crowded subway, or send a crude nuclear weapon into a busy harbor.

I ask my colleagues: What do you think is the more likely scenario? Do you really believe that North Korea will leave the trail of a missile, a targetable trail and send a missile to the United States, and like the sleeping giant that was awakened in Pearl Harbor, have us return the compliment, or do you believe if they were intent on doing injury to the United States, they would take a little bottle of anthrax and drop it in the water system in Washington, DC?

What do you think is more likely? Do you think it is more likely perhaps that some rogue nation might say: Wait a minute, they have the ability to knock down our missile, so let's put one of these illegally purchased weapons in the marketplace—because we are not doing enough to stop proliferation internationally so they can go out and purchase a small nuclear weapon—and they bring it in on a rusty freighter under the Verrazano Bridge, and detonate a nuclear weapon just outside New York City.

I would like to see us focus on those things that most threaten us, not create these notions of false threat that require us to debate for hours to stop something that does not necessarily promise a very positive impact for the long-term interests of our Nation.

Obviously, the President gave very few details yesterday because he cannot. We do not have an architecture yet. We do not even have a budget yet. We do not even have enough successful tests yet to suggest we should be rapidly deploying and abrogating the ABM Treaty. What are we talking about?

The President said he wants to pursue technology that would allow us to intercept a ballistic missile at the boost phase when they are moving the slowest. I agree with that. In June of 2000, I called on the previous administration to explore the technology for a boost phase intercept system which would build on the current technology of the Army's land-based THAAD and the Navy's sea-based theater-wide defense system to provide forward-deployed defenses against both theater missile ballistic threats and long-range ballistic missile threats.

I welcome President Bush's commitment to investing considerable resources needed to make those systems capable of reaching the speeds necessary to intercept an ICBM. A forward-deployed boost phase intercept system would allow us to target relatively small ballistic missile arsenals and shoot down a very few accidental or unauthorized launches.

Deploying such a system, even though it might require amendments to the 1997 ABM Treaty Demarcation Agreement, would establish the line between theater missile defense systems that are not limited by the treaty and the strategic defenses that the treaty prescribes.

In a nutshell, these agreements allow the United States to deploy and test the PAC–3, the THAAD, and the Navy theater-wide TMD systems, but they prohibit us from developing or testing capabilities that would enable these systems to shoot down ICBMs.

Russia might not be happy about that, but I believe they would prefer that to a system that would really scrap the entire treaty and all the limitations on strategic defenses that would come with it.

I agree that the strategic situation we confront today is worlds apart from the one we faced in 1972, but nothing in this changed environment suggests that we will be better off by walking away from the ABM Treaty. If somehow Russia and China are not persuaded by President Bush's assurances that our missile defense system is not aimed at undermining their nuclear deterrent capabilities, and instead they perceive a growing threat to their interests, they will act to counter that threat. We will not be safer if our NMD system focuses their energies on developing—and eventually selling—new ways to overwhelm our defenses.

The ABM Treaty can be amended to reflect our changed security environment. But to abandon it all-together is to welcome an arms race that will make us more vulnerable, not less.

The President made a point of announcing that he will begin high-level consultations with our allies about his plans for NMD and he stressed that he would seek real input from them as he moves forward. This is critical. Even if, as can be expected, our allies in Europe and Asia accept a U.S. NMD system, they have a lot at stake in how we develop and deploy that system. The President must take their views into account as he determines what architecture he will pursue and the timing of deploying. Clearly, these are important discussions that will require more than one or two cursory consultations.

The administration must also pay close attention to our allies concerns about Russia. Because they are keenly aware that a fearful, insecure Russia is a dangerous Russia, they have consistently stressed the importance of including Moscow in our discussions on NMD. Let me be clear: the importance of working with Russia as we move forward is not to suggest that Moscow has a veto over our missile defense plans. But we have an obligation to avoid unilateral steps that will throw our already tenuous relations with Russia into further turmoil. Serious discussions with Moscow on amending the ABM Treaty—even if they are not ultimately successful—will allow us to move toward NMD deployment transparently and with minimal provocation.

As with Russia, if an NMD decision is made absent serious discussions with China, the leadership in Beijing will perceive the deployment as at least partially directed at them. The Administration must try hard to reach a common understanding with China that there is a real threat from isolated regimes bent on terrorism and accidental or unauthorized launches. The Clinton administration invested a great deal of time and diplomatic effort convincing Russia that the threat is real and it affects us both. We must make the same effort with China. If we fail to take this task seriously, we will jeopardize stability in the Pacific.

The President's proposal on NMD lacks specifics and his intentions on the ABM Treaty are vague. He and his advisors know that the American people will not support an expensive, ineffective NMD system, or one that comes at the expense of a Treaty that has made them safer over the last 20 years. So to sweeten the President's bad news on these two issues, he promised—again without any detail—to unilaterally reduce the U.S. arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons.

The proposal to unilaterally reduce U.S. nuclear stockpiles is an important and overdue first step toward reducing the nuclear danger. Unfortunately, before the President can make good on this promise, he will have to convince his Republican colleagues in the Congress to repeal a provision in the FY 98 Defense Department Authorization bill that prohibits the reduction of strategic nuclear delivery systems to levels below those established by the START I treaty.

Senate Democrats have tried for the last three years to repeal this provision, which prevents exactly the kind of nuclear reduction President Bush has spoken about. But they have been stymied by a Republican leadership that believes the U.S. should not move to START II arms levels even though the Senate ratified that treaty in 1996—before Russia has done so.

I hope we can move immediately to repeal this prohibition and begin the process of cutting our strategic arsenal in half—from more than 7,000 warheads today to the 3,500 allowed under START II. While those reductions are underway, the President should immediately proceed to talks with Russia on a START III agreement, which could bring our arsenal to below 2,000 warheads and codify similar, transparent, verifiable and irreversible reductions by Russia.

Mr. President, for 40 years, the United States has led international efforts to reduce and contain the danger from nuclear weapons. We can continue that leadership by exploiting our technological strengths to find a defense against ballistic missiles, and by extending that defense to our friends and allies. But we must not jeopardize stability in Europe and Asia by putting political ideology ahead of commitments that have kept us safe for decades.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for a few

minutes within my hour on the motion to proceed.

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

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair and my colleagues. I will be brief. I see the Senator from Maryland is here, as well as others.

Mr. President, I do not think there is a person in the Senate who does not view education as the single most important domestic priority this year. A number of us have been working for a long period of time to advance the dialog with respect to education. Indeed, a couple of years ago, we Democrats were prepared to move forward on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We were prevented from doing so because, frankly, our colleagues on the other side, for political reasons, were unwilling to allow President Clinton to be the person who signed a bill that passed education reform in the country.

Politics trumped real reform. Politics trumped, once again, the interests of young people in our country.

I remember JOE LIEBERMAN, others, and myself talking for hours with Paul Coverdell, our late colleague, with Slade Gorton, and others trying to find the common ground so we could move forward on this critical issue.

Here we are this year with Democrats having moved in ways that many people would have argued they never would have moved previously. There has been a challenging of the orthodoxy that has governed the debate on education for a long period of time. So we have a consolidation of programs. We have an effort to deal in a realistic way with the problem of accountability.

It used to be there were some pretty one-sided discussions. Some people on the other side of the aisle thought it was just good money chasing after bad, and so they did not even want to talk about resources. All the discussion was about an alternative to the public education system—fundamentally, vouchers. On this side there was fundamentally only a discussion about school construction or class size. Nothing happened. Most important, nothing happened for our kids. The schools did not get much better, except in isolated instances where extraordinary leadership managed to break through.

The fact is that 90 percent of America's children go to school in public schools. There are not enough vouchers and there are not enough private and parochial schools to offer enough choice to all of the students of this generation to get the education they need by alternatives.

The bottom line is if 90 percent of America's children go to school today in public schools, if we are going to have the workforce we need for the future, but equally important, if we are going to have the skilled labor force we need, and much more important, if we are going to have young people who grow up to understand the obligations of citizenship, who have the capacity in an age of managing more information to be able to process the information and translate it into good civic activities, the acceptance of values, the acceptance of family responsibilities, the acceptance of community responsibilities, then every student, indeed, better have the best of opportunities.

I have joined with JOE LIEBERMAN, EVAN BAYH, MARY LANDRIEU, BLANCHE LINCOLN, JOHN BREAUX, TOM CARPER, and a host of Democrats in agreeing we have to change the dynamics of this debate; that we need strict accountability; that we cannot put money into a school and allow it year after year as a consequence of some kind of reform to fail. But everybody in this institution knows there are countless communities in the United States of America that just cannot afford to do the basics. Property tax is what funds education. Come to Lawrence, New Bedford, or Holyoke, MA, or countless other communities in America where they don't have the tax base, particularly through the property tax, where people are on fixed incomes trying to hang on to a home and cannot afford higher property rates. In many States, there are limits on what can be raised on the property tax—mine among them.

The question is, how do we provide adequate numbers of teachers to have a class size where a teacher can actually cope with children? How do we keep school doors open into the evening if the community can't pay the custodians or the additional teachers or have remedial classes? How do we put in the technology if they can't afford to buy it?

The bottom line is, we have put in place in this bill an enormous change, a sea change, in how we are prepared to try to encourage accountability, to encourage reform and encourage change. But we cannot do it if there isn't an adequate commitment of resources for IDEA, the greatest burden we hear principals talk about in schools, to the capacity to be able to have a teacher for certain classes. We have some schools where 80 percent of the children in the school do not have an algebra teacher. Teachers are teaching out of field.

Test students all you want, but if they do not get the fundamentals, they will be in deficit from the beginning.

This is a choice for the Senate. Either we fund education reform to the degree that will empower it to actually take place or we will invite an incredible new round of cynicism. We will pass something and call it reform, and teachers and parents across the country will say: Thank God, reform at last. It is coming. But if you don't empower them to be able to do it, you can see the next wave of discussion. It will be: The public schools have failed; they did not live up to the expectations. We gave them the opportunity, and they didn't make it. Now it is alternatives.

I am not going to buy into, as I think many of my colleagues will not buy into, a false equation of reform. We insist there be adequate funding of those communities that simply do not have the ability to be able to make the difference. That is the best of what the Federal Government exists for in the sense we assert a national priority, something in the interest of everybody in this country—educating our kids, making sure they have values, making sure they are in safe communities, where they can grow up to full citizenship. We share the capacity of our country to be able to guarantee that no child is left behind.

In the budget that President Bush has presented, with only a 5 percent increase in disadvantaged children's funding, how can one possibly live up to that promise? This is not a political fight. This is not a political food fight. This is not just Washington somehow being the same.

I respect President Bush's effort to change the tone and be bipartisan. Right now, the only bipartisanship has been movement on our side of the aisle to consolidate the programs, to move toward a more sensible regime for accountability. The question we are asking is, where is the bipartisanship on the other side of the aisle that moves toward us with respect to this critical element of funding?

You can have accountability, but if you don't have adequate funding to make it happen, it is a complete sham and waste of time. Likewise, we believe you can have a lot of money but if you don't have the accountability, it is equally a sham and waste of time. If we are prepared to change the dynamic and provide this country with education reform it deserves, we must be prepared to adequately fund the reform effort.

I reserve the balance of my hour, and I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to speak again within the hour, if necessary.

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

The distinguished Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the motion to proceed to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and I yield myself 15 minutes.

I hope we will proceed. I intend to vote for the motion to proceed so we can get on the bill and get serious in the Senate about addressing the compelling human needs that exist in America's public schools.

I believe education is the most important crucial rung in our Nation's opportunity ladder. During the coming days, we will discuss how we can strengthen this opportunity ladder. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is only the first step. It sets the framework for reform, and also it will establish how we will address our public education.

We do need reform in our public schools, and at the same time we need to have the resources to put the reforms into action. However, if we put

the reforms on the Federal law books but do not put the resources in the Federal checkbook, this will be a hollow opportunity.

There are some on my side of the aisle who question whether we should embark upon testing. First, I stand squarely in the corner of supporting the concept of accountability. I also stand squarely in the corner of supporting testing, but making sure the Federal Government does pay the bill.

In the State of Maryland, we have had testing for more than a decade. Testing enabled us to provide an inventory of where our schools were, what schools needed intervention and what type of intervention.

I view testing like a CAT scan. It gives an inventory of where the problems might be and identifies other areas of potential problems. I believe we should proceed with testing and also aggressively fight for the resources. At the same time, we should not hold up on getting an inventory of where we are.

In keeping with this principle, I support six priorities for educational reform. One is something I am calling ''digital opportunity.'' I know the Presiding Officer is deeply troubled about the need to have more people educated in math, science and technology in order to meet our growing national security needs. The Rudman-Hart report clearly indicates we need to have children technologically competent, not only for the new economy but also for the new security threats facing the United States of America. Issues such as cyberterrorism are an example of why we need to make the availability of educational technology a priority.

I worked very hard to have a series of amendments creating digital opportunity. One, a national goal that every child be computer literate by the time they finish the eighth grade. I enjoyed bipartisan support on this issue in the committee and it passed. To make the goal a reality, I offered an amendment to make technology funds more robust and more effective. The BEST bill authorizing $1 billion for education technology.

The new technology block grant that President Bush is advocating is something I will support because it will mean the programs will no longer be scattered through the Department of Education. As we are dealing with the scattered problem, we also have to deal with the skimpy problem and make sure we have the funds for hardware, software, and teacher training.

