United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 147 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2001 No. 66

Senate

The Senate met at 10:32 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BILL FRIST, a Senator from the State of Tennessee.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Holy Father, we join with Americans across our land in the celebration of National Police Week. We gratefully remember those who lost their lives in the line of duty. Particularly, we honor the memory of our own officers in the United States Capitol Police: Sergeant Christopher Eney on August 24, 1984, Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John W. Gibson on July 24, 1998. Thank You for their valor and heroism. Continue to bless their families as they endure the loss of these fine men.

May this be a time for all of us in the Senate family to express our profound appreciation for all of the police officers and detectives who serve here in the Senate. They do so much to maintain safety and order, knowing that, at any moment, their lives may be in danger. Help us to put our gratitude into words and actions of affirmation. May we take no one for granted.

Now we dedicate this day to You. Bless the Senators as they confront issues with Your divinely endowed wisdom and vision. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BILL FRIST led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL FRIST, a Senator from the State of Tennessee, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. FRIST thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, today the Senate will immediately resume consideration of the Murray amendment regarding class size. Under the order, there will be 2 hours of debate on the amendment prior to the 12:30 recess. When the Senate reconvenes at 2:15 p.m., there will be 5 minutes for final remarks on the Murray amendment with a vote to occur at 2:20 p.m. Following the vote, the Senate will continue consideration of amendments to the education bill. Rollcall votes are expected throughout the day.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to extend programs and activities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Pending:

Jeffords amendment No. 358, in the nature of a substitute.

Kennedy (for Murray) amendment No. 378 (to amendment No. 358), to provide for class size reduction programs.

Kennedy (for Dodd) amendment No. 382 (to amendment No. 358), to remove the 21st century community learning center program from the list of programs covered by performance agreements.

Biden amendment No. 386 (to amendment No. 358), to establish school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and local school systems, by providing school resource officers who operate in and around elementary and secondary schools.

Voinovich amendment No. 389 (to amendment No. 358), to modify provisions relating to State applications and plans and school improvement to provide for the input of the Governor of the State involved.

Carnahan amendment No. 374 (to amendment No. 358), to improve the quality of education in our Nation's classrooms.

Reed amendment No. 425 (to amendment No. 358), to revise provisions regarding the Reading First Program.

Leahy (for Hatch) amendment No. 424 (to amendment No. 358), to provide for the establishment of additional Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Helms amendment No. 574 (to amendment No. 358), to prohibit the use of Federal funds by any State or local educational agency or school that discriminates against the Boy Scouts of America in providing equal access to school premises or facilities.

Helms amendment No. 648 (to amendment No. 574), in the nature of a substitute.

Dorgan amendment No. 640 (to amendment No. 358), expressing the sense of the Senate that there should be established a joint committee of the Senate and House of Representatives to investigate the rapidly increasing energy prices across the country and to determine what is causing the increases.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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Wellstone/Feingold amendment No. 465 (to amendment No. 358), to improve the provisions relating to assessment completion bonuses.

Voinovich amendment No. 443 (to amendment No. 358), to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend loan forgiveness for certain loans to Head Start teachers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENSIGN). Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the Murray amendment No. 378 under which there will be 120 minutes equally divided.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Washington.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I would like to yield myself about 15 minutes. It can go either way.

Mrs. MURRAY. If the Senator from Tennessee wants to begin, that is OK. I will go after the Senator finishes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

AMENDMENT NO. 378

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I yield myself 15 minutes.

I rise to speak to the underlying amendment about which we will be talking over the course of the morning and on which we will be voting on this afternoon shortly after 2 o'clock. It is a very important amendment, one which we talked about over the last several days—in fact, into last week—an amendment that deserves this time, that deserves the debate, that deserves the discussion that has been put forth.

I say that because it really does strike, I believe, at a fundamental principle that distinguishes much of the debate around education today. It strikes right at the heart of an understanding of what is in the underlying bill as well as in the amendment which is being proposed to that bill.

The principle is one of freedom, and we feel very strongly that local communities, local needs, must dictate what we do here in Washington, through our Federal legislation. We feel strongly that Washington must give local communities—schools, school districts—the opportunity to identify their particular needs or deficiencies. And, yes, it takes testing in many ways to identify the different types of students—that is in the underlying bill. But we must also identify needs such as number of teachers, teacher quality, classroom size, the environment in which the teacher-pupil relationship is cultivated and maximized so achievement is boosted to the largest degree possible. And it really does, to my mind, boil down to freedom, the freedom, the flexibility, the opportunity to identify those local needs and to satisfy them as they see fit at the local level.

Again, it goes to the heart of much of what is in this bill because there are disparities all over the country, and the degree of education success is, in part, dependent on location. That needs to be addressed. And I think it is best addressed at the local level. That is what we would like to do, and that is what is in the underlying bill.

In the bill—and again I encourage our colleagues to go and look at what is in the underlying bill—we try to allow school districts to have that choice, to use the resources available either for class size or for teacher development, professional development, again focusing on what goes on in that classroom between that teacher and that student.

The goal is to boost student achievement. What is needed in Alamo, TN, might be different than what is needed in Manhattan, or the Bronx, or down in Fort Lauderdale, FL. One school might need class size reduction if the classes are very large in certain subjects. Another school might need a better and higher quality teacher in that classroom.

The underlying bill takes those two components of teacher quality and class size, pools those resources, and says to local communities and to local school districts: You choose as to which of those areas you need to apply those resources to boost student achievement.

I think it is very important because class size in some cases can be very important. We all know that. If you happen to be in a State or a community where class size is very large in certain subjects, I think it is very important that class size be reduced. Other parts of the country might have already reduced class size down to an appropriate level, in their judgement, and they prefer the freedom to use that class size reduction money, and teacher development money, to recruit teachers or attract teachers by paying them more, or by encouraging their professional development.

