

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LOTT (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. Res. 55. A resolution making appointments to certain Senate committees for the 106th Congress; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COVERDELL (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, and Mr. ROBB):

S. Res. 56. A resolution recognizing March 2, 1999 as the "National Read Across America Day", and encouraging every child, parent and teacher to read throughout the year; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LAUTENBERG:

S. 491. A bill to enable America's schools to use their computer hardware to increase student achievement and prepare students for the 21st century workplace; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

THE "EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT"

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to introduce "E-21"—the Education for the 21st Century Act.

The E-21 Act will help ensure that all middle school graduates attain basic computer literacy skills that will prepare them for high school and beyond, and ultimately, for the 21st Century workplace. The E-21 Act will also allow all school districts to obtain and utilize the latest high-quality educational software, free of charge.

Mr. President, the first piece of legislation I introduced in the Senate was to provide financial assistance to introduce computers into schools, to help students learn and expand their horizons. That was in 1983. Back then, it was the exceptional school that even had a computer. It was an unusual teacher or student who knew how to use one.

That legislation was enacted into law. Along with other resources, it helped bring computers into our schools as part of everyday learning.

Mr. President, as many of my colleagues know, I got my start in the computing business. Back then, computers filled large rooms and were so expensive that only the largest corporations could afford their own computing centers. Today, even more powerful computers sit on a desktop in millions of homes, schools and businesses across the nation.

Mr. President, we've made great strides toward introducing computers into schools, but too many of these computers are not being utilized to their potential due to lack of updated computer training for teachers.

Mr. President, a recent study by the Educational Testing Service confirmed that computers do increase student achievement and improve a school's learning climate. However—and this is critical—the study specified that to

achieve those results, teachers must be appropriately trained and use effective educational software programs. Otherwise, these computers become mere furniture in a classroom.

To boost student achievement through computers and technology, my "Education for the 21st Century Act" will provide up to \$30 million per year to train a team of teachers from every middle school in the nation in the most up-to-date computing technology. These Teacher Technology leaders could then share their training with the rest of the faculty in their schools, so all teachers are ready to pass these skills on to their students.

Mr. President, the E-21 Act will also create national educational software competitions, open to high school and college students, to work in partnership with university faculty and professional software developers. The best of these software packages would be available free-of-charge over the Internet through the Department of Education's web page.

Mr. President, I want to make clear to my colleagues that this emphasis on computer training is not at the expense of the fundamental, basic skills that underlie education: reading, writing and arithmetic. It's still important to master these traditional basics. But we should also add a "new basic" to the list—computer literacy. Americans will need those skills to compete in the 21st Century.

Mr. President, this proposal is part of President Clinton's FY 2000 Budget, and as Ranking Member of the Budget Committee and a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will work to see that it is funded for years to come.

Mr. President, as a businessman who got his start at the beginning of the computing age, I am proud to see the way our nation has led the world in computer technology. I want to make sure that we continue to lead—through the second computer century—the 21st Century.

I therefore ask my colleagues to support "E-21"—the Education for the 21st Century Act.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 491

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Education for the 21st Century (e-21) Act".

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

It is the purpose of this Act to enable America's schools to use their computer hardware to increase student achievement and prepare students for the 21st century workplace.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Establishing computer literacy for middle school graduates will help ensure that students are receiving the skills needed for

advanced education and for securing employment in the 21st century.

(2) Computer literacy skills, such as information gathering, critical analysis and communication with the latest technology, build upon the necessary basics of reading, writing, mathematics, and other core subject areas.

(3) According to a study conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), eighth grade mathematics students whose teachers used computers for simulations and applications outperformed students whose teachers did not use such educational technology.

(4) Although an ever increasing amount of schools are obtaining the latest computer hardware, schools will not be able to take advantage of the benefits of computer-based learning unless teachers are effectively trained in the latest educational software applications.

(5) The Educational Testing Service (ETS) study showed that students whose teachers received training in computers performed better than other students. The study also found that schools that provide teachers with professional development in computers enjoyed higher staff morale and lower absenteeism rates.

(6) Some of the most exciting applications in educational technology are being developed not only by commercial software companies, but also by university faculty and secondary school and college students. The fruit of this academic talent should be channeled more effectively to benefit our Nation's elementary and secondary schools.

SEC. 4. MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPUTER LITERACY CHALLENGE.

(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Education is authorized to award grants to States that integrate into the State curriculum the goal of making all middle school graduates in the State technology literate.

(b) USES.—Grants awarded under this section shall be used for teacher training in technology, with an emphasis on programs that prepare 1 or more teachers in each middle school in the State to become technology leaders who then serve as experts and train other teachers.

(c) MATCHING FUNDS.—Each State shall encourage schools that receive assistance under this section to provide matching funds, with respect to the cost of teacher training in technology to be assisted under this section, in order to enhance the impact of the teacher training and to help ensure that all middle school graduates in the State are computer literate.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$30,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through 2004.

SEC. 5. HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE FOR ALL SCHOOLS.

(a) COMPETITION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Education is authorized to award grants, on a competitive basis, to secondary school and college students working with university faculty, software developers, and experts in educational technology for the development of high-quality educational software and Internet web sites by such students, faculty, developers, and experts.

(b) RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education shall recognize outstanding educational software and Internet web sites developed with assistance provided under this section.

(2) CERTIFICATES.—The President is requested to, and the Secretary shall, issue an official certificate signed by the President and Secretary, to each student and faculty member who develops outstanding educational software or Internet web sites recognized under this section.