I know, also, we are not considering the e-rate in ESEA. Sometimes in legislation the best thing we can do is do no harm. The Bush administration talked about eliminating the E-rate or consolidating the E-rate with ESEA technology programs. I am pleased that in our discussion with the White House they clarified the E-rate will be a subject of further discussion in the future. I am a big supporter of the E rate. I hope we do not change it.

A weakness in the bill is that it focuses entirely on schools and not enough on the communities where children learn. Everybody does not entirely learn in school. Many people learn in structured afterschool activities and in the community. This is why I will offer an amendment on community tech centers, to establish 1,000 community tech centers, throughout the United States of America. That means that they can be run by nonprofits including the Boys and Girls Clubs, faith-based organizations, and Latino heritage organizations. Let's get tech into the community. In some instances our children are in schools that are so dated they cannot be wired. We want to make sure our kids are wired for the future.

We also need to focus on teachers, recruiting the best, training the best, and retaining the best. I am pleased the education bill authorizes almost $3 billion for teacher training. At the same time, we could use more. I believe we need at least $2 billion more for teacher training to bring them into the classroom and also to upgrade their skills.

Another priority I believe we need to focus on is smaller class size. Everyone will tell you we do need smaller class sizes. I will be supporting Senator MURRAY's effort to continue to try to hire 100,000 new teachers for our classrooms.

Coming back to where children learn, I support structured afterschool activities. Children need structured afterschool activities where they can learn, have fun, and be safe. In many of these neighborhoods this is absolutely crucial.

Speaking of safety, this then takes us to school modernization. The average school in the United States of America is 42 years old. Many of them are crumbling. Many are dated. Some are even dangerous. We really need to work out how we can be a partner with State and local governments on the improvement of schools to modernize those facilities.

The other area where we also need to keep our commitment is on funding for IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Federal Government passed, some years ago, a mandate that local school districts are supposed to come up with individual education plans for children who are disabled. We promised them if they did that, they would get 40 percent of the cost from the Federal Government. Guess what. We only provide about 15 percent. In Maryland it's 9 percent. I believe we should keep the policy, but let's really, now, meet that mandate. If over the next 3 years we could work every year to increase the funding for IDEA, the money would go right into the school districts. It would help the local communities. It would alleviate a lot of the financial pressure on the state and locals to serve our special kids, without us becoming the schoolmarm or chairman of the school board in local school districts.

These are the issues on which I look forward to working. I believe we can move the bill on a bipartisan basis. Let's have reform with resources so we can have results. Those are the three R's I want: Reform, resources, and results. Let's get our kids and our country ready for the 21st century. We have made great progress in the past, and I know we can do so in the future.

I yield the floor. I yield back any time I may not have consumed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I would like to be recognized on the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized. The minority has 16 minutes 6 seconds remaining.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I listened closely to the eloquent comments of our colleague from Massachusetts this morning. It was his late brother, President Kennedy, in 1962, who said in a message to the 87th Congress: ''A child miseducated is a child lost.''

Today, nearly four decades later, these words ring truer than ever. Far too many of our children, particularly poor and minority children, remain miseducated today despite efforts over the years to strengthen and reform America's public schools. The latest tests by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, showed that only 32 percent of our Nation's fourth graders were proficient or better in reading and more than one-third of the fourth graders read below basic minimum standards. That is unacceptable, especially today, when the consequences of such poor performance have never been greater.

In this era of rapid technological change, business and industry require highly skilled, highly educated workers. If we fail to improve our school systems, many of our young people will be locked out of well-paid jobs and denied opportunities to succeed in a changing global economy. We cannot deny them that opportunity, nor can we deny this Nation the talent and skills it needs to grow and prosper. This 107th Congress must lead so no child is left behind.

As for their leadership thus far, I wish to compliment many of our colleagues who have engaged in tough and bipartisan negotiations aimed at ensuring that we adequately address our Nation's educational priorities. The administration has proposed one plan, and some parts of it are very good. They are certainly in step with the reforms many of us have advocated in the past—particularly as I tried to articulate in this last election cycle in Florida. But other parts of the administration's plan are seriously flawed or are grossly underfunded. At the outset we must decide to put partisan interests aside and do what is right for our children.

By the way, more than 90 percent of our children attend public schools. We

must debate and resolve the important issues that still separate us, keeping in mind our common goal of giving every child the opportunity to succeed, not only in school but also in life.

The teachers and public schools in Melbourne, FL, along with my parents, gave me my start and instilled in me a lifelong love of learning. Public elementary and secondary schools gave me the opportunity to go on to college and to law school, and to serve in the Army and the Florida legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives. That public school education also allowed me to serve as Florida's State treasurer and as a member of the State cabinet, as a member of the State board of education, overseeing public education. Now I have the privilege of being here as a Member of the Senate.

I am forever indebted to my teachers and to those schools. Those schools were good ones, located in a growing, prospering community along the east coast of Florida. I was blessed. As we know and as the recent reading scores demonstrate, not every child is that fortunate. Too many of them come from broken families, too busy putting food on the table to worry about the absence of books in their homes. Too many attend failing schools in failing neighborhoods, or crumbling schools with overcrowded classrooms. Too many have outdated textbooks, insufficient numbers of books to go around, and tired teachers who believe they lack the support they need.

Thanks to economic growth and the fiscal discipline imposed by the Congress, we now have a unique opportunity this session to help our States and local school districts address these problems. We have an opportunity not only to provide more of the financial help needed but also to ensure that those dollars help produce a better education for our children. We must not squander that opportunity now.

I am encouraged that the White House has emphasized education. I also am encouraged that progress has been made in the negotiations so that we can give the States and school districts greater flexibility on spending while also holding them more accountable for results. These are goals we all share.

I am confident that we can resolve our remaining differences on this legislation and work out the details on how best to achieve those goals that we share. But I am also convinced that the administration's commitment to leave no child behind will be nothing more than an empty slogan unless we bolster it with sufficient resources needed to get the job done. Reform without resources is not reform.

In this regard, the President's demand for excessive tax cuts contradicts his pledge to do right by America's schoolchildren. I believe that it would be reckless to risk a return to the annual budget deficits that you and I, Mr. President, experienced in the 1980s and return to mounting national debt by committing this Nation to a tax cut that could overwhelm the projected surplus. It is a tax cut that is said to be $1.6 trillion, but in a real estimate of what it would cost in terms of deficit reduction, it is $2.5 trillion. It would be reckless to use the surplus for that instead of investing any increase in Federal education over the next 10 years. The White House claimed its proposed budget would provide an 11.5 percent increase for education in the coming fiscal year. But the real increase would be half that amount, and could leave the States with unfunded mandates, something the Congress in 1995 vowed that it would never do—put unfunded mandates on the States.

If we are truly to leave no child behind, then we can do a whole lot better. We must do better.

In my view, there is no higher priority than providing a first-rate education for the children in our public school systems. Our Federal Government, which now provides just 7 percent of the money for all of our schools nationally, ought to provide a larger investment for school construction, for dropout prevention, for smaller and safer classes, for teachers who are both well trained and well paid, and for programs that assist children with preschool education and afterschool care.

The amendments we adopted last month in our Senate budget resolution would strengthen the Federal investment in public education and children with disabilities by more than $250 billion over the next decade. We can also help failing schools succeed by strengthening our programs for disadvantaged children and targeting additional Federal money to needy students and to the poorest schools, some represented by the distinguished Senator who honors me with his presence here, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

Along with increased support, the education bill that Congress enacts this year should provide for greater accountability. It should condition future help on academic performance standards set by the States and measured by testing students yearly and uniformly within each State.

We also need to ensure that the States set meaningful standards and measure real progress.

We can do all of this in part by using the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests of fourth and eighth grade students and as a way to audit the results of the yearly State reading and math tests that would be provided under this bill in grades three through eight.

So the States do their thing, with their own accountability, but we then will have a national measure, a standard by which to compare the States with the National Assessment of Education Progress test. This will then enable us to confirm that Federal dollars were well spent.

Parents have an important role to play. They are entitled to timely report cards from their school districts on the performance of their children's schools, not just their individual child's report card. If, despite our best efforts, a school continues to fail, they ought to have a choice so their kids are not trapped in failure. But when the Nation's taxpayers are paying for it, the choice ought to involve public schools, and not private ones, if it is public school money.

I believe our negotiations are on the right track for providing options for transfers to charter schools, magnet schools, or other schools within a district, or for extra help from outside tutoring to summer school.

I want to make sure that we don't divert public school tax dollars to private schools through vouchers. We need to improve public schools that perform poorly. We don't need to abandon them. As we make our schools and local school systems accountable, we also need to give them more control and greater flexibility to use the Federal funds in ways that better meet local needs. I believe that we can consolidate programs and cut bureaucratic strings without sacrificing those Federal initiatives that are an essential part of the solution.

For example, we know that children learn better in smaller classes. Why in the world would we want to abandon our national commitment to reducing class size, to building new schools and renovating the old ones if we know that creates an environment in which children can better learn? We can do better.

In February, I joined with 10 other Senators in introducing the Public Education Reinvestment, Reinvention, and Responsibility Act, which we call the three Rs. Its aim is to streamline the Federal role in education and eliminate some of the bureaucratic strings that hinder local school districts. Its goal is to establish a clear national priority to ensure that every child has a chance at a quality education. These priorities include—and let's think about these; they are common sense—closing the achievement gap between poor and more affluent children; helping immigrant children learn English; improving teacher quality; reducing class size in the early grades; spurring innovative practices; and promoting choice within the public school framework.

I am pleased that many of our proposals are now embraced in the committee bill that is now pending before us. As our deliberations proceed, I will be fighting to ensure that they receive adequate funding.

We must succeed in this endeavor. Failure is not an option. We cannot afford to abandon our young people. In the long run, such failure would be far more costly than investing in quality education for all of our children.

Let us make sure that no child is miseducated, and let us make sure that no child is lost.

I thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for being kind

enough to be interested and to be on the floor as I present my maiden speech on education.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the distinguished Senator has expired. The time of the minority has expired.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Florida may have 3 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and thank the distinguished Senator from Florida for yielding. I thank him for the thoughtful remarks he has just made. I heard him as I was in my office, and I came to the floor because I knew I would hear something worth listening to. I gave some time to the Senator from Florida. I am very impressed with his dedication to his Senate duties, and I appreciate his love for the Senate. I am going to have a few remarks later concerning education and our schools and this legislation. I will want to scan very carefully—perhaps it would not be scanning—I will want to study very carefully the words of the Senator from Florida before I make my own remarks.

I thank him for his contribution to the Senate and for his contribution to the debate on this extremely important subject. I look forward to reading his comments and hearing him from time to time. It is a pleasure to work with him.

(Mrs. CLINTON assumed the chair.)

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, just in the remaining moment, I say to the Senator from West Virginia what a tremendous role model he has been to all of us new Senators, including the Senator now presiding in the chair. What a tremendous pillar of historical example he has been in carrying forth the traditions of the Senate and imparting those traditions to the new Senators, and then in his vision for the future to keep alive those traditions.

I have been so educated sitting in this Chamber listening to Senator BYRD bring in the history of the world to make his point on a particular argument in which he might be engaged. He recalls to mind, for me, the great orators who have been in this Chamber. Again, that is another part of he being a wonderful role model for all of the new Senators.

So I am eternally grateful, and I am especially honored that he would think me worthy of coming and listening to my comments today on education.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator for his generous and overly charitable remarks. I thank him very much.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the next 30 minutes of postcloture debate be equally divided between the majority and Senator HOLLINGS from the minority and that the time be deducted from each individual Senator as provided under rule XXII.

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

Mr. THOMAS. Madam President, I am waiting for one of our Senators. In the meantime, let me again say how important it is that we move on with what we started to do in this Chamber. We have been working on the education bill now for a very long time. The committee has done a great deal of work. But we find ourselves now sort of postponing consideration of the bill. This is the third time I have been in this Chamber today to ask for another hour of postcloture activity.

The time has come, certainly, for us to begin consideration of the bill, to begin to move forward, to begin to talk about those areas of disagreement, and to begin to offer the amendments that need to be considered.

I think, clearly, this bill is one of the most important issues on which we will be working. We have talked for a long time about the need for accountability. We have talked for a very long time about the need for additional funding. We have talked a long time about the flexibility that should exist when we have Federal money going to local and State governments so that there can be enough changes made to allow for the differences that exist in communities. Certainly that is important.

We have talked a lot about how we need to help teachers become more efficient and more effective in that they are the most important aspect of education.

We have talked about parental choice so that students can move between public schools in the various communities at the choice of the parent. Certainly that is an important item.

There will never be agreement on all these things among all of us, but certainly it is an issue with which we have to proceed. I look forward to that.

Madam President, I yield the floor to my friend from Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank the Chair and thank the distinguished Senator from Wyoming for his leadership in this debate.

Madam President, I will just take a few moments to again speak on the very important issue of education and the legislation we have pending before us, and to urge my colleagues to support the motion to proceed.

I believe we have spent close to a week—perhaps more than a week—talking about education without having yet taken a single vote on an amendment.

I believe this issue is of such great importance that while we do not want to shortchange the amount of time we spend on this issue, and while we do not want to short circuit the process, we also do not want to become victims of the process.

I saw last year where we spent weeks on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and where we had other items of important business that would interrupt the education debate, and where we would return to the education debate, and while there was never a formal filibuster, the effect last year was to have a filibuster by amendment and by process, so that extraneous amendments prevented us from ever getting a final vote on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the reauthorization of this important bill. The losers, as always, are the American people and, more critically, the children of this country.