What we want to do is give local school districts the freedom to spend the money in a way that they believe will best increase student achievement.

School districts should have the flexibility to decide whether to use that money for class size or for teacher development. That is very simple. That is what we have heard laid out in the bill. It is very important for people to understand that it is that flexibility, that local identification of need, that principle, on which we are voting at 2:20 today. We fundamentally believe school districts should be given maximum freedom and flexibility as to how they use those funds.

Again, it is important to understand the underlying bill. Basically, we pool these resources from class size reduction and teacher development and put them together. We give that local school district the opportunity to use them in the best way they see fit.

Over the last several days we have talked a lot about cost effectiveness of our education dollars to get the very best bang for the buck, the very best outcome and achievement for the dollars invested. When you look at it that way, in terms of cost effectiveness of the dollars being invested in education, that is what we are doing in the underlying bill. We are becoming not education spenders but education investors by investing in the system and investing in that flexibility and local control.

For every dollar invested, it is important to look at what sort of outcome you achieve. If we say school districts shouldn't be forced to downsize classes, and recognize that some have downsized the class size already, then you can ask how effective is each of those dollars invested in terms of cost effectiveness.

It is interesting, if you go back and look at the studies which examine at all sorts of different and independent variables regarding boosting student achievement, class size does not come at the top or even in the middle but further down on that list. In fact, in many of these studies, it is the least effective reform, but it is coupled with the very highest price tag. So in terms of dollars invested, the effect is it falls to the lower end of those scales.

Studies have found that class size can be among the least effective educational investment, especially when you compare it to something like teacher education or teacher development—providing teachers with the resources they need to become better teachers, or to become better educated, for example, to become a real specialist in the field they are teaching.

Again, I don't want to overplay this because I, for one, think class size is an important variable, but I think it is important to recognize that is addressed in the underlying bill. The resources are there. We are simply saying to give the local community the flexibility to use those dollars in a way that gives the biggest bang for the buck invested.

What is the No. 1 variable in many of these studies? If you look outside of parental involvement, which again we encourage in the underlying bill, it is to have a highly qualified teacher in the classroom—not the size of the classroom but a highly qualified teacher.

One recent study conducted at the University of Rochester examined more than 300 studies on the impact of class size reduction and found that it is the quality of the teacher which is much more important than the absolute class size. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future found that teacher education is five times as effective for each dollar invested as is class size.

All of us can remember our own teachers when we were young and the impact that a high-quality teacher has in the classroom. It is a lasting impact. A smaller classroom has an effect—a here and now effect—but it doesn't have the lasting effect that a highly qualified teacher does in the classroom.

A study done in Tennessee found that the impact of a high-quality teacher continues for at least two years after the student has left that teacher.

Bill Saunders, who has been quoted again and again on this floor, determined that the percentile difference

between the student who has 3 years of high-quality teaching versus 3 years of poor quality teaching could mean the difference between a student that is enrolled in a remedial class versus an honors class—again, underscoring the critical importance of not just having more teachers in the classroom but having high-quality teachers in the classroom.

Over the last week or so we have talked a lot about the shortage of high-quality teachers. The fact is that more than 25 percent of new teachers enter our Nation's schools poorly qualified to teach.

We talked a little bit about the studies that have shown that mastery in a subject area is the most tangible teacher quality. When you look at that measure, we are simply not doing as good a job as we should.

Many teachers either lack a major or minor in the subject they are teaching. Fifty-six percent of physics and chemistry teachers lack a major or a minor. Thirty-four percent of English teaches lack a major or minor. And 34 percent of math teachers lack a major or minor.

It is important for people to understand that compulsory class size—focusing just on class size—can exacerbate the problem of having a shortage of high quality teachers.

Over the past week, we talked about a little bit about California's experiment with compulsory class size. It led to many credentialed teachers coming into the classroom. It led to underqualified teachers, and an increase in teacher aides rather than teachers in the classroom—all providing direct instruction to students. This hit especially hard in the underserved areas in inner-city schools, and in rural schools.

Where is the impact? I think the impact of declining teacher quality has been greatest in low-income schools, if you look at the studies altogether. That is where the percentage of qualified teachers has dropped nationwide—but specifically in the California studies.

The third point that I would like to make is that there is no need today for compulsory class size reduction. Again, it comes back to this opportunity of freedom to choose class size reduction, if you want, or to spend those moneys on training teachers.

I mentioned that it is important to understand what is in the underlying bill. In the bill we have combined professional development with class size money. Teacher quality and teacher recruitment varies from community to community. It varies from district to district. We want to have that right balance between class size and having a good high quality teacher in the room. That is why we chose to pool those two resources together and allow that local school and that local school district to choose either a combination of both of those, or one versus the other.

The underlying bill permits school districts to use Federal dollars to recruit high-quality teachers.

The underlying bill supports school efforts to establish incentive programs such as differential pay to attract, hire and keep highly qualified and knowledgeable teachers.

The underlying bill contains specific provisions for recruitment. It supports efforts to recruit individuals who have careers outside of teaching but whose life experience provide a solid foundation for teaching.

The underlying bill also looks at the issue of class size, support schools in hiring teachers, reduce class size, if they so desire it, and to address the teacher shortages in particular grades in subject areas.

The underlying bill addresses the issue of teacher development and promoting teacher reforms, including mentoring and master teachers.

The underlying bill looks at issues, such as alternative credentialing programs.

The underlying bill addresses teacher opportunity payments, allowing funds to go directly to teachers so they can choose their own professional development.

In conclusion, I want to make it very clear from at least my standpoint, and on our side of the aisle, that we are not opposed to class size reduction. Again, I for one think that an appropriate class size and appropriate ratios, depending on where you are in the subject matter, is important. I point out, many areas in many regions have already addressed this particular issue. Secondly, the underlying bill permits States and school districts to use those pooled Federal funds in the best way they see fit.

We increase the number of high-quality teachers by promoting innovative teacher reforms, including alternative certification, merit pay, and the list I just mentioned.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the Murray amendment. Again, it will be a very important vote that we take at 2:20 today because I think it does move us in the wrong direction: less choice, less freedom for our local communities, less flexibility, and less attention to local needs.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote against the amendment later today and look forward to participating in the debate as we go forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I rise, once again, to urge my colleagues to continue our commitment to help our schools reduce classroom overcrowding.

Before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be added as cosponsors to my amendment: Senators LEVIN, MIKULSKI, and SCHUMER.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we all want to improve education. In the last few years we have made a lot of progress. In fact, thanks to our commitment at the Federal level, local schools have now hired about 34,000 new highly qualified teachers.

Because of our investment over the last 3 years, almost 2 million students are learning in less crowded classrooms today. That is because of the Federal commitment we have had. Those kids are learning the basics. They have fewer distractions and fewer discipline problems. Isn't that what we want for all of our kids?

Over the last 3 years we have done the responsible thing by supporting what works. But the underlying bill, despite the rhetoric you have just heard, takes a very different approach. It breaks our commitment to investing in smaller classes. I can tell you as a parent, as a former educator, and as a former school board member, it is the wrong way to go. We should be building on our progress. That is why I am offering this amendment today.

In just a few hours we are going to vote on this amendment. So I want to talk about some of the arguments we have heard throughout the debate last week and today and probably we will hear more of today.

First, we have heard that smaller classes do not really make a difference. Let me tell you, any parent or any teacher knows better. The first questions parents ask their kids when they come home from school on the first day in September are: Who is your teacher? And how many kids are in your classroom? Parents know it makes a difference on how many kids are in that classroom as to whether their child is going to have a successful year or not.

It is not just parents and it is not just teachers. Research, over and over again, has shown us that smaller classes help children succeed. The Tennessee Project STAR—Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio—study has consistently demonstrated that reducing class sizes in K–3 to 13 to 17 students significantly increases children's reading and mathematics scores. And the biggest gains have been found for poor and minority students—those children who are most in danger of being left behind.

Studies have shown that the children in those smaller classes in the early grades were: More likely to take college entrance exams, more likely to finish high school, more likely to enroll in college, less likely to become teen parents, and less likely to go to jail.

In the last month two new studies that have been released interpreting the STAR study have concluded that smaller classes produce significant benefits. One joint study by researchers from Tennessee State University and the University of Chicago found significant increases in ninth grade math test scores among students who had spent their early grades in smaller classes, with the gains even more pronounced among minority students.

Robert Reichardt, a researcher with Mid-continent Research for Education

and Learning, concluded in yet another study that class size reduction ''provides policymakers with a direct lever for influencing classrooms'' and is one of a few policies that ''offer such immediate concrete effects.''

As in Project STAR, students participating in Wisconsin's SAGE class-size reduction effort outperformed their counterparts in larger classrooms on standardized tests.

Again, as in the other studies, these benefits were strongest among African American students who had larger gains than their white counterparts.

So not only can smaller class size help raise student achievement overall, but reduced class size may be an especially effective measure for closing the ''achievement gap'' between black students and white students.

Let me turn to a second argument we have heard. I keep hearing that Federal money should not be targeted for a specific purpose such as making classrooms less crowded.

I remind all of my colleagues that in this underlying bill we have targeted money for many causes, including reading, technology, afterschool programs, school safety, and charter schools and magnet schools.

In fact, there are more than 20 targeted funding streams in the underlying bill.

If targeted funding were really the problem, and why we should vote against this amendment, then those who vote against my class size amendment ought to vote against the entire bill.

Some have said we should just let school boards choose how to use this money. But that really ignores the realities local school boards face. I served on a local school board. I know what it is like to try to set aside money to hire new teachers for the foreseeable future when you do not even know if a school bond is going to pass next month. That is one of the reasons it is so hard for local schools to hire new teachers to reduce overcrowding on their own.

Fortunately, because of the work we have done in the last 3 years, today they are not on their own. They have a Federal partner to help them make that critical investment. We need to continue that commitment.

The truth is, the underlying bill would pit two key elements of good schools against one another: Small classes and good teachers. Under this bill, any dollar that local schools decide to spend on smaller classes comes at the expense of a dollar spent on teacher quality. We should not make our schools choose between two priorities that are important; we should fund both.

This kind of ''false flexibility'' that we see in this underlying bill would be unacceptable in most other arenas. Do we make our military choose between weapons and training? Of course not. We know both are necessary to protect our Nation. Do we make a sick patient choose between food and medicine? Of course not, because we know both are necessary.

Why then, in this underlying bill, are we forcing our schools to choose between high-quality teachers and smaller classes when we know both are necessary to help our children learn?

In their zeal to assail small classes, some people have even claimed that a good teacher is more important than a small class size. Let me say this as clearly as I can: Small classes and good teachers are both important. The importance of funding teacher quality should not crowd out funding for other important reforms such as smaller classes.

I also point out that smaller classes can help us recruit and retain good teachers. One of the main reasons that teachers leave the classroom is job dissatisfaction. The truth is, we are losing a lot of teachers very early in their careers. After 1 year of teaching, we lose 11 percent of our new teachers; after 2 years, we lose 21 percent of them; and after 5 years, it is now up to 39 percent.

Why are we losing teachers out of our classrooms? Studies have shown that one of the main reasons is job dissatisfaction. One of the main causes of job dissatisfaction: Overcrowded classes. Another top complaint: Student discipline. We know there are fewer discipline problems in smaller classes. We need to keep good teachers in our classrooms. That means we ought to invest in teacher quality. But it also means we should reduce overcrowding to encourage more good teachers to stay in our classrooms and give their students their best.

This is not just about statistics. The other day in this Chamber I read an excerpt from a letter sent to me by an award-winning teacher from Pullman, WA. Kristi wrote to me that she is very frustrated. Every day she tries to give her students her best, but with large classes that is getting harder and harder. Kristi is a great teacher. She is a national award-winning teacher.

She is asking us to help her be the kind of ''high-quality'' teacher we say we want for every child by giving her a class small enough for every child to get the attention they need.

Dedicated teachers such as Kristi spend their lives helping our children to learn. We reward them with working conditions that none of us would tolerate.

Fourth, some on the other side have said we should focus our reform efforts on testing and accountability. The truth is that this amendment is even more essential because of the testing and accountability provisions in the underlying bill. This bill could punish students for failing tests, but it does not give them the tools they need to pass those tests.

Implying that testing is some kind of magic bullet that will somehow turn around low-performing schools is simplistic. The truth is far more complex. Testing is just one of many tools, and it is useless by itself. Tests can identify problems but without the support to solve those problems, tests have little value. Tests alone cannot improve a student's achievement, but give that student a smaller class and a good teacher, and the sky is not even a limit for his or her potential success.

I want all of us to think about that. No test is going to help a student learn to read or learn to write or learn to add. A smaller class and a qualified teacher will.

We can take a classroom of students and give them tests every day for 10 years, and those kids won't do better unless they have a qualified teacher in a classroom that is not overcrowded, where they get the individual attention they need to learn.

Let's make sure we give those kids the tools they need to pass the test, not just to take the test. Let's invest in what works. Our schools are facing bigger challenges than they ever have before. They are educating more students, and more students with special challenges are filling our classrooms such as children with limited English proficiency and disabilities. They are educating them to meet higher standards and succeed in an increasingly complex world.

We know many schools need to do a better job. Schools need to be held accountable and teachers need to be held accountable. But in Congress, we must also be held accountable for meeting our responsibilities as a Federal partner to our schools. Believe me, if we pass this bill without guaranteed funding for things such as smaller classes and with huge unfunded testing mandates, we will be held accountable.

Finally, I will mention something we did not hear from the other side but is at the heart of what is going on in the bill. We did not hear this new funding scheme that is in the underlying bill described as a block grant. That is exactly what it is. The reason it is not called a block grant is because parents know that block grants offer less accountability, less focus on things that work, and in the end less funding. So instead of calling it a block grant, they now call it ''a funding pool.''

Parents don't want pools of funding. They want commonsense investments that make a difference, such as smaller classes and decent facilities. We have heard a lot of excuses. We have heard a lot of rhetoric. The only thing that will matter when this debate is done is how the students in Kristi's classrooms and thousands of classrooms across our country do next year.

I have shown my colleagues why the arguments that have been raised don't hold up. I close by mentioning some of the reasons we should target these dollars to smaller classes.

Parents know better than to believe the false rhetoric about smaller classes not helping children learn. Smaller classes result in more individual attention for students and better student performance on assessments. They

produce long-lasting academic benefits such as lower dropout rates and more students taking college entrance exams and long-lasting social benefits such as less teen pregnancy and incarceration. Rhetoric about choice and flexibility will not go very far when parents ask us why class sizes went back up. The reasons we need a guaranteed funding stream for class size reduction are clear.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to invest in the things that work. As local schools across the country try to make progress in the face of growing challenges, let's give them the tools they need to succeed.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, will the Senator from Washington yield?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the ranking member for the time.

I compliment the Senator from Washington on her amendment and for the tremendous insight she brings, as someone who has participated on a school board, as a mom, who understands education from the grassroots.

As the Senator from Washington was talking, I couldn't help but think, I don't get to go to the movies very much, but there was one movie about 2 years ago named ''October Sky'' that I saw. It was about a coal mining town in West Virginia and how the escape for those young people in school from a life of coal mining was only through the avenue of a dedicated teacher who ignited their little minds.

In this particular case, they were called the rocket boys. They went out and built miniature rockets, won the State science fair, got the college scholarships, and were able to go to college. It is based on a true story about one of those rocket boys who went on to become a very accomplished NASA engineer.

It popped into my mind because of what the Senator was saying about the importance of the teacher and the teacher being able to interrelate with the children in that classroom. If it is a classroom of 50 or 60 children, that personal attention, that interaction just isn't going to occur.

How many studies do we have to undertake to understand that when class size is reduced, particularly in the formative years of kindergarten through the third grade, it shows up in spades later on in life by the child's ability to accomplish and succeed.

The Senator's amendment is so clear. This is like voting against motherhood. I can't imagine anybody would not be supporting this amendment. We have already had 2 years of experience with this program. It clearly has started to work. The Senator wants to extend this program for another 5 years for a total program of 7 years.

If I went to my State and asked the average citizen on the street: Do you want to lower class size by hiring more teachers over a 7-year period, to have the Federal Government invest more by hiring 100,000 teachers, I would get an almost unanimous response.

I add my voice of appreciation to the Senator from Washington for her wonderful commentary and for her very insightful amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes off the bill on the amendment.

I commend the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, for bringing this measure back to the Chamber, urging the Senate to support an amendment which will make available to school districts the additional funding for smaller class sizes with a particular emphasis on K–3 classrooms.

Senator MURRAY brings a unique and special credibility to this issue as someone who has been an active school board member and also someone who has been a first grade school teacher. Although she didn't review that experience with us this morning, I think all of us who have listened to her make this presentation and fight for this program remember clearly the very compelling case that she has made.

I think it still echoes in my ears about the schoolteachers who are in the classes with 30 children, trying to deal with all of their particular names and needs, as compared to a teacher in a smaller class of 15, 13 children, where she is able to spend the time to give the individual kind of attention to the child, and particularly that child who may have some very special needs on that particular day. It is translated into helping and assisting children in the earliest grades to be able to develop their interests and their awareness in terms of education and reflects itself in terms of an enhancement in their academic achievement and accomplishment.

Now there has been some suggestion on the floor of the Senate that this is not effective, that the studies indicate this is not effective, that it is one of the least desirable reforms. I hope those who maintain that position will at least be good enough to illustrate what studies they were referring to, because I am going to give three practical studies that are compelling information and make a compelling case in support of the Murray amendment. They are overwhelming. And you don't have to go back years to look at the results of the studies, all you have to do is look at the front page of the newspapers here Tuesday of last week:

> Prince Georges' Test Scores Show Best Gains Ever.

Then you read down through this:

> Prince Georges County students posted their highest gains ever on a key standardized test used to gauge how local children measure up to their peers nationally, according to the results released.

Then the school superintendent, when asked about what the principal contributors were in moving the children along in this direction:

> [She] said she hoped that county and State leaders would see the test scores as proof that the county is serious about improving academic achievement and that they would reward it with more funding to reduce class size.

There it is. Results. Reduce class size. We reject this idea that you have to make a choice between well-qualified teachers in the classroom and smaller class size. The Murray amendment says we can do both. That is our position, that we can do both.

With all respect to our colleagues on the other side, the ones who have been addressing this issue voted against getting an allocation of resources in our committee toward having well-qualified, well-trained teachers with professional development and mentoring. As many of us tried to say, let's make sure we are going to provide that, and that was rejected in our committee. Now, in some kind of an attempt to defeat the Murray amendment, they say the No. 1 question is: Are we going to have a well-trained teacher in every class?

We are for it. The Senate voted in favor of it, with a strong bipartisan vote to expand that last week. What we are also saying is we want to have a well-trained teacher in the class with professional development and mentoring programs, but we also want the smaller class size, as has been done here every time we have reviewed this amendment. All we have to do is look at the results.

I think what would be useful is, rather than speculating perhaps what each Member believes is best in the local community, to look at what is happening out in the country and what the results are. Maybe we can benefit from what is happening when we have results. That is what we have.

In the STAR program in the State of Tennessee, April 29, 1999, report, it says:

> The original STAR research tracked the progress of an average of 6,500 students each year in 79 schools between 1985 and 1989 (and 11,600 students overall). It found that children who attended small classes (13–17 pupils per teacher) in kindergarten through grade 3 outperformed students in larger class sizes (22–25 pupils) in both reading and math on the Stanford Achievement Tests for elementary students. The second phase of the STAR research found that even after returning to larger classes in grade 4, STAR's small class students continued to outperform their peers who had been in larger class sizes.

That is what we have, Mr. President. The study goes on and shows that students in smaller class sizes are more likely to pursue college, small classes lead to higher graduation rates, students in small classes achieve at higher levels, and the list goes on. That is Tennessee, 6,500 students.

We can go to what took place from 1996 up to the year 2000 in the State of Wisconsin, the SAGE Program. The exact same results—30 schools, 21 school districts. When adjusted for preexisting differences in academic

achievement, attendance, and socioeconomic status, the SAGE students showed significant improvement over their comparison school counterparts from the beginning of the first grade to the end of the third grade across all academic areas. The charts go through there.

We can take the Rand study. That is not known to be a flaming liberal or Democratic organization—the Rand Corporation. Here they examine smaller class sizes in California —more than 1.8 million students. This is their conclusion:

Smaller class sizes with certified teachers—

That is what we stand for. We have the certified teachers with the authorizations we passed last week in a bipartisan way. But also we haven't got the guarantee that there will be resources in here for the smaller class sizes. Here is the Rand study that was just produced in July of last year:

Smaller class sizes with certified teachers have the greatest benefit for the neediest students.

Why not do both? That is what the Senator from Washington is saying. Why don't we do both? We are doing the well-qualified teachers. Why not do smaller class sizes? Why be in the situation? We have to make a choice. We know what is working. Let's give that option to the local communities. That is what the Murray amendment does.

Here it is:

Smaller class sizes with certified teachers have the greatest benefit for the neediest students. Evaluation shows that those students in the most disadvantaged schools were most likely to be in larger classes, or have less-qualified teachers. Students in smaller classes still outperformed their peers in larger classes, even with less-qualified teachers. These students could be performing even better if all children in these schools had fully qualified teachers and smaller class sizes.

That is the Rand Corporation. If we want to try to do something to help children in local communities, let's take the best in terms of studies. Let's take the best in practical experience. Let's take the best in terms of our own intuition and understanding about a schoolteacher in a classroom where they are familiar with the children and can spend the time with the children versus in a larger classroom. That is what this is really all about.

Finally, I want to read this. I have other examples. In Fayetteville, AR, there is a wonderful story about a rural school that took advantage of the Murray amendment, because although we are resisted on the floor of the Senate by our Republican friends, in the past we were able to, under the leadership of Senator MURRAY and President Clinton, have an effective program that is currently working, and one we want to keep.

Let me just read a very brief letter from a student at the Richmond Elementary School from Narragansett, RI. I think it could have been from any number of children. This is from Marieke Spresser:

If I were in a smaller class, I would do more projects. I could talk more with my teacher about school. I could read more in my book packets. I could have more time for centers. I could have more time for snacks. I could ask more questions. I could talk more with my friends. The coat room would not be so messy and we would not waste the time looking for something. The line would not be so long.

My colleagues get the sense from this student. Even though there are references about other activities, my colleagues have an understanding, which the children have, that should not be lost as well. If we are talking about developing a legislative initiative that is going to present the best we possibly can to local communities, let them make their choice; let them make the decision. They are the ones who are going to ultimately make the request.

There is nothing mandatory in here, but let us at least pass legislation that reflects the best of educators and practical experience. The Murray amendment does that in spades. It is a compelling case. It should be accepted, and I hope it will be.

My colleague, the Senator from New York has arrived. The Senator from Washington can yield time to our colleague.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Washington. I rise to express my very strong support for Senator MURRAY's class size reduction amendment.

I have been in this Chamber several times in the last weeks talking about class size and have shown numerous pictures of conditions in the classes in the schools in New York. I have listened to the extraordinary description of other colleagues as to what their students and teachers face day in and day out because of overcrowded classrooms.

I know we will be making decisions that determine the opportunities for our educational achievement for our students for years to come when we vote on this amendment and on the bill of which I hope it will be a part.

I have to reiterate several points and call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to look at the evidence. I do believe sometimes in Washington we live in an evidence-free zone. It does not matter who comes up with whatever scientific research or evidence. If it runs against any particular political point of view, it is not given the seriousness it deserves.

I do not see how we can turn our backs on the evidence that we have from study after study that lower class size, when it comes to teaching children from disadvantaged backgrounds, makes all the difference.

Sometimes my colleagues say: But there are schools that do a good job with more students, and I remember when I was in school and we had a lot of students.

I can remember that, too. I started school when we had three television networks. I can remember when we had more two-parent families. I can remember when we did not have all of the social and cultural interference with raising children that we now face.

The fact is, we have to take our kids where they are today, and many of them today are coming from situations where they need more attention, more adult time, more discipline, more guidance in order to be academically successful.

We are turning our backs not only on the research which points that out time and again but on these children. I hope my colleagues who have not seen fit to support this amendment will reconsider it. It is not too late to cast a vote for the kinds of classrooms where teachers can teach and children can learn.

If you look at our big States with big cities—and I know New York has obviously a special set of issues because of the size of our school district in New York City, but it is not unique. In Pennsylvania, for example, the average class size in Philadelphia is 30 children per class. In Pittsburgh, it is 25 children per class. In Chicago, it averages 28. In Georgia, it averages 32.

This is not an issue for just Senators or teachers or school board members to be concerned about in debate. Much of the attention I have seen focused on this comes from parents who know their children are not getting academic assistance they need to do the best they can do.

There is a woman in New York whom I commend who started a grassroots parents organization called Class Size Matters. She began to form networks of parents around the country who know because they have seen with their own eyes and their experience of their children, that class size matters.

In Pennsylvania alone, this Class Size Matters network got 1,700 parents to sign a petition in just 2 days, urging the Senate to vote in favor of class size reductions.

I have heard from parents throughout New York who tell me in great detail how crowded their classrooms are and how they need help. This does not interfere with flexibility. This does not take anything away from the local school districts determining priorities, but it does give additional help and resources to those districts and those parents who know that unless we get those class sizes down, their children will not learn to the extent they should do so.

I also regret deeply that if we do not adopt this amendment, we will be stopping the progress we have made.

New York State has hired to date 2,600 teachers and has 700 more all ready to be hired. This will stop that hiring, and we know from the 2,600 we have already hired what a difference it makes in the classrooms of New York.

I believe that without dedicated funding for reducing class sizes, our

hardest pressed, most needy districts will not receive the dollars they need to reduce the classes.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to stand behind our children, our parents, our teachers and reduce the size of our classes and adopt Senator MURRAY's amendment.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mrs. MURRAY. How much time does the Senator from Michigan wish?

Ms. STABENOW. Five minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I commend my colleague from Washington State who has been such a stalwart on this commonsense issue. If you were to ask anyone in the public whether it makes sense to have smaller class size so that our children can receive the attention they need from the teacher and have the opportunity to interact in the classroom and maximum opportunity to learn in the classroom, everyone would look at you and say: Well, of course, that ought to be a priority.

We have been able to back up the commonsense nature of this ideal with numerous studies that have been talked about by my colleagues today about what has happened around the country and the difference smaller class size makes.

I want to share with my colleagues what is happening in my great State of Michigan. I have a colleague, a former State senate colleague, Senator Joe Conroy, who is the Senator MURRAY of Michigan. For years he has been speaking about the importance of lowering the number of children in a classroom and how critical that is to teaching. He has been bringing those studies to Michigan, and Michigan finally took action in 1996.

For the 1996–1997 school year, thanks to Senator Conroy, Michigan created a pilot project in Flint, MI, to focus on grades 1–3 and to create a 17-student-per-teacher classroom, a ratio of 17 children to 1 teacher in the high-risk schools.

They found it was so successful after 3 years that the State of Michigan has begun to look for ways to expand that and has now expanded a classroom project to lower class size to 26 different districts in Michigan.

That is the good news. They found in Flint that, in fact, it made a difference that children's performance in reading and math increased dramatically. They are now looking for ways to bring that to children all across Michigan. But the challenge is that there are over 500 districts, and the State has been able to expand to 26 districts, but they need our partnership. They need this Murray amendment. Our children in Michigan need to know that we in Washington understand the critical importance of partnering with the States to lower class size so that our teachers can teach and our children can learn.

We have heard the numbers. We have heard about national studies. Let me just add an analysis of a Texas program that used data from 800 school districts containing more than 2.4 million children. They found that as the number of children in a classroom went up above 18 students per 1 teacher, student achievement fell dramatically. So the more children in the classroom, the lower the achievement.

We have seen study after study that has shown this. We have the opportunity in the Senate to show that we have responded to the common sense and the studies that have indicated very clearly the direction in which we should move as we look at improving education for our children.

I support having strong standards, high standards, and I commend colleagues on both sides of the aisle for initiatives that relate to accountability. But if we do not also provide the opportunity for children to learn in small classes, if we do not also focus on recruiting more certified teachers, and make sure there are an appropriate number of classrooms and they are modernized so the tools are there, we are only doing half the job.

I urge my colleagues to support the Murray amendment. It has made a difference. It will make a difference. The efforts that we have seen in Flint, MI, and now expanded across Michigan, have demonstrated very dramatically that if a teacher is able to spend the time in a classroom—and the ideal number we found in Michigan is 17 to 18 children per classroom—if you are able to do that, if that teacher has the opportunity to spend time with children in a small class, we know reading scores go up, math scores go up, and student performance goes up in general. We also know that classroom is more safe; there is a better opportunity in general for children to be in safe, quality schools when we focus on small class size.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. Who yields time?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 16 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. How much remains on the other side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire has 43 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask the Senator from New Hampshire when he intends to use his time? Mr. President, we have 16 minutes on our side and 43 minutes on the other side. If I could just inquire when the other side intends to use their time?

Mr. GREGG. I believe the Senator from Minnesota wished to speak. We will proceed after the Senator from Minnesota.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will just take 3 minutes because I want to give the Senator from Washington as much time as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator from Michigan for her response. I ask unanimous consent I be included as an original cosponsor.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I heard the Senator from Florida state to the Senator from Washington he appreciated her grassroots perspective. I do as well. I didn't serve on a school board. I wish I had. I keep calling on people in Minnesota to please run for the school board. We desperately need good leadership on our school boards. There is no more important issue and there is no more important public service.

I certainly agree with what the Senator from Michigan has said. The only thing I would add to this debate is, while I didn't serve on a school board, I have averaged being in a school every 2 weeks for the last 10½ years. I love to teach. I was a college teacher. I was in Woodbury High School yesterday. I love being in schools. Almost every time now in the last year or so we have gotten into discussions about education, I pretty much ask students: What do you think makes for a good education? Where do you think the gaps are? What works well? what does not? Why?

Really, over and over again the first of two things students talk about is good teachers. When they talk about good teachers, they never then define good teachers as teachers who teach to worksheets. They are not talking about drill education. They are talking about teachers who fire their imagination, get them to relate themselves personally in relation to the material that is being discussed. Also you hear about smaller class size.

I agree certainly with the little ones, under 4 feet tall, it is critically important. But I frankly think it goes all the way through high school. When you ask students to talk about why, it is just a no-brainer to them.

They say the good teachers are the teachers who get to know us, who can interact with us and can really support us, and they are much better able to do that when there is a smaller class size.

I am a proud Jewish father. My daughter is a great teacher. Next year, the school in which she is teaching will have to lay off 40 teachers for many reasons, including an awful State budget. She will have 50 students in her Spanish class. It is hard to get to know them well and give them the help they need.

Maybe this is the best way I can support this amendment. She said she kept the parents around the night of the parent/teacher conference and had

them all crammed into the classroom. She sat them all down and said this year she has 40. She said: Next year, there will be 10 more. That means your child will get 1 minute.

If you think about a class, and they were all sitting there, thinking: This doesn't work very well, does it?

It does not. At the national level, the one thing we can say is there are certain priorities we have, and there is a certain commitment we make to all children wherever they live. We at the Senate say we know good teachers and small class size are important, so we make this commitment in our education legislation. Therefore, I am proud to support your amendment. I certainly hope it will be agreed to in the Senate.

I have no doubt that at the grassroots level in all of our States, the people we represent, including the students who maybe cannot even vote, view this as a priority for them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? If no one yields time, time will be charged equally to both sides. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, how much time do we have on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 11½ minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. The other side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. They have 43 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask the Senator from New Hampshire when they intend to use their time? Certainly we have several Senators coming to the floor. We would like to use our 11½ minutes. If the other side doesn't want to use their time, we would love to have some of it.

Mr. GREGG. I appreciate the generosity of the Senator from Washington. I yield to the Senator from Alabama 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate the courtesy of the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire and appreciate his leadership on all issues relating to this education bill. As a former Governor and a person who has been deeply involved in trying to get the best possible advantage from every dollar spent on education, his influence has been very valuable to us in this body. I think President Bush—as a former Governor himself who made education a high priority, who traveled his State and who was in schools and met with school boards and principals all over his State, he wrestled with those kinds of issues that face all educators—also is providing great leadership. I am pleased to be able to support legislation that he proposes.

We deeply care about improving learning in the classroom. My wife and I both have taught. She taught a number of years. We care about it, have been active in the PTA and those kinds of things, and have tried to keep up with the relevant issues of importance to education.

With regard to class size reductions, it would seem that class size reductions is a wonderful idea. I am sure teachers would say: Wouldn't it be great if I had a smaller group of students? And teacher unions like it; they get to hire more teachers. Polling numbers show that people think they like that.

How are you going to improve education? What do you want to do? Poll? Reducing class size. That sounds like a good idea. It sounds like a good idea to me. It sounds like a good idea for politicians who want to please the public and do something about education. I have thought over the years it is a good public policy we ought to pursue.

I do not suggest there is no benefit from reducing the size of the class.

I think we need to be real serious about it. We are talking about a lot of money and a major commitment. We need to know whether or not this is the best way to achieve additional learning.

Senator MURRAY's goal is a noble one. I know it comes from her heart. She believes in it. But her amendment is, in fact, a federal mandate and a $2.4 billion requirement on education for fiscal year 2002 alone. It is in such sums as are necessary for the next 6 years. It would require States to use those funds to reduce class size whether this is, in their mind, a local need or not.

The bill we have under consideration would allow schools to use the already increased Federal funds for class size reduction, but it does not require them to do so. It leaves those decisions in the hands of the States and localities. I think they should make those determinations.

In addition to that, I think we ought to be real careful in this body when we pass an amendment—if we were to pass this amendment—that we would be sending a signal that it is the considered opinion of this body and the Federal Government that class size reduction ought to be made the No. 1 priority in the schools around America. If that were the right thing to do, I would feel more comfortable about this.

Reduction of class size is a highly expensive policy to place on the States. Many researchers have found little or no benefit in reducing class size.

Some would say, JEFF, that is just skinflint talk. You are always frugal. You are always worried about spending money, and you know that we are going to have more learning if we have smaller classes. Why would you suggest otherwise? I thought so myself. But the more I look at the facts and the studies, I am less and less convinced that we receive any real benefit from a reduction in class size.

Professor Hanushek, a professor at the University of Rochester, and now I believe at Stanford University, has written that class size reduction is best thought of as a political decision. Past evidence suggests that it is a very effective mechanism for gaining voter support, even if past evidence also suggests that it is a very ineffective educational policy.

The problem is, we are dealing with a counterintuitive circumstance here. But we weren't thinking this way in 1988. The Department of Education of the United States declared that reducing class size in 1988 was probably a waste of money.

Then we had a series of efforts and programs around the country and campaigns to raise this issue. It seemed to have taken hold.

I would like to mention a few facts that we need to consider if we really want to make sure the money we are spending benefits children.

In 1961, the average class size in America was 30. In 1998, the average class size was 23.

Most Americans who are thinking about reducing class size probably don't realize that the average class size in America is that small. I think we have made some very good progress in reducing class size already. In fact, that is almost a one-third reduction since 1960 in the size of classes.

Unfortunately, we need to ask ourselves what kind of benefit have we received from this one-third reduction, this reducing down to 23 students per classroom. If we look at the standardized test scores over that same period from 1960 to 1998, scores have fallen. They have not gone up.

You say, well, a standardized test is not a perfect evaluation for a lot of complicated reasons. That is true. But most experts who have studied these numbers will tell you they believe fundamentally test scores have not gone up since 1960. I think most would agree they probably have at least declined some.

The NAEP scores of 17-year-olds have been conducted since 1969, and from 1969 to 1995, class size dropped 23 percent. But NAEP scores on academic improvement show that math and reading were level and science and writing declined.

We have a continual decline in classroom size and no improvement in learning scores. I think that is strong evidence when we are talking about these numbers.

Make no mistake. When we reduce a class size by one-third, what have we done? We have required that we hire one-third more teachers. We have required that we build one-third more classrooms; that we will have one-third more insurance to pay for; one-third more maintenance; and one-third more upkeep and all the things that go with operating a school—a tremendous wealth investment in classroom size reduction.

We have had big classroom size reductions, and I have always thought that was great. But we surely haven't had great test score results in recent years.

The question I guess would be, if we have already had a one-third classroom size reduction and no benefit, why do

we think further reductions of a significant order are going to be paid for in increased educational return? I think that is the question with which we need to wrestle.

In 1994, Professor Hanushek did a study. He examined 277 studies that have been conducted of the effects of classroom size in America. He took every one of them. He pored through their data and examined it and reached a number of startling conclusions. He published his study. It showed that in statistically significant studies 15 percent of the studies found some positive benefit from reducing classroom size and 13 percent found a negative benefit from reducing classroom size—negative, adverse consequences from reducing classroom size. Seventy-two percent were basically neutral and didn't show any effect. If you took all the studies, it was 27 percent positive and 25 percent negative.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes.

Mr. KENNEDY. To what studies are we referring? I am trying to understand. We had the study in Tennessee, and the STARS study. I am trying to find out what these studies are and who conducted them.

Mr. SESSIONS. This is a study by Eric Hanushek, a professor at the University of Rochester who published his writings, and who I think is well known in the field and referred to by experts.

Mr. KENNEDY. I apologize to the Senator. I did not hear him.

Mr. SESSIONS. Professor Hanushek.

Mr. KENNEDY. Where is he from?

Mr. SESSIONS. He is now from Stanford University, I believe. He was at the University of Rochester, I believe, previously.

Mr. KENNEDY. What is the title of the study? I want to have a chance to review it.

Mr. SESSIONS. I would be glad to get the Senator the information.

Mr. KENNEDY. Is this the only study that we are using?

Mr. GREGG. Will the Senator yield on that point?

Mr. SESSIONS. I would be glad to yield and talk about it specifically.

Mr. GREGG. Hanushek is a professor at Rochester. He looked at 300 different studies on the question of class size and its effect on pupil performance in the classroom. He also looked at teacher performance in the classroom and teacher professionalism and performance in the classroom. Within those 300 different studies on that subject, he evaluated and came to the conclusions being related by the Senator from Alabama very precisely.

Mr. KENNEDY. Is this the only study that the Senator is using? I used the Tennessee study, the California study, and then the Prince George's results. I am wondering whether the Senator has other studies? I know the Senator from Tennessee referred to multiple studies that are being done on this. I was just trying to be able to look at the studies myself.

Mr. SESSIONS. I will be glad to provide the Senator his analysis of the existing studies he reviewed. That was his conclusion.

He also reviewed the Tennessee STAR report in some depth and concluded that its methodology was dubious, that benefits, at best, were very small, even under the STAR report. It took an heroic endeavor by the writer of the STAR report, based on a single British study of how much more money you make, if you receive a little more education, to justify the expense of it.

His conclusion was that the problem with that analysis is that it compares something to nothing. If you count the amount of billions of dollars that were spent on reducing class size, and you receive such a minimal benefