told me: "I had to give a deposition and it never occurred to me I was not required to tell the truth."

A few years ago, I had occasion to prosecute a young police officer who was, basically, I think the driver for the chief of police, a controversial

chief of police, in my hometown. I liked him. He was an aggressive young African-American officer and made some good community-based changes. There were people with different views about things, and the young officer made some statements that were not true, and a lawsuit was filed. He testified in that lawsuit and later admitted what he said was not true.

It caused a big controversy in town, and in the newspapers. The people were upset, they didn't know whether the chief deserved to be kept in office or not. Finally, we found out it wasn't true. I was U.S. attorney then. We returned an indictment against that young officer for perjury in a civil case because he abused the legal system. He corrupted the legal system and caused great public damage and turmoil in the community.

I don't know what the standards are here. I don't expect to be prejudging what ought to occur in this body. But I want to say, as someone who has spent 15 years, really 17 years as a prosecutor, as someone who has been in court all my life professionally, and having seen these kinds of cases, I am telling you, we don't ever want to get in a situation in this country where we treat lightly the act of testifying falsely in a court of law. I mean that very sincerely and from my heart.

The President of the United States takes an oath to faithfully execute the duties of the Office of President, and one of those duties is to faithfully "take care that the laws of the United States be faithfully executed".

I think the Senator from Delaware has given us much insight and much food for thought. He said these are stark and momentous decisions, and they are. But at the same time, he said something else that was just right. He quoted his father saying, "This country is so big, so strong, so solid; we can handle an awful lot." I really believe that.

The process is set out in the Constitution and, as the Senator from Delaware said, this is not a constitutional crisis. Some way, we will get through it. If we follow what the Constitution says, if we let the House do its duty, and if they vote impeachment, it will come over here; if they don't vote impeachment, it won't come over here. It is set out clearly in the Constitution. I don't think there will be any doubt about the procedure to follow. I am much comforted, as I have studied the Constitution in that regard, that there won't be much confusion or doubt about how this process ought to be handled.

I thank the Senator from Delaware for his comments. They are insightful and important. All of us need to begin to think about this. I don't think we are required to be mute and not say anything about what is obviously taking place around us, never expressing an opinion about anything relating to this matter. This is not that kind of process. I think we ought to be careful