I urge my colleagues to allow us to proceed with the bill. I know there are good-faith negotiations occurring on important subjects. I have been involved in those. I think they are in good faith. I applaud the efforts that are ongoing. But we have spent a long time on this issue. The differences now are fairly small, whether it be in funding or whether it be in policy. It is critically important that we go ahead and proceed to consider the bill and begin the process of offering amendments and debating this issue.

The process of what occurred in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the bill that was voted out of that committee, as well as the bipartisan policy agreements that have been reached through negotiations, have produced, I suspect, 95-percent agreement now on policy. In both of these instances—both the committee and the negotiated agreement—we have taken a tremendous step forward in education in this country and have made a tremendous move toward real educational reform.

Let me mention a few of the areas. Let's reiterate them again. We must have accountability in educational reform. To pour billions of dollars more into the Federal contribution to educate our children without requiring real accountability would not only be foolhardy but would be a waste of taxpayers' dollars. So we must have accountability.

The bill that is before us—the negotiations and what has resulted from those negotiations—brings us real accountability, and it transforms the way we have thought about accountability for the last 35 years. What it has been in the past has been asking the local schools, local education authorities: Are you spending the money the way we prescribed that you spend it? That is what we have defined as accountability. Did you fill out the paperwork correctly? Did you cross the t's correctly? Did you dot the i's correctly? Did you spend it the way we prescribed you to spend it?

Whether it made good sense locally or not, whether it was in the best interest of the children or not, if it conformed with what we in Washington believed was the right way to spend it, we

said, then that is accountability. You have met the accountability requirements.

We have changed that and gone in a whole new direction. We have said every child ought to be tested every year. We ought to know whether or not children are learning. We are taking a giant step away from how old are you, what grade should you be in, have we shuffled you through the system, to what do you know.

I have heard the critics of testing and the testing proposals. Testing is by no means perfect, but I ask my colleagues, is there a better way to measure what children know? The answer is, of course, no. That is the best tool we have to know whether or not children are progressing academically, whether or not they should be moved ahead and promoted. That is very important. If you are going to have real accountability, you must not only measure through testing; there must be consequences to those schools that are not teaching, that are not succeeding, that are not preparing their students to go out into the workplace and compete in this global economy.

Under this bill, there are real consequences for those schools that will not teach and will not change. Yes, additional resources; yes, additional help, but in the end, if a school will not change and it will not teach and the children are being trapped in a school that is handicapping their future, then we say, in this legislation, there should be consequences to those schools.

The best consequence, the best way you hold schools accountable is to ensure that parents have greater choices. Yes, after schools are given an opportunity to improve and to address the shortcomings of failing schools, and still they do not make the changes, then we would say parents should have the right to take those children and move them to the public school of their choice. I would prefer that the choices be expanded, but in the bill before us at least there is the expansion of parental choice in the sense that they can go to another public school. Competition is good in any sector in our economy. It is good in business and in education. The public schools will be better when that element of competition is injected.

The evidence is overwhelming, whether you look at Milwaukee, WI, or whether you look at the State of Florida, that where you have competition, you have improvement in the public schools.

We recently heard from the Milwaukee superintendent of schools, the longest choice program in the Nation. His testimony was that the public schools in Milwaukee are better today because of the choice element, because parents of low-income children have the right to take those children and move them into a private, public, parochial, or charter school where they have a whole range of options; that choice has made the public school system better. We suggest in this legislation that real consequences mean greater parental choice.

We also say that where a school will not change and will not teach, those parents should be able to find supplemental services to assist in the education of their children. Parents should not be forced to sacrifice the future of their children because they happen to be in a school that will not make the academic investment in those children.

We say, yes, if a parent has children who are in a school that after years does not improve and is still not doing the job, is still a failing school, the parents ought to be able to take those children to a Sylvan Learning Center or they should be able, with their title I dollars, to hire a tutor. They ought to be able to take that portion of the Federal contribution to local education and ensure that their children are not sacrificed in a failing system.

Accountability is a huge part of the legislation that is before the Senate and that I hope we will begin voting on soon.

A second aspect of this legislation is the consolidation that occurs. One of the frustrations of local educators for many years has been the plethora of programs that we have created at the Federal level, oftentimes well intended, oftentimes with a very good purpose in mind, and frequently never funded by the Federal Government, just authorized without any funding. Sometimes when we question officials at the Department of Education about how many programs they have, it is very difficult to get a clear, unequivocal answer. They simply don't know how many programs are under their jurisdiction that have been created through the years, since the department was established, authorized, some funded, some not funded, some having wilted away but still on the books. They don't know how many programs there are.

We know that while it has been repeated frequently during the debate on education that we contribute between 7 and 9 percent of the local school's budget from the Federal Government, we contribute about 50 percent of the paperwork with which local educators are required to comply. That is probably the best gauge of how many Federal mandates accompany that 7 to 9 percent of the funding at the local level.

What the President has suggested and what the committee has produced in the committee deliberations is a bill that consolidates this plethora of Federal programs into a more manageable, more simple stream of funding for the local schools. The funding is still there but, as a result, there is far greater flexibility than there has been in the past because we have consolidated these many programs.

That is something that needs to be done. Local educators acknowledge that. Yes, every program has a constituency. When we try to consolidate, to eliminate, we hear from those constituencies. But let the educators of this country realize, there is no reduction in funding. In fact, the funding is dramatically increased in this legislation.

The flexibility for local educators to use those resources in the area they feel is most essential for local educational reform is enhanced under this legislation. Whether that is class size reduction, hiring more teachers, whether it is tutors, school nurses, whether it would be a form of merit pay, paying the best teachers more, enhanced flexibility would be there for these local educators under this legislation. So consolidation is a very important part of what we are doing in this education reform.

Then what I hope comes out of the ongoing negotiations is a form of the President's proposal regarding charter States. This was a bold initiative that President Bush campaigned on and spoke eloquently about and that has been whittled down and whittled down and diminished and deluded, but there is a form of it still remaining. We are talking about perhaps seven States as a demonstration project with perhaps 25 local educational authorities or school districts that would be given the option of applying for this new status created called charter States. In last year's deliberations, we called it the Straight A's Program.

The concept is we will give States broad new flexibility to consolidate streams of funding and to make local education reforms in exchange for strict accountability standards.

The concept of charter schools has for years been used successfully across the country. That is why they are increasing in number. We say to a charter school: You have a waiver in effect from local and State education requirements in exchange for results we expect from what you are doing in that charter school. If it works at the local school, why shouldn't it work if we give States, the laboratories of democracy, that kind of flexibility. So States would be given a new element of freedom and flexibility in exchange for a performance agreement with the Department of Education and the Secretary of Education as to what they intend to accomplish and how they intend to accomplish it and ensuring that there is going to be increased annual yearly progress.

That is a good deal for schools; it is a good deal for States; and it is a good deal for the American people. There will be a little bit of that proposal that survives so that a few States can apply, and a few States will be willing to try it, to break out of the old mold. The result will be an example that a lot of other States will want to try in the future.

I commend the President for his strong emphasis upon early childhood

education and particularly his emphasis upon reading programs, his willingness to triple funding for reading programs. So often the tragedy of shuffling children through the system all begins in kindergarten and first grade and second grade, where the foundation is not adequately laid. The President's emphasis upon reading is to be commended and is an important part of this legislation as well.

One aspect that I and my staff have been involved in, that will not get a lot of attention but is going to be a very significant step, is the change that is made in the bilingual education program.

Historically, that has been a competitive grant program. Many States that have had growing minority populations—particularly—in the State of Arkansas, with a growing population have received almost nil under the current system. Because of the changes made in the legislation, we will not only have increased funding nationwide, but we will have a formula that will benefit many of these States such as Arkansas and Alabama, and many of the rural States that have fared so poorly under the past approach on bilingual education. In addition, there will be emphasis—in fact, a requirement—on teaching English in these programs.

This is a huge step in the proper direction of reform. I know my colleague, Senator BOND, is on the floor. I am anxious to hear what he has to say on this subject. Senator BOND has been involved in education for years.

I will conclude by addressing an issue that we have heard repeatedly on the floor, and we are going to hear a lot more about it in the next couple weeks, and that is the issue of spending. For those who say this is an unfunded mandate upon the States, for those who say it is unconscionable to do education reform without fully funding the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, I just say: Where have you been? This is the first time that the Republican Senate, with a Republican Congress and with a Republican President, has had an opportunity to reauthorize the ESEA. Historically, with a Democrat President and Democrat Congress, the funding increases when ESEA has been reauthorized, have been between 5 and 6 percent. So to demand that the only way you will support education reform is if there is a full commitment to funding ESEA for the next so many years is really disingenuous.

The President has made a strong commitment to dramatic increases in education funding—in fact, more than in any other Cabinet department—and has been willing to move even higher on those numbers in the negotiation process across the aisle.

So I just plead with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we not allow a bogus debate on funding to distract us from the very important task of giving the children of this country and the families of this country the kind of education reform they deserve, and that will truly put meaning behind what has become a very popular phrase—''leaving no child behind.'' We are leaving them behind today. We have an opportunity to leave far fewer behind. Every child can learn if given the opportunity and the expectations.

This legislation, through accountability and flexibility, testing requirements, through increased funding, does many good things in moving us in the right direction toward greater educational opportunity for every child in America. I hope that we get on with it, get on the bill, and pass the bill and send it to the President, who has been a dynamic leader on education reform in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I know I am out of order, but I do not see a representative from the other side. I ask unanimous consent that I may be allowed to proceed out of order for up to 8 minutes.

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

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I rise today to support President Bush's education initiative and S. 1, the Better Education for Students and Teachers Act. As a new member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee I have been involved in the tremendous bipartisan progress that has been made in Congress thus far on public education reform. I look forward to the swift conclusion of the debate, the signing ceremony that will take place, but most importantly—the improvements to public education that will result to ensure that ''no child is left behind.''

It is obvious that the American public places improvement of our public education system as a top priority. Parents and communities are aware of the same statistics that have been provided to us. Our children are not reading at the basic level. Too many students never graduate from high school. U.S. students lag behind too many countries in science and math. Our higher education institutions are spending too much money on remedial education and businesses have to spend billions of dollars teaching their employees what the schools did not teach them.

I believe there is agreement that education, while a national priority, is a responsibility and obligation of the state and local communities. The education of our children has always been carried out and implemented at the local level. The American public is interested in the debate here in Washington, but they understand what really matters is what takes place in the schools and classrooms around the country—not the Senate or House floors.

The decisions that are going to improve children in a particular school district are going to be made by the teachers, parents, school board members, and administrators who know the names of the children, know their problems, know their opportunities.

Every single one of us have a vested interest in the success of today's generation and future generations of youth in this country. Therefore, we have a vested interest in the improvement of our public education system.

For many decades Congress has debated numerous education issues, including the federal role and federal funding. Even after the completion of this specific debate, discussions and debates will continue. The debates continue because we are constantly seeking ways to improve upon our public education system.

However, we must be careful. One of the main reasons that I support President Bush's plan and S. 1 is because it streamlines and consolidates many of the countless individual education programs that exist. We have all read the reports and have heard several colleagues talk about the 760 education programs scattered throughout 39 different federal agencies. According to the Education Commission of the States, ''In the 1999–2000 budget, the federal government spent almost $44 billion on elementary and secondary education programs. This funding was spread across 35 different education programs in 15 different federal departments.''

All the programs that exist today were started with good intentions. Some I have advocated and numerous others I have supported. All along, all of us have tried to do the right thing. But—what have they gotten us?

Today, our good intentions have gotten us burdensome regulations, unfunded mandates, and unwanted meddling. Parents, teachers, and local school officials have less and less control over what happens in the classroom. The myriad of federal education programs make the jobs of our school administrators and teachers harder than they should be. Teachers are taken of the task of teaching, preparing lesson plans, taking on after school student activities and instead are researching for grant opportunities, reading regulations, preparing applications, filling out paperwork requirements, complying with cumbersome rules, and reporting on how they spend the little federal funding received. We even have teachers and administrators that decide that the little extra federal funding is not worth the time and effort that it will take to apply and comply so they do not even bother with the process. Instead of empowering parents, teachers, and local school officials we have empowered the federal government and bureaucrats.

We have slowly eroded the opportunity for creativity and innovation on the local level and have established a system where supposedly the Olympians on the hill know what is best for the peasants in the valley.

Knowing where we now are, how can we afford to keep spending our federal

education dollars in the same way we have been doing for years if it is not simulating academic success for our children? We can't. Not only will I not stand for it, but parents, teachers, school boards, communities, and businesses cannot afford to stand for continued lackluster performance and failure in some cases.

The President's education plan and S.1 are huge steps in the right direction recognizing that the answer to improving public education does not lie within the Halls of Congress or in the granite buildings of the downtown Washington education establishment. As an editorial from one of my homestate newspapers, the Southeast Missourian stated, ''The answer to fixing America's educational woes rests with individual school boards and passionate educators. The bureaucrats must reduce the red tape and mandates that are strangling our schools. Give those who know best the time, talent and incentives to finally fix public education.'' I agree with what the Southeast Missourian said.

The President's proposal and S. 1 stress high academic achievement for all students so the achievement gap that exists will erode. The legislation stresses the importance of literacy and making certain our children can read. We know that reading is a basic, essential, and fundamental tool for personal growth and self-sufficiency. Reading provides the foundation for all other learning and eventually for productive employment. Accountability, as well as flexibility, are incorporated in the Bush plan and S. 1 to ensure that the needs of the individual child and school can be addressed while also ensuring that our tax dollars are resulting in academic success. Finally, one of the most important aspects from my perspective—advocation for increased parental involvement. It is very simple and well documented. Children whose parents are involved in their education from the very beginning are more successful in school and score higher on tests. Parents are a child's first teacher, and we can do things to help them be better teachers.

Parental involvement, especially as it relates to early childhood education, is something that everyone has heard me talk a lot about, and they are going to hear more about it.

There is bipartisan recognition that we must try something new to improve our public education system. My dear friend and colleague, the Senate leader from the other side of the aisle, Senator BYRD, said the following on the Senate floor in the 105th Congress:

> . . . when one goes the last mile of the way and concludes from what he sees, from what he hears, and from what he reads, concludes from analytical reports about public education that we are not doing well, that there is something working, then it seems to me that, in the interest of the public schools system, we may have to try a little different approach, else the confidence of the American people in that system and the support of the American people for that system are going to erode. We see that happening.

From all the newspaper articles, television reports, letters to the office, et cetera, we know that the American people want more, demand more, and deserve more when it comes to public education. Let's put partisan rhetoric aside, let's move past the squabbling, and let's move forward on our common goal. Let's get on with our business. Let's have our votes. We want to be a positive contribution to educating our children for a lifetime of achievement.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the next 30 minutes of postcloture debate be equally divided between the majority and minority parties and the time deducted from each Senator as provided under rule XXII.

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

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I rise to speak again on the education bill that I hope will be before the Senate very shortly. We have been talking about this bill off and on for 2 weeks. It is time for the Senate to get down to the real debate.

Let us bring the bill forward, propose amendments, let everyone have their say, and send a bill to President Bush he can sign. We have the opportunity in this debate to change the course of public education in this country, and I believe it needs changing.

We have seen year after year, in the last 25 years in this country, more spending going into public education from the Federal level but not improvements in the overall education of our children. I do not think throwing more money at education is the only answer. We are going to put more money into education, but we are going to do it in a reformed education system. In fact, we need to shake up the system.

We have some very good public schools in our country, but we don't have a uniform standard of public schools where we can say all of them meet the test of giving every child the chance to reach his or her full potential with a public education. That should be the standard. We must be able to help each individual child learn in the best way that child possibly can, if that child is going to reach his or her full potential. That is exactly what we are trying to do with the bill we hope to bring up soon.

I will talk about a couple of amendments I want to include in the bill that are not included now. One is to help bring more good teachers into the classroom. Every Member knows of a teacher shortage in a public school in their area. Rural schools have problems, urban schools have problems getting qualified teachers in some of the core subject matters, and especially math and science are lacking in qualified public teachers.

We are trying to add some creativity into the process by giving incentives to school districts to bring more people into the teaching profession. We must be a partner with the States. It is the States that set the salaries and the benefits and the hours for the teachers. That is first and foremost what needs to be improved. I don't know of one public school teacher making enough money—not one. Not even in our best public schools are teachers making what they are worth. Our teachers should be making what our major corporate CEOs are making. What they are doing is more important than what any corporate CEO could possibly do. They are determining if our democracy is going to stay intact. We should pay them more. Most States are trying to do that.

My home State of Texas is in its legislative session now and they are looking for ways to augment what teachers are paid, as well as benefits for teachers. I imagine most States are trying to do it because I think we all agree, public school teachers are not being paid what they are worth.

We can do more at the Federal level where we can't set the salaries and we can't set the hours and we can't set the school days. We can be creative. We can reach out, and we have done so, as in the Troops to Teachers Program which would go for the many wonderfully qualified military personnel who are retiring, sometimes at the age of 40, 45. They are looking for a second career. We want them to go into teaching. Many of them have skills where there are teacher shortages.

For instance, a military person is fluent in French, Spanish, Chinese, or Japanese. We have schools all over our country that cannot teach these courses because they don't have qualified teachers. We are offering incentives for alternative certification to get those people into the classrooms in their areas of expertise, although they don't have educational certification or educational degrees.

Someone has a math degree, but they didn't get an educational degree. However, they are very qualified to teach math. Why not give them an incentive to come into the classroom and teach the area in which they are expert?

My amendment will be called careers to classrooms. It is modeled after the Troops to Teachers Program. It says to a retiree of a computer firm, perhaps one of the wonderfully successful computer firms that has done well and the person can retire at the age of 40, 45, 50, or 55, if they would like to do something else, they are not ready to retire, why not encourage them to teach computer skills to our young people in the classroom by offering an incentive for an alternative certification for that

teacher to be able to come into the classroom with a minimum of hassle, a minimum of bureaucratic red tape. Let's break the red tape. Let's get the qualified people into our classrooms, targeting the schools that have teacher shortages—rural schools and urban schools.

My careers to classrooms amendment will be just such an incentive that we hope will reach out to more teachers or more potential teachers and bring them into the classroom and enrich the experience of the young people in the classroom.

The second amendment I am planning to offer, along with Senator SUSAN COLLINS, with the help of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI and others, is the single sex option for public schools. I believe if our public schools are going to compete, we are going to have to give every option to parents. Many parents can afford to send their children to private schools. So they have their young girl attend a girls' school, or their boy attend a boys' school.

However, if you go to public schools or you cannot afford to send your children to private schools, you probably don't have that single sex option. It has proven, time and time and time again, some young people at certain ages, usually in that junior high school to high school age range, and not later than elementary school, some young people do so much better in a single sex atmosphere. It was found girls do better in math in a single sex atmosphere in those age levels. It was found that rowdy boys do better in a single sex atmosphere, particularly in an urban setting.

Why not allow parents the options? We are not talking mandate. Many parents prefer to have their children in coeducational schools. Some parents might want to give a special needs child that single sex atmosphere. They can't afford to send their children to private schools, so why not let them have the option of going to their school board and saying they would like to have a single sex math class in the fifth grade in the elementary school. Why not give them the option? We want to take away the barriers being put in front of the parents, putting schools in fear they may be sued if they have a single sex educational opportunity.

There would be a requirement for a comparable opportunity for young people of the other sex. That is fair. We want that to be allowed, also.

We want to offer all the options a parent could possibly have if the parent had the opportunity to go to parochial schools or private schools for their children. We want those options to be available in public schools. I will offer the single sex amendment to this bill because I want to grow the opportunities; I don't want to kill them. I want public schools to be the best.

I always like to proudly say I am a total product of public schools. I grew up in a small town of 15,000. I went to public schools. I graduated from the University of Texas and the University of Texas Law School. I want every child to have the same opportunity I had. I want every child to be able to go to public school and compete in any arena. I have competed in debates, I have had opponents who have had a wonderful Harvard education, and I won. I couldn't have done that without the quality public education.

I want every child to have the same opportunity I had so that young people with private school degrees and public school degrees will have the equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Madam President, the choices are what make our country great. The basis we must provide is quality public education. I am excited about the opportunity to reform education, and I am excited about the President's plan. I am excited about what Congress will be able to do to make sure that future generations have the quality public education that has been the foundation of our democracy. That is what I want for every child for the future in our country.

I hope we can get on to the bill. I think it is time. We have talked about policy and all the priorities that we have for a long time—about 10 days now. It is time for us to start amending this bill and going forward so we will have the winds of change in this country in public education. I urge my colleagues to come together and make it happen.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent I may speak notwithstanding the previous agreement. If someone from the other side of the aisle arrives to the floor, I will yield.

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

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, I rise to continue our discussion as we prepare to bring to the floor a very important bill that I believe realizes the dream of the President of the United States, his campaign pledge, the vision he has put forward of dramatically shaping and reshaping and modifying and changing Washington and the Federal Government's role in education.

We are at a unique time. I believe never before in this body, at least in the history of the last 35 years since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first enacted, have the American people, and their Representatives on both sides of the aisle, been so focused on education, kindergarten through 12th grade, and the reform of education so that we truly leave no child behind.

With that attention and that focus, come great expectations. I believe as a Congress we must seize that opportunity. We must work together, both sides of the aisle, to work with the President of the United States and take advantage of that opportunity to creatively improve how the Federal Government addresses education and to answer the question: What is the appropriate Federal role and how can we best leverage that Federal role to leave no child behind?

I spoke a little bit to that point yesterday. It was to get Washington out of the business. Remember, of the total amount of money spent on education for K–12 in this country, only 7 percent comes from the Federal Government—from the taxpayer, I should say, through the Federal Government.

In my mind, it means we need to change that Washington role from one of regulator to one of education investor—to invest in education and to regulate only to the degree that we accomplish that goal of reducing the achievement gap, of boosting the academic achievement of all children to make them more ready for the world they inherit. It comes down to the concept of allowing innovation and creativity to address the problems we have identified and then coupling the freedom to innovate and create, the freedom to teach with measurable results, which clearly is a Federal role, to couple whatever requirements and assessments we place, mandates—yes, mandates—that we place in terms of testing and assessing that we attach to freedom and flexibility, to have those measurable results.

We must continue, I believe, to cut the redtape, to cut the unnecessary bureaucracy that has resulted from a litany, a myriad of programs that were all well-intended. They were Federal programs passed in this body over the last 35 years, but they have resulted in a complex network of overlapping responsibility in terms of the target population: excessive and confusing bureaucracy, and paperwork. We need to get rid of the overly prescriptive Federal mandates on the Federal role in education, those mandates put on the floor, taken through the legislative arena, and imposed on our communities. I believe it is our opportunity today to cut that red tape and remove those overly prescriptive mandates.

I think the result of our discussion and debate on this bill, once we are allowed to bring it to the floor, will result in innovation, in creativity, all of which will translate, again, to leaving no child behind.

One aspect of our bipartisan discussion of the last 3 months that I look forward to talking more about at the appropriate time is what is called Straight A's, the Academic Achievement for All Act. That is why it is called Straight A's, which really in a demonstrable, optional way allows for a consolidation of a lot of the programs that we have inherited—given that

consolidation of programs in funding all the way down to the State or down to the district—and allows those funds to be used but attaches them to demonstrable, measurable results of academic achievement.

This is, again, a demonstration program that hopefully will allow up to seven States to participate. They will have what is called a performance agreement. In that performance agreement with the Secretary of the Department of Education and the administration, there will be high standards, high accountability, measurable results coupled with freedom, with consolidation of programs so we can, with a performance agreement, link, to the maximum extent possible, flexibility and freedom to innovate with measurable results.

I see we have other Members on the floor. As I said, by unanimous consent I will be glad to yield the floor at this juncture and look forward to coming back and continuing a discussion of what is in the underlying bill as well as what I hope will be added to the bill over the course of the day as the language becomes available.

Madam President, I request recognition to briefly speak on behalf of the leader.

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

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the next 60 minutes of postcloture debate be equally divided between the majority and the minority parties and the time be deducted from each individual Senator as provided under rule XXII.

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

The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Tennessee.

Madam President, I rise today to speak about the landmark educational reform bill and plan we are currently debating, and in fact are currently negotiating, a plan that, I think, if it reaches its proper drafting conclusion and, most importantly, is adequately funded, will spur bold changes and innovations in our public schools and will ultimately help improve the quality of education for every child in Connecticut and every child in America.

It is premature at this moment to talk about this comprehensive legislation with total certainty and in all of its details, so I intend to make a fuller statement about the bill once the negotiations are complete. But I did want to come to the floor today as we work out the final pieces of this complicated policy puzzle to offer both a few congratulations and a few concerns about what I would call this important near agreement on reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Let me start by saying how encouraged I am about the process we have followed for formulating this plan to reauthorize ESEA and its prospects for stirring a real revolution in our public educational system.

The discussions we have had over the last several weeks involving Senate Democrats and Republicans and the White House have been a model of how this place should work. There has been civility. There has been healthy debate. There has been disagreement from time to time. But there has also ultimately been a shared sense of common purpose. We have had our disagreements—some of them profound—but the Members and our staff have negotiated in good faith and with good will. In doing so, I think we have demonstrated that we can find common ground on a consequential issue and move this country forward as we do so. This can be a real breakthrough given some of the rancor and division that have plagued the education debate too often in recent years.

I commend our leaders, my colleagues from both parties, the President, and representatives from the White House who participated in these negotiations. I think we all want to realize the same goal, which is the best public educational system in the world. We all understand that today we have significant challenges ahead of us if we are going to achieve that goal.

We all want to close the persistent achievement gap separating the haves in our society from the have-nots. That is by far the biggest hurdle I think we have to overcome. We all want to deliver on the promise of equality and opportunity for every child. We all want to increase the supply of highly skilled workers, which we all know is critical to our future economic competitiveness and the long-term prosperity and security of this Nation. Now, through the reforms in this bill, we are not just talking the same points of principle; we are actually walking the same path to progress.

I am particularly encouraged and gratified that a number of the ideals and ideas that Senator BAYH and I and so many other Members of the new Senate Democratic coalition have been advocating for the past few years through our three R's reform bill and that so many of these ideas presented by the distinguished occupant of the Chair, and other colleagues, are reflected in the historic agreement on a core bipartisan amendment to ESEA that we are very close to achieving.

As some of my colleagues know, we started out with the three R's bill with the new vision of education policy, one that focuses not on progress but on performance, not on rules and regulations but on results, not so much on what we put into the system, although obviously that is important, but ultimately on the real test, which is what we get out of the system. What are the results? How well are our children being educated?

We drew up a reform blueprint that translates these principles into policies, calling for increased investments to help our public schools, help every child learn at a high level, for greater flexibility to allow the local educators to decide, as they know best, how best to spend their Federal dollars to meet the specific needs of their students, and also to encourage innovation and experimentation with different educational reform models at the local level.

We have in this bill stronger accountability. That is the way we test the results. That is the way we make sure we are not giving up on any child in America and that we are going to take them to the highest level their God-given potential gives them to achieve in education. That is particularly true of low-income and minority students. We propose this new equation, which we call invest in reform, and insist on results, as a possible bridge to a bipartisan compromise.

Last year, President Bush went across a bridge of his own and embraced some of those same goals and values and articulated a similar reform plan for realizing them, and for encouraging and accelerating the growing movement in many States towards standards and accountability—focus on results. What are our children learning?

This year, the President made that plan a legislative priority and signaled his seriousness not just on the subject of education but on the kind of educational reform that is embraced in our three R's bill.

It was focused on transforming the Federal Government into a catalyst for change, on demanding results, and on no longer tolerating failure, so that this bill, about which we are now debating a motion to proceed and around which negotiations are continuing and coming ever closer to a bipartisan agreement, builds on that common ground we have forged on those critical innovative ingredients to the recipe of reform.

The centerpiece of the three R's plan and of the President's blueprint was a tough new accountability system that would reward States in making real progress in meeting high standards while sanctioning those that did not and would require local districts to take strong remedial action to fix chronically failing schools.

We are not going to sit back and let schools continue to fail to educate our kids. We are not going to continue to push kids ahead from one grade to another just because a year has passed, regardless of whether the school has taught them anything or whether they have made progress.

This is a system that tracks the progressive reform that State leaders around America, including my own State of Connecticut, have already implemented. It has proven effective.

I will say that in the negotiations that have gone on over the last few weeks, we have had some differences on how to set those standards for judging performance, which is to say, How do

we define progress for our students? How do we strike the right balance between truly holding schools and States accountable for raising academic achievement, and particularly closing the achievement, without setting the bar so high that we end up grading most schools as failing?

We have worked through those problems over the last few weeks.

I want my colleagues to know that we have reached an agreement certainly on policy on a reasonable and realistic middle ground. That agreement is now being drafted. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity to present it in this Chamber before very long. But it is a significant, real, and hopeful agreement.

While I would have liked, in some ways, to have made the provisions stronger, I have not given up hope of enhancing them in our discussions with the House. I do think this agreement is suitably explicit and demanding, as well as suitably fair, and will achieve our goal of driving real change and bold reform. I hope soon to be able to share the details of that agreement with our colleagues.

But as much as I appreciate this significant bipartisan achievement, I remain deeply concerned—as I believe almost all my colleagues on this side of the aisle do—about one missing, indispensable ingredient to the recipe for genuine educational reform in America, and that is investment. It is clear to us that these reforms will not work without a significant increase in resources from the Federal Government.

To date, the Federal Government supplies only about 7 cents of every dollar spent on public schools in America. Under the President's current budget, we will not provide much more than that. Some would go a step further and suggest we may, in fact, be setting up schools and children to fail if we do not back up the new demands for results that are in this bill—which we all agree are critically important—with new dollars to meet those demands. If that becomes the case, then we do not have a system of genuine accountability; we have a system that sets standards and does not help the local school districts meet those standards.

We clearly recognize, of course, that money alone will not solve the problems plaguing our public schools. Money will not spur innovation and lasting reform, and it will not streamline inert and inefficient bureaucracies. Money will not set high standards and hold schools responsible for meeting them.

That is why we New Democrats pushed so hard in this bill to shift our Federal focus from process to performance, to streamline duplicative and ineffective programs, to accentuate the freedom of local teachers to innovate—they are the heart of our whole educational system—to have principals enact reforms, superintendents to set new standards, and try new, bold ideas.

That is why we pushed so hard to recognize that we cannot have more blue ribbon schools without less redtape. And not least of all, that is why we who advanced the three R's bill decided that imposing real consequences on schools and districts that chronically fail to educate disadvantaged children is a necessary and critical element of a true educational reform proposal.

But we also recognize that money is a crucial part of the equation. We simply cannot expect States and local districts to improve the quality of teaching and reduce class size to help every child—for instance, an immigrant child to master English, to reconstitute chronically underperforming schools, and in particular to end the national disgrace of having African American and Latino American children reading and doing math, on the average around our country, at a level that is substantially below their fellow students in America's schools—if we do not substantially increase our investments in our public schools. This is something most Americans recognize, which is why there is overwhelming support for significantly increasing our national investment in education.

At home, in conversations I have had with people in Connecticut, and from public opinion surveys I read about American attitudes, it is clear that the American people put education at the top of their priority list, and sensibly so. The American people know you cannot bring millions of children, particularly low-income children who cannot read, up to grade level on the cheap. It cannot be done.

Consider a few specific examples, such as teacher quality. The reality is that we must hire, train, and ultimately retrain about 2 million new teachers over the next several years—2 million new teachers over the next several years.

The reality is, 95 percent of urban school districts are experiencing a shortage of qualified math and science teachers and that 50 percent of new teachers quit high-need schools during the first 3 years of their teaching there.

The reality is, educational reform will not succeed if we do not provide every child with a good teacher. Many people in our society do important work, but no one in our society today does more important work than a good teacher. We learned that lesson in Connecticut, which has invested millions of dollars—tens of millions, hundreds of millions—over the last several years to raise teachers' salaries, to attract and train high-quality professionals, and develop a nationally recognized mentoring program to nurture young teachers in their early years in the profession. That has produced, I am proud to say, one of the best teaching forces in the Nation. In turn, they have helped to produce consistently high scores by Connecticut students on national education tests.

The bill we are working on will push all of America in all of America's school districts to take similarly strong steps to strengthen the quality of their teaching force, setting a firm goal of having all teachers in the highest poverty districts highly qualified within 4 years. But reaching that benchmark is clearly going to take a significant increase in funding for recruitment, retention, and professional development. We have an obligation—since we are making these demands on the local school districts and on the schools and on the teachers—to help States meet those high standards by giving them adequate financial resources to do so.

Also, consider title I, the heart of our traditional Federal focus on disadvantaged children. Here again, the distinguished occupant of the Chair, the junior Senator from Arkansas, and I have talked often about this problem. It is real, from the cities of Connecticut to the cities and towns of Arkansas. The reality is that one-fifth of urban and rural districts, with 50 to 75 percent of their students living in poverty, receive no title I funding today. It is hard to believe.

Title I was a program established 35 years ago to help disadvantaged kids, low-income kids. Yet today, I repeat, one-fifth of urban and rural districts, with 50 and 75 percent of their students living in poverty, receive no title I funding. That is, in good part, because we do not target those dollars well with the formulas we are using today. That is a shortcoming we are working very hard to fix in these negotiations that are ongoing. But it is also because we are not providing the resources—enough money—to fully serve disadvantaged children and carry out our responsibilities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

According to independent estimates, it would take $17 billion to fully fund title I, an increase of about 100 percent above current funding levels. That is an annual number.

The accountability system we are working on now will help make title I a much more effective program for kids in high-poverty districts—whether they live in Connecticut, Arkansas, or anywhere else throughout America—requiring States and local districts to turn around chronically underperforming schools, empowering parents whose children are trapped in those failing schools with new choices and new options to help their kids get a better education, sanctioning States that do not make progress in raising the academic achievement of disadvantaged students, and closing the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

Again, we cannot expect those interventions to succeed, those choices to be meaningful, or those sanctions to be fair if we do not invest in reform while we are insisting on results. That means infusing title I with substantial increases in funding.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration has to date been unwilling to match their commitment to reform

that we are so near agreement on with commensurate resources on which we are still some distance from agreement. The President's initial proposal for ESEA programs included only a $700 million increase for the next fiscal year and less than $500 million for title I. In the last few days, the White House has increased that now to a total number of more than $2 billion. But this counteroffer is still far from sufficient to meet either the needs we have identified or the demands we will place on America's schools with this legislation.

That is particularly hard to justify when we know that we are projecting a $200 billion surplus for next year, $69 billion of which apparently will be spent on the President's tax plan. That is almost 35 percent of the projected surplus next year for the tax plan and a little more than 1 percent for additional funding for education.

We can do better. Hopefully, together, as we have come some substantial distance on most of the critical policy issues facing American education over the last several weeks in our bipartisan negotiations, we can similarly close the gap when it comes to our remaining disagreement on resources to make reform real.

In the same spirit in which we have negotiated this agreement to insist on results, we appeal today to the President to join us in investing in reform. We have a unique opportunity at this moment, and we cannot afford to let it slip away. The truth is, we can afford to give every child in America a quality education. That is our responsibility and, if we do it right, that will guarantee that our future is brighter.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I wonder if the Senator would be good enough to yield for a question.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I certainly would.

Mr. KENNEDY. First of all, I commend the Senator for an excellent presentation and, more importantly, for all of his good work in the past weeks in helping move the process along and for the work that has been done in the past.

As the Senator spoke, one of the points he underlined was the need for additional funding. As we understand funding, for the Senator from Connecticut and myself, we are talking about investments. We are talking about investing in children and in their future and our Nation's future. The Senator has made that case very effectively.

I join with the Senator from Connecticut in the importance of developing the kind of blueprint which has been developed which we believe can really make a difference if it reaches out to the children who are out there who need the assistance. One of the major struggles and one of the major battles has been over funding.

Yesterday, we saw the President and our Republican friends make the announcement on the budget for this year and projected over future years. In that budget, the negotiators found $1.35 trillion in tax cuts over the next 11 years. Yet they declined to find the funding which would be necessary to support the amendment of our colleague and friend, Senator HARKIN.

As my colleague remembers, Senator HARKIN, during the budget debate, initiated an amendment that was passed with strong bipartisan support for $250 billion for education over the life of the budget. That virtually disappeared in these negotiations. That cannot be found. The position of the Senate, which was bipartisan, and the majority, is virtually eliminated.

I find it difficult. In looking over this budget and consulting with members of the Budget Committee and asking them whatever happened to it, it just disappeared. It virtually was eliminated. In that was the funding, as the Senator remembers, for the expansion of Head Start Programs. It had funding in terms of increased funding on title I. It had additional programs in terms of child care support, the block grant program, other programs that were targeted on children and needy children.

We have been told in these conversations that we have had with the administration: We are prepared to give some funds, some additional funds for title I, but we are unable to make a commitment in future years.

I notice in those budget figures that came out from the Budget Committee, they are prepared to list for millionaires what the reduction of their inheritance tax will be in the year 2011. Here we have, for the wealthiest individuals, a very clear roadmap about how their taxes are going to be reduced in 2011, but we can't get the administration to commit that over the next 4 years they are prepared to allocate sufficient funds so that the benefits of this bill will reach the children who are qualified to benefit from the program.

Is the Senator from Connecticut troubled by that development?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Responding, if I may, to the Senator from Massachusetts, this Senator certainly is troubled by that.

Let me say, before I respond directly, what a pleasure it has been to work with the Senator from Massachusetts on this bill. There is not a better lawmaker/legislator in the literal meaning of that word in this Chamber than the Senator from Massachusetts. I have seen his talents, his persistence, his knowledge, and his great skill as an advocate at work. I have actually enjoyed the experience.

I thank him for his leadership. He has been responsible for successive advances in the quality of life in our country, particularly for our children. If we can bring this one to a conclusion, it will be yet another extraordinary accomplishment that he has led, working not just with members of this party but across the aisle and, in fact, with the White House.

The numbers the Senator from Massachusetts cites are troubling to me. They are particularly troubling today, as the two of us have said, because we have essentially reached agreement on the core issues relating to this bill. Our staffs are drafting and we will meet again later in the day, but this is a substantial accomplishment. It shows that we have common purposes, and we can reach common ground across party lines, across Pennsylvania Avenue, because what is on the line here is the well-being of our children and the future of our country.

All of these agreements we have now reached and are drafting are just not going to mean anything much unless we help the States and local governments and school districts meet the additional responsibilities we are placing on them through this bill.

The Senator from Massachusetts has spoken about the amendment to the budget resolution introduced by Senator HARKIN, our colleague from Iowa. It passed with bipartisan support. It took over $200 billion from the tax plan, used it to pay down the debt, took a similar amount, over $200 billion, and asked that it be invested in education. This expresses the concern across the aisle here in the priority placed on education.

In that amendment, as I read it, over the 10 years there was approximately $100 billion of that money that was to go through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that we are considering now, about $50 billion there for the first 5 years which we are considering as part of this authorization; therefore, $10 billion a year. That is what was voted by this Senate in a bipartisan vote.

Here we are with the President saying to us that the most he can do at this point, as I understand it, is somewhat over $2 billion. And while so much more next year—$69 billion—is being put into the tax cut, 35 percent of the projected surplus in the tax cut, 1 percent is in education. I agree with the Senator. It doesn't make any sense to say we can't make a long-range commitment to the children of America for their education, but we can, in the budget resolution, somehow make a long-range commitment to the wealthiest taxpayers who, if I may say so personally, don't need the help as much as the children of America.

So the Senator is right. I say, again, when you think about the plenty that we have available to us, when you think about the strong economy we have had for the last several years, and the restraint we have shown at the Federal Government level that produces these extraordinary surpluses ahead, the likes of which we have never seen before, this all comes down to priorities and choices. How do we want to invest this money?

I say proudly, with the Senator from Massachusetts, who has been the leader, we want to invest it in our children's education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the 30 minutes allotted to the Democrats has expired.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, I want to take the next 7 or 8 minutes to complete the remarks I had begun 30 or 40 minutes ago. It really boils down to this whole theme of a change, a change in the Washington approach to education, from kindergarten through 12th grade. That is very much what I believe the underlying bill is all about. We recognize that 35 years and $125 billion later, we have failed to accomplish the original goal of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have not met that goal, that is we have not reduced the achievement gap between the served and underserved, or the advantaged and disadvantaged, and we want to accomplish that, working together in a bipartisan way, under the leadership of President Bush and the principles he has laid out.

An important element of the President's plan is flexibility based on local identification of the problems and challenges facing schools today, coupled with strong accountability—accountability for the taxpayer dollars that are being invested, accountability in exchange for the freedom that we, through this legislation, will give local schools, teachers, school districts, communities and States in return for measurable results.

As I mentioned, we must cut the red tape and get rid of the overly prescriptive regulations, which we know have not worked. We must change the Washington approach, and transform the Federal role from that of education regulator, which has not worked, to education investor, because we are investing in education, in policies that we know are successful, in programs that work. We must not reward programs that don't work by investing in them further.

Education investor versus education regulator. To me that's what it's all about.

One element of our education investment plan is a piece of legislation called Straight A's. The formal name, of course, is the Academic Achievement for All Act—a lot of A's in there, which is why we call it Straight A's. That is an easy way to remember what it is all about.

Ultimately, Straight A's addresses the fact that we know there is excessive regulation out there—well-intended, but excessive. It addresses the fact that we know there are and hundreds of programs, again well-intended, but programs that straitjacket our teachers to the point that they can no longer teach because they are spending all their time complying with federal law. Rather than teaching that individual child face-to-face, they are doing paperwork.

Straight A's will free them up of that red tape, get those regulations off their backs, so they can do what we want them to do, what we'd like to hold them accountable for doing: teaching our children. Yes, it's what they want, but more importantly, its what our children need and deserve.

Today they do not have that flexibility.

Straight A's is an optional program. There is no school district that must participate in this demonstration project if it chooses not to. That is the way it is outlined and presented in the bill. It is an optional program, limited to just seven States. Even if there is a great demand, we will limit it to seven States. Personally, I would like to increase the number of participation states, but in negotiations we decided that as many as seven States would have the option of being freed from regulations if they agree to be held accountable for strong, measurable results.

Straight A's is not a block grant. We hear that, and it scares people. Block grant means when you give money to a group of people en bloc instead of having a hundred different programs and saying the money has to be used for a computer or software or to hire another teacher. The idea is to give that money in the aggregate. This is not a block grant program. It is a performance grant, linked to results. There is strong accountability. It is not just giving the money away. I think we have done that for too long. If you look at the last 35 years, we have spent about $120 billion. And for that $120 billion we neither received nor demanded results.

What I think is great about this bill is that it provides both local control and flexibility. Local folks receive the funds, they are held accountable for results, but how they use those funds is up to them.

Teachers in a classroom know what they need. Is it a piece of software? If so, they can use the money for that. Is it a new computer? If so, they can use the money for that. Smaller class size? Those things are best determined by an individual school or perhaps an individual subject area of a school. Why should we be dictating that from above when local schools, teachers or parents can make those decisions and participate in the process?

It might be that this money could be used for reducing class size or improving technology, or hiring better teachers. I can also be used for teacher development. If, for example, a teacher does not feel qualified to teach in a certain area, that money, available for the first time, can be used for teacher development, to ensure that every child in this country is given the opportunity to be in a safe classroom, drug-free classroom, with an excellent teacher at the head of that class.

So, this is not a block grant, it is a performance agreement. Accountability is part of that agreement, it is written in. You will hear a lot about accountability, accountability and high standards, because we all feel very strongly that boosting student achievement, reducing that achievement gap, is the essence of accountability measurement.

For this increased flexibility we have built even higher standards of accountability. We have very specifically addressed the idea of targeting both for the title I component and the title II component. An element of targeting is written into the bill, and the demonstration project, to ensure that the money goes to the people who need it the most.

Today, States, localities, and school districts are the engines of change. Not Washington. We are locked into a system where change is not allowed. That is the sort of reform I am very hopeful we will be able to debate and put forward. We want to support that engine of change that is going on in States all across America. We want to encourage it, make it possible, because there are teachers out there who care, who want to teach, who will teach, if we get rid of the bureaucracy.

We have parents who care, nobody cares more about children than parents. But right now, they have little in the way of choice, very little power to direct resources. We talk about supplemental services and how important they are so parents can have some element of choice, some way to direct their taxpayer dollars in a direction that will benefit their children.

This is very different than the current system. That system over the last 35 years, involved always thinking up new programs, and funding those programs—usually inadequately—hoping it would do some good. So that now we have hundreds of programs each with their own bureaucracy, each their own requirements, each inadequately funded, and all of which have resulted in the failure we see today.

I just want to share with my colleagues what the Chicago school system officials—again, this is not partisan—reported to the task force on education that we conducted in the Budget Committee under the leadership of Senator PETE DOMENICI. Those officials from the Chicago school system extolled the virtues of flexibility and credit much of the success they have seen in Chicago to this increased flexibility. I quote:

> We know the system and we believe we know the things that it needs to have in order to improve. So the more flexibility we have with Federal and State funds, the easier it is to make those changes.

It makes sense. People at the local level can best identify those needs. So we need to free up, get rid of those unnecessary regulations which have tied their hands, that have prevented them from boosting student achievement and reducing that achievement gap.

We will have time, hopefully, in the next several days to continue the discussion of this concept of flexibility, accountability, and local control. I appreciate the opportunity to share with my colleagues this concept of Straight A's which will be a part of the underlying agreement by allowing greater flexibility, coupled with those demands of achievement.

Washington will become, not the education regulator, but the education investor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Tennessee for his leadership in the area of education. We do have an opportunity to reform the system. What Senator FRIST was discussing on the issue of accountability is the key. We can pass all the laws in the world. We can pass all the regulations that fill the books, but if we do not have accountability, it will not work.

We know that because it has not worked so far. We have poured in more money. We have tried to give mandates; we have given them red tape; we have given regulations; but that has not helped.

What we need to do is have accountability. We need parents, teachers, and principals to work together to determine what is best in any particular area. Then we need to test to see if it is working, not so we can point fingers. We need to test so we can identify weaknesses and strengthen those weaknesses. That is the difference.

We have 15 more minutes of our time, but I understand the Democrats would like to start a little early. I ask Senator SESSIONS to take up to 10 minutes, and then we will allow the Democrats to take the rest of the time until we determine the next amount of time that we will have on the subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak. I thank the Senator from Texas for her steadfast leadership and commitment to education. She has been a stalwart on these issues and cares about them deeply.

I also appreciate the leadership on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee of Dr./Senator BILL FRIST of Tennessee. He is one of the champions for doing something different this time.

Yes, we have the largest increase in spending percentagewise in education than any other budget item, but that is not what is so special about our education debate today.

Our debate today is about children. Our debate today is about making sure what we do furthers not just a system that has not been as effective as it should be, but actually furthers learning. That magic moment in a classroom when a child and teacher come together and learning occurs is what it is all about. Nothing else really counts.

When you visit schools as I have for the last year, 25 or more schools around the State, and talk to teachers, principals, and superintendents, and you hear them express their deep frustration at the burdensome strings that are attached to the Federal Government's education funding. The Federal Government only makes up about 10 percent of education spending—90 percent of it is funded by the State, and well it should be. States have always been the primary engine of education in America. The Federal Government does not need to take over.

I do not think there is anyone who will stand up and defend a major, massive Federal takeover of education in America, but we are paying a substantial sum of money. We spend $125 billion improving the education of low-income children, trying to narrow the gap, and it has not worked.

What do you learn when you talk to the teachers and principals? They are frustrated. They tell me the paperwork is substantial; the regulations are burdensome; the money they get can only be used for certain programs which may not be programs they need in their school, and they cannot use the money for things they think are important and would improve learning in their school system.

They tell me the Federal Government—and I spend a lot of time dealing with this issue—is creating mandates under IDEA. School officials are not able to discipline children with disabilities who are disrupting a classroom. They must keep them in the classroom day after day, even though the child is not benefiting from being in the classroom and even though that child is disrupting the other children in the classroom.

I started in recent months to ask teachers, Which would you rather do: Take the 10 percent from the Federal Government or let them go away and run the schools the way you want to run them?

You would be surprised how many say: Take your money and leave us alone. That is shocking. I am not sure they really meant that, but their hands went up when I asked that question. It reflects a deep frustration that we are not being good partners in this deal.

How do these programs come about? How have we ended up with 700 Federal education programs in America? It is something like this: Some State develops a good idea for an education program. A Senator or Congressman hears about it. He thinks it is popular and would be popular back home if he authored a bill to fund that kind of program around the country, and program after program gets adopted over the years.

Some are good, some not good. Some may have been good 15, 20 years ago, but are not good today. Some of the programs are successful, and my colleagues have to understand that some of those special programs were successful because the teacher who ran it was special, and they could make certain things happen in a way that cannot be replicated with a teacher who does not have that passion to run that particular program. So we created all these systems.

We send the money and say: You can only use it for this science instruction, this reading instruction, this math instruction. It has burdened our school systems and has not created as much good will as we would like.

I believe our legislation today is a big step in the right direction. This legislation is designed to provide a way to give schools more money with less strings in return for accountability.

Many Senators have talked about accountability. It seems to me they have a misconception of what accountability actually is. They seem to think accountability is when somebody spends Federal Government money precisely, exactly as written in a rule book. They think that if they spend it that way, that is accountability, even though learning has not been improved one bit.

The growing consensus, I think, is bipartisan. Our bill came out of the committee almost unanimously. We believe accountability means finding out if the children are learning. Have they benefitted from the instruction or are they falling behind? We must look at those test scores and make sure they are brought up to speed. We must ask what can be done, at the earlier grades, to identify when children are falling behind? We must not let even one child fall behind.

When the Secretary of Education, Dr. Paige, was in Houston, he doubled the number of students passing the basic Texas proficiency test. Dr. Paige says if you love children and care about them, you will test them and find out if they are keeping up. If they are not, and you love them, you figure out a way to help them do better. He did that in Houston. Some say he got a lot of extra money to administer these tests, but he did not. The third or fourth year he picked up bit extra, but in 5 years he doubled the test scores mainly through changes in policy by doing things differently, with the passion to achieve. If schools in his system were not conforming, he confronted them, and fixed them. He did not let continue to fail.

In Alabama we have an excellent State superintendent of education and some wonderful schools and magnificent teachers. The new superintendent believes in testing. He has been testing for some time, and test scores are moving upward. Some say the tests in Alabama may be the most difficult in the Nation. Students cannot get a degree if they do not pass the basic proficiency test, and the test scores are moving up. If a school allows children to move to a higher grade without learning, the State superintendent can take over the school system and fix it. The State is putting a lot of money into this testing, and we need to know it is being spent well.

Let's get out of the business of micromanaging schools. Let's make sure progress is being made, that children achieve, that the school system is not leaving children behind, that they are not being abandoned, are not given up on. Because when children reach the ninth grade, still unable to read, unable to do basic math, they drop out of school with no prospects for any good economic future.

We can do better. Every child may not be able to handle advanced mathematics and the high sciences, but most children are able to do the basic reading, writing, and mathematics necessary to be successful in America today.

Some complain about tests, calling it punishment, a way to categorize or stigmatize a child. I don't see it that way. Neither does Dr. Paige who believes it is part of a good education. The way to teach is to find out how children are learning and progressing. When we know what they need, we can do it better. I think it is the right thing to do.

First, we want the States to conduct the tests. We encourage them to develop tests that fundamentally are fair and objective. If a test focuses on basic reading, basic math, basic science, and students are tested on those things, how can anyone complain if a teacher teaches to the test? Isn't that what we want? Don't we want to make sure that the basics are not being overlooked in the classroom?

I am excited about the possibility today that, across the Nation, we could achieve a fraction of the progress that our Secretary of Education achieved in Houston.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Will the Senator yield?

The distinguished Senator from Alabama mentioned Rod Paige was the superintendent of schools in Houston before he became Secretary of Education. What struck me most about Rod Paige's attitude was that he wanted testing. He wanted parents to have a choice. He wanted parents to be able to send their children wherever they thought they could get a better chance. He was open to it. Because he was open, the public schools ended up winning the competition. More students came into public schools rather than into private schools because he said, I want parents to have the freedom.

He has had the experience at the grassroots level. He is not somebody reading about it out of the book. He has been there. He had a troubled school system, and he turned it around by seeking creativity, by seeking openness, by seeking choice, by seeking more opportunities for parents, because he wants parents to know they are getting the very best chance for their children.

That is what struck me about Rod Paige's style of leadership.

Mr. SESSIONS. I agree. That is precisely the way I feel. To hear him talk with such compassion and concern and determination was exciting.

His advice was, ''[If we don't care about a child, we will let them just go along and we won't find out if they are falling behind.]'' What happens if we don't test? A child will be left behind.

He deeply believes in President Bush's vision that no child should be left behind. The Houston example is perfect.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent the period for postcloture debate be extended until 4:40 p.m. with the additional time equally divided between the majority and the minority parties, and the time be deducted from each individual Senator as provided under rule XXII.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the importance of adopting legislation to expand and improve the Federal Government's commitment to education. In my view, there is no more important issue before the Congress than how we deal with education. As our economy becomes increasingly global, based on high technology, its future is increasingly dependent on the quality of our workforce.

The better our educational system, the stronger our economy and our Nation will be. That is why as a nation we should make education our number-one priority.

Let me begin by saying our current educational system, while it has many faults, does have real strengths. Today, throughout our Nation, dedicated teachers are working long, hard hours to educate our children. Often they get little public recognition and acknowledgment for their contributions. Almost always, they are paid much less than individuals educated similarly can earn in the private sector. I know because my mother was a teacher for 30 years, my wife for 7.

We have an incredible commitment to teaching from folks across the country. We should start this debate on education by saying thank you to these teachers. They deserve our appreciation and our support.

Of course, while our Nation is fortunate to have so many dedicated and selfless teachers, the fact remains our educational system still has serious problems. Too many of our schools are dilapidated, ill-equipped, and unsafe.

During the recent recess I visited schools in Jersey City, NJ, that were 100 years old or older. There are still too many children in too many classes that are not up to the latest standards. Too few schools are at the cutting edge of new technologies and new approaches, and mediocrity continues to be tolerated in too many of our school systems, without the accountability necessary to improve performance.

Some have suggested that local school boards should be left alone to solve these problems on their own. I disagree. I do support local control of education. It is fundamental in America. But local control does not mean much if you don't have adequate resources within your control. And it's not enough to leave the problem to states, which can pit urban areas against suburban communities—a fight with no winners.

Common sense makes clear that a property-tax-based financial system for our public education leaves unequal education rampant in our society.

No, if we are serious about education, we need to make it a national priority. We need to ensure that our national government plays an active and aggressive role, making sure every child has access to quality public education.

Our public schools can not assure equal outcomes in life, but they should provide equal opportunity.

I am optimistic that we can make that happen, and that we will soon pass a strong bill that addresses the most serious pressing issues facing education today. I thank Senator JEFFORDS, Senator KENNEDY, and the many other leaders in the Senate for their tremendous bipartisan efforts to ensure we have an exceptional bill. These are true leaders, making sure our children come first. I want to do what I can to help ensure their efforts are rewarded with passage in the Senate.

Today, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss some of the most important issues that I hope we will be addressing in the debate ahead.

First, let me mention some of the areas in which I think most of us agree. For example, I think we all agree that we need to promote parental involvement in education. It is common sense. That means giving parents more information about their children's schools, and giving them increased options in choosing among public schools. That is the right thing to do, and I am glad these ideas have broad support.

I am also glad that we generally agree about the value of promoting literacy. President Bush—and I compliment him for this—has proposed $1 billion annually for a reading first bill, and I applaud him for that. We need to make sure appropriations follow the authorization. We need to make sure we put our money where our mouth is, so we ensure that all children can read by the end of the third grade.

Another area of broad agreement is the need to improve teacher quality.

A good teacher is probably the most important single factor in the quality of a child's education. We can do everything else right, but if we do not have excellent teachers, the educational system just will not be top drawer.

That is why it is critically important that we provide real resources to attract and retain quality teachers, and to help teachers develop their skills and create a career of teaching our children.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of work to do in this area. Last year, schools in high poverty areas hired 50,000 unqualified teachers, and only 39 percent of teachers in these areas have an undergraduate major or minor in the primary field of instruction. That is not acceptable. And I am grateful that colleagues on both sides of the aisle seem to agree.

Unfortunately while there is much about education with which we can all

agree, there are also some areas of disagreement.

I'm especially concerned about the need to reduce class sizes. In my view, it is abundantly clear that smaller classes are better for children, and we have made progress in recent years. But we have not gone far enough.

That Jersey City school I visited, the average class size was 29—29 children. No one believes that is the right size to make sure that you have quality education going on in the classroom.

It is abundantly clear that smaller classes are better for children and we have made some progress in recent years, but we have not gone far enough.

The Bush administration in my view is walking away from the class size initiative. In my view, that's a serious mistake. I look forward to working with Senator MURRAY and my other colleagues to secure approval of an amendment to reduce class sizes later in the debate. We ought to move that down to 18 per class.

I am also disappointed that the administration has failed to address one of the most compelling needs in education: the need to modernize our schools. Mr. President, 14 million children now attend schools that need major renovations, like fixed heating and plumbing systems. Nationwide, school construction needs total more than $127 billion. The problem is worse in our cities, where two-thirds of the schools—serving 10 million students—report problems. In my State of New Jersey, 87 percent of schools report a need to upgrade or repair a building; one in six say that the effort will require between $1.7 million to $30 million. The average age of all New Jersey school buildings is 47 years, compared to the national average of 35 years. That is why in New Jersey, we have begun a $12 billion funding program to modernize our schools. I believe the Federal Government should be a partner in that effort.

Despite the size of these needs, the Bush administration is proposing to eliminate virtually the entire school construction program that means higher taxes at the local level. That would be wrong. I look forward to working with my colleagues to protect the program, and increase our commitment to school modernization.

We have heard a lot of rhetoric lately about the need to ensure that no child is left behind, and about the need for school reform. But, at least until now, Congress simply has been unwilling to put our money where our mouth is. Whether we do now may be the most important issue of all.

There may be broad support for increased testing in our schools. But it does no good to diagnose a problem if you lack the resources to treat it.

I have heard in the last few hours that even in the conference committee on the budget we have now dropped the Harkin amendment, putting $225 billion over 10 years into supporting our school system. This is a mistake. We need to put money where we want our priorities to be—and our children should be that.

If we want to reform schools, we need to provide them with real resources. I would highlight, in particular, the title I program, which focuses funds on areas with the greatest needs. Title I can and should be the real engine for reform. Yet today we are meeting only one-third of related needs. And that is just not good enough. My own State struggles to cover the costs of implementing parity in education for the school children in our Abbott Districts—urban districts, the economically deprived. Especially given our historic surpluses, is not the time to leave behind the children from low-income families who need our help the most. I look forward to working with my colleagues to dramatically increase our commitment to the critical title I program.

I also want to take a few moments to discuss an issue of particular interest to me: teaching students the basic principles of financial literacy.

Unfortunately, when it comes to personal finances, young Americans do not have the skills they need. Too few understand the details of managing a checking account, for example, preparing tax returns or using a credit card. A recent survey by the non-profit JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy revealed the extent of this problem, finding that only 36 percent of surveyed high school students could correctly answer basic personal finance questions, and only 33 percent of students believed that financial issues strongly impacted their daily lives.

In my view, it is time to make sure that our education system teaches our children all the skills they need, including the fundamental principles involved with earning, spending, saving, and investing.

These skills will help them stay out of debt and maintain a good credit record, save money for the future, and negotiate an increasingly exceedingly complex financial system.

I filed an amendment that would include financial education in S. 1, and I am very fortunate to have the support of my colleagues, Senators ENZI and AKAKA. I am hopeful that, working together, we can ensure that our next generation is prepared to meet the challenges of the new economy.

In conclusion, I again thank Senators JEFFORDS and KENNEDY for their remarkable leadership on this legislation. I look forward to working with them and with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make a real commitment to education in the legislation before us.

But we must put resources with reform. The stakes couldn't be higher because the future of our children and our Nation depends on it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, many in the Senate today have not seen that much participation with respect to the education debate. I have found out after 30-some years up here that you have to direct your attention to where you can do the most good. I am not on the Education Committee.

Let me qualify. No. 1, 50 years ago I wrote a 3-percent sales tax for public education in the State of South Carolina. We were trying to play catchup ball with our sister State, North Carolina. They had passed theirs in 1936, some 14 years ahead of us. They were getting the industry in, and we were getting no investment whatsoever.

Right to the point, if somebody wants to attract an industry, don't tell me about the taxes, the highways, the climate, the rivers, the availability of water and that kind of thing. Get yourself good school buildings and a school system.

So I venture to say of the six-person committee that I headed up, five lost the election right after that.

But be that as it may, no one has put in to repeal that particular measure. It has been a saving grace in the sense that not only is it 3, but we have now increased it to 5 percent, and we have embellished it with technical training.

I immediately started to work the week after I was elected in 1948. The superintendent of the schools in my hometown said, FRITZ, I want you to get in the car and I want to show you something. We went across the river on the bridge on Christ Church Parish Road, and there was a big square building of just one story with four sides and a roof and a pot-bellied stove. It was November. There was a class in one corner, a class in another corner, a class in the third, and a class in the fourth corner, and one teacher.

Those were the schools we had at that time for minorities in South Carolina. I have this to say for those who weep and wail about the past 36 years, I have been putting money into education for the past 50 years and it's still not enough.

Yes. I started an equalization of facilities with that sales tax. But we have yet to perform the sort of catchup where we provide schools in rural areas, and those we have abandoned within the city, with equal facilities as those in the wealthier suburbs.

I came to Washington with that bone in my craw, as the saying goes, and I put in a revenue-sharing plan. But in taking the plan around, I found that I couldn't put it in just for education. That is what I was intent upon. If you can single out and target the program, I thought you could get the support. But I was told no, you couldn't get the support unless you could get it back to the States for general purposes. They did not suffer the ills and needs of my great State of South Carolina.

So I put in on February 1, 1967, the first revenue-sharing bill, later abolished in the 1980s, interestingly, from the standpoint of Howard Baker who

led the abolition, or repeal. He said we were just financing the Government and we should send money back to the Governors so they could take the money and do with it what they wanted. So we were financing our opposition. We weren't financing education. We were financing our own education. We learned the hard way. So we did away with revenue sharing.

The next thing I got into was a tuition tax credit. I can see the distinguished Senator from New York now talking about his Boston Latin school. I had the assistance of the Senator from Arkansas, Kaneaster Hodges. We fought that particular diversion of funds from public schools to private schools, and thereupon they fought the institution, the Department of Education. We, along with President Carter, established the Department of Education. They wanted to, by gosh, avoid and oppose the Department of Education.

Then I have been on the floor, of course, with the vouchers and trying to force those. But I had not paid good enough attention to the testing and accountability debate until I started listening to the distinguished Senator from Minnesota, Mr. PAUL WELLSTONE, and now I know we have to fight. He knows of what he speaks. He is not talking about the pollster thing. That is the thing I resent and resist around here, this entire operation—that it's pollster driven. The cardinal rule of the pollster is: Never take a position that divides the voters. Don't say you are for chairs and desks. Don't say you are against them. Say I am concerned about these chairs and desks; they trouble me. All the Senators are running around, and they are all troubled. That is the nonsense we are engaged in.

But I take a poll, and everybody is for tax cuts. We have forgotten from whence we came. I am completely absolutely opposed to the budget settlement of $1.235 trillion, plus the stimulus $1.35 trillion, because I believe in paying down the debt, not increasing it.

But the polls do not do that. They ask you if you are for a tax cut, but they do not tell you we are spending surpluses that do not exist. I will bet anybody any amount of money, with any odds, that we will end this fiscal year with an increase in the national debt. We have done that each year, since Lyndon Johnson was President, for the last 30 years.

But now comes education, and it is polled also: Accountability, accountability. Here is the crowd that says: We want to find out what is wrong. Heavens above, they come to government as if it begins with them.

Senator WELLSTONE is really fighting the fight for the youngsters of America, for the economic strength of America, and for its defense. The best defense is an educated citizen. Do not give me all the toys—the Osprey: Jump, move forward, jump around, get in it, and kill everybody who gets in it. I am not for these toys. I am for education. That is the best defense.

Give me $225 billion; give me the Harkin amendment. That is what I want. Give me the moneys to flesh out these programs that have worked. But they come and say the programs have not worked. It is ignorance.

I say to Senator WELLSTONE, the Governors met in 1988. The distinguished Governor from Arkansas got together with another Governor, a Republican leader at the time, and they founded, so to speak, Goals 2000. But President Bush would not put it in. Then when President Clinton got here to put it in, they fought it.

So I begin to wonder when they say: We don't know how the schools are performing. Ha, they fought the Department of Education. They fought to privatize all the public money for public schools with vouchers, charter schools, tuition tax credits, any way they could, to destroy the public support for public schools. And they come now and say they don't know, when they fought Goals 2000.

We had testing in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1994. They act as if we haven't heard of testing. We have testing coming out of our ears. But the polls say: Accountability; discipline, discipline, yes.

I say to the Senator, in relation to that discipline, I remember the mother who sent her little boy to school with a note for the teacher. It said: Dear teacher, my boy Ivan is very sensitive. If he misbehaves, slap the child next to him. That is punishment enough for my Ivan.

They say: Discipline, yes. I am for accountability. We are going to find out. Don't give me that stuff. Bug off. As my grandchildren say: Get a life.

We provide $7 of every $100 spent—or 7 cents for every $1 spent—on education. We act as if we have invented education and all of a sudden we are going to do something about it. One way or the other, we are not going to do much. But what we do that is working ought to be allowed to continue.

Specifically, we have the women's, infants, and children's nutrition program, which is not part of the education budget, but it is an important part of education. I worked with Senator Humphrey from Minnesota, a state where I worked on and wrote a book on hunger. I got with him, and we put in the women's, infants and children's program. You have 21 billion brain cells, and I have 21 billion brain cells, and 17 billion of the 21 billion brain cells have developed in the first 5 months in the mother's womb. Without the proper nutrition in relation to the protein and the synthesis of the nerve cells during those first 5 months, there can be as much as 20 percent less cellular development when that child is born, causing what we call organic brain damage. The child can't function, can't assimilate. That has everything to do with their education, and yet WIC is not adequately funded to meet the needs of all those who are eligible.

They want to know what works. We have had mathematical studies conducted about the benefits of title I for the disadvantaged. For every dollar we put in title I, the Government and society reap $7. For Head Start, it is $4. That works.

We are going to have this testing to find out who is failing and who is succeeding, but we are not testing the school building, we are not testing the principal, we are not testing the school board, we are not testing, really, the pupil.

As my distinguished colleague from Minnesota says, we are testing wealth. Why? Because the wealthy student—the one who starts his education in a good pre-school and has books read to him, and everything else of that kind—by the time he's tested in third grade, he has had 6 years of schooling. Without these advantages, a child has only three years of schooling coming into the test. So you are testing wealth.

The Senator from Minnesota has educated this Senator. He has really gotten into things that mean something to this body and this country. We are about to go the way—as I am convinced we are running up the national debt, and we have interest costs of $1 billion a day—of hollering surpluses, surpluses, surpluses, when we have deficits, deficits, deficits. That is their way of getting rid of the Government. And this is their way of getting rid of public education—anything to get rid of public education.

We have not really equipped our minority teachers, and yet they have outstanding schools here, there, and yonder. And then we have very poor ones. We know. I read in the morning paper—I do not have to wait to pass this bill—about schools that are practically closed. So they are going to take the test. And what are we going to find out? What we already know. It is like taking a fellow who can't swim, who is drowning 100 yards offshore, and throwing him a 50-yard lifeline. We haven't made it all the way for Head Start, for title I, for all of these measures. And then we are going to have the test to see whether he can swim, while the poor fellow drowns. No. We ought to be realistic and look at what we know is there.

I campaigned all over the State of Texas. I have never forgotten it. It was not the ''best little whorehouse in Texas,'' it was the best little poorhouse—poorhouse. The Rand Corporation agreed last year that Texas had failed to improve on key education points. I can get into that debate on schools, but it isn't the point here. The point is, we do not want to really find that 20 percent or a third of our schools are failures. You do not have to administer a test to see what the good schools are doing.

So what are we going to do about it? What are we going to do about it? Mr. President, nothing. We are going to talk. We are going to speak to the polls

and say in the campaign: I was for accountability. I am for accountability and I voted for testing.

The Senator from Minnesota and some of us others are going to have an extended debate on this issue. We have to educate our colleagues and get the support to kill the so-called accountability in its crib, the accountability they refused in Goals 2000 and earlier with the testing in the 1994 act. Now they act as if they have a discovery to identify the problem—hit-and-run driving.

Yes, accountability, accountability, accountability. Ask them about the Patients' Bill of Rights. There are too many lawsuits when you bring a suit to get accountability. No, no, we are not for accountability. We have too many lawyers. Get rid of the lawyers. That is also in the polls. Kill all the lawyers, said Shakespeare in Henry VI. Accountability.

Unfunded mandates, where are they? They were jumping all over the place 7 years ago on unfunded mandates. Now they are pell-mell down the road. For what? The President has put in $320 million to cover an estimated $2 to $7 billion in costs over the 4-year testing period. I am concerned that the states will have to pick up a substantial part of that cost.

We had the Governors. We had the local people say, heck, we know, we are there. It is amazing to me the distinguished President, who had been a Governor, acts as if he never has been in government before. He would know that this would hackle every Governor, every school board, every school superintendent, every principal. They know about testing. They are trying to get the money. But, no, we have accountability. We have unfunded mandates now, and right on down the road with a program that can't possibly work. But it is only going to highlight the need, they say, for vouchers.

The Senator from Minnesota has an amendment that fleshes out a program that works; namely to fully fund Title I before we proceed with a testing mandate. You have to teach the course before you give the exam. The U.S. Congress has not taught the course. We haven't given students, in many instances, the building. We haven't given them the professional classroom teacher. We haven't given them the right size class so that they can get the teacher's attention. We haven't given them counselors, and they need counseling. We haven't given, of course, the different courses and other assistance that we have all found, from time to time, is very necessary. So we haven't taught the course, but we are going to give them the exam. We are going to have accountability, and we are going to puff and blow and walk all around on the political stump saying: I was in Washington and I told that Washington crowd that we had to have accountability.

I want them to come with the Patients' Bill of Rights, because that is what we have in the Patients' Bill of Rights, some accountability. If they absolutely step aside, if they engage in malicious and reckless conduct, malpractice, then we can bring the suit. That makes them accountable. But, no, they are opposed to that kind of thing.

If the test shows schools are failing, we are not going to put up the billions to improve schools. Instead, they are going to put on a full course drive for vouchers to $1,500. What is that going to do?

The real need is to get teachers' pay up. If I were king for a day—I ran for the Presidency on this back in the 1980s—they laughed but it is still just as efficacious—I would increase teacher pay, because that $36,000, the average pay of a teacher in South Carolina, doesn't do the job.

But I go across the stage having made a graduation speech, and students approach me and say: Senator, I wanted to get into teaching, but I couldn't save enough money with the pay to send my kids to college. We have a lot of dedicated teachers in the classrooms and a lot of great schools, but we are missing out on bringing in the feedstock of that professional teacher because we are not paying enough. We are doing it on the cheap. We are doing it on the cheap, and we know it.

But we are going to tinker around. We are going to have reading. We are going to have math and science, and we are going to have the size of the classroom. And we are going to build another building, and we are going to toy around with it to try the hit-and-run drive, to identify with the problem but not solve it.

Begin at the beginning. Somehow let's get some revenue sharing with the teacher out in that rural school or combat pay for the inner-city classroom teacher. They deserve combat pay trying to keep law and order and act as a parent at the same time. The role of a teacher is just almost unable to be performed in the sense that teachers can't get around to teaching because of the other particular duties at hand.

I will have plenty more to say when this measure comes up about accountability. Please spare the Senator here from all of these expressions, the pollsters. Has anyone ever heard of a pollster being elected to anything? If they can find me a pollster who has been elected to office, I would like to find one. A pollster has never experienced anything.

Here are some expressions. We have to give the child ''a real chance.'' We want to ''find out what works'' and so forth like that. We need to ''increase flexibility.'' We need to ''reduce bureaucracy.'' We need to ''empower parents.'' Come on. Don't give us all of that. Parents are working day and night and the child is home and nobody is helping him with his homework. And we know it. We don't need a test to prove it. Let's get away from all of this gamesmanship and polling politics and really do something for public education in the United States.

If they want a starting point, our distinguished friend from Massachusetts has led the way and held the line on public schools for the years I have been up here. I have been glad to associate with him.

But I can tell you here and now, this is dangerous to come in and start, under the auspices of accountability, testing from the third to the eighth grade every student in all of America. They are going to create the very cost and the bureaucracy they want to get rid of and waste money that is needed for teachers' pay. The ultimate is, of course, finding out that there are a lot of schools in need, and we know where they are, and we are trying to get assistance to them. I saw it 50 years ago when I put in a county-wide millage for a school in Awendaw. You put in 100 mills property tax in that rural area, and you couldn't build a lunchroom, much less a school. So as chairman of the delegation, I put it in.

So don't give us these nebulous statements of flexibility and empowerment and all these buzz words around here. Let's give us some education and test the Senate. That is where we ought to have a test. Find out if we have passed the test first. Have we really fleshed out the women, infants, and children's program? Have we really fleshed out and supported 100 percent Head Start. Have we really financed title I for the disadvantaged? Have we built school buildings so that students can learn without the ceiling falling in on their heads or freezing to death? Have we done that? Give us the test first. Find out what we have done.

Or have we regarded what we have already known to be the case, what the Governors have come in with, Goals 2000? Have we responded to the test that we prescribed with the flexibility they said they wanted? In 1994, they wanted the States to be able to decide.

Have we passed that test? Give us a flunking grade, a zero—except for the Senator from Massachusetts, the Senator from Minnesota, the Senator from Iowa, and some others, such as the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. DODD. They have been out here working for education. But there are only a handful of them who can pass the test if given to the Senate itself. That is what I want to see. Cut out the pollster's gamesmanship and the campaigning and let's think not of our needs to be reelected, but the needs of the country to prosper and survive.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I understand our time would start in about 10 minutes. I am going to yield time to Senator BYRD, the time up to 4 o'clock, and then we will reclaim our time because we have speakers coming at 4. So such time as he may consume, until 4, I yield to Senator BYRD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Texas yield time from the Republican side to Senator BYRD until the hour of 4 p.m.?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I yield up until 4 o'clock to Senator BYRD, but I would not want it to come from the Republican time if others come and want to speak on the Republican time.

Mr. BYRD. If the distinguished Senator from Texas will yield, may I suggest that I only take—I think we have 5, 6 or 8 minutes——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is 7½ minutes.

Mr. BYRD. May I suggest that I take that amount of time now and make a few remarks about Bob Schieffer. Then I will wait until 4:30. I could have more time at that point, as I understand it.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Senator for her efforts to accommodate me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

BOB SCHIEFFER'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY AT ''FACE THE NATION''

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this evening, politicians, celebrities, and newscasters alike will gather to honor one of the most trusted reporters in Washington; namely, Bob Schieffer of CBS News. Bob Schieffer has gained a reputation as a man of integrity, an honest man, a man who holds fairness and the truth in the highest regard.

Nothing better can be said about a politician, and certainly nothing better can be said about a news reporter. I will say that again about Bob Schieffer. Mr. Schieffer has gained the reputation as a man of integrity, an honest man, a man who holds fairness and the truth in the highest regard. We will remember that Plato, while visiting with Hiero, was asked, ''Why have you come here?'' Plato said, ''I am looking for an honest man.'' So we have one here—a man of integrity, an honest man, a man who holds fairness and the truth in the highest regard. Now that is saying something in today's world. That is saying something about a news man.

Bob Schieffer is a Texan who started in journalism as a reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. He moved on to a local television station and then to CBS. For 20 years, Bob was the network's Saturday evening news anchor. For the past decade, he has hosted ''Face The Nation'' on Sunday mornings. He has called Sunday mornings the smartest time period on television, saying, ''It is the last place on television where people can lay out their ideas about things and discuss them at length.''

Well, if Sunday morning is the smartest time period on television—that is what Bob Schieffer says it is—I say another reason for that would be that it is Bob Schieffer's time when he is reporting to the Nation. He decries—as do I—the 30-second sound bite that has replaced the true interaction between voters and public officials. One reason I decry it, of course, is I am not very good at it. A 30-second sound bite—it takes me about that long to say hello or good morning.

Sitting in the anchor chair at CBS is a high responsibility, a high responsibility, an important responsibility. It was the chair from which Roger Mudd and Walter Cronkite would report every night. It was the chair in which Edward R. Murrow—perhaps the grandfather of in-depth, thorough television reporting—hosted ''CBS Reports'' and ''Person to Person'' and ''See It Now.'' Edward R. Murrow set the standard. Bob Schieffer excels at meeting that standard.

There is no obstacle that cannot be overcome by the vigorous mind determined to follow truth. That seems to be the philosophy that guides the work of Bob Schieffer. He follows the truth. He has a vigorous mind, and he follows the truth, he keeps after it. He does not invent the truth. There is a difference in following and pursuing the truth and attempting to invent it. Bob Schieffer does not invent the truth, he asks the questions. He asks the questions, but he does not assume the answers. He listens and, from the answers he receives, we all then learn.

Bob Schieffer once told an audience, ''Your trust is the greatest honor I can receive.'' Now that says it all. I am not a news man, but if I were a news reporter, it would seem to me that that would be the pith, the crux, the milk in the coconut. ''Your trust is the greatest honor I can receive.'' We know that, as a general rule, the people of America do not trust news people. They do not trust news reporters. They do not trust the news media. They do not trust politicians. So Bob Schieffer said it well when he said, ''Your trust is the greatest honor I can receive.'' He can speak for me as a politician on that line also. The trust of the people, he says, is the greatest honor he can receive. That trust is well earned.

I congratulate Mr. Schieffer on his decade of service at ''Face the Nation,'' and I look forward to watching him for many years to come. He is a man I trust.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I, again, thank the Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from West Virginia. I so appreciate the remarks he made about my friend, Bob Schieffer, and ''Face the Nation.'' I, too, have known Bob Schieffer for a long time. He grew up in Fort Worth, TX. His brother and I served together in the Texas Legislature. I have known him and his family for a long time.

There is not a more principled, fair person in the entire news media than Bob Schieffer. I certainly appreciate the kind remarks made by the Senator from West Virginia. I know Bob Schieffer is very happy tonight, celebrating the anniversary of ''Face the Nation.'' He has taken it to new heights just by being a person who is trusted and respected by the American people. Both Presidential candidates choosing Bob Schieffer to be the moderator of a debate shows he is well regarded by Republicans, Democrats, and Independents throughout our country.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I want to talk about the education bill that is so important to all of us. We are hopefully very close to agreement on bringing the bill before the Senate.

We are all a little frustrated because we have been waiting for the bill for about 10 days. There have been a lot of negotiations.

There are some very key issues that need to be discussed, and I hope they will be discussed in the open. I hope they will not be negotiated away. Reform is the key to success in education.

We are going to spend more money on education. In fact, President Bush has put forward a budget that provides an 11.4-percent increase in spending in education. That is warranted because we do need to add emphasis to certain areas of public education.

What is going to determine success or failure is whether we reform our system, whether we make it accountable, whether we give parents the ability to know what their children are doing and how they are doing. If a child comes home with A's or B's and is promoted to the next grade, and you, as a parent, find out 5 years later the child did not read at grade level, that is a failure in the system.

If a parent does not have the tools to find out if there is a weakness in the child's education, the parent is at a significant disadvantage, and the child is doomed forever.

We need to make sure parents have the knowledge of how a school is doing. A lot of people say we should not have tests. If we do not have tests, how will we have a benchmark? How will we know where the weaknesses are?

If we have tests, even if the test is not perfect, it will show a red flag and we will see the weakness. We can determine if the test is not right, if the failure is not real. At least we will check on it to make sure, but most of the time the failure is real.

If we catch the failure at third grade instead of eighth grade, we will save that child's future. We will save that child's productive life because we can make sure that every child can read at grade level in the third grade. If we do that, then every child will have the chance to absorb the rest of his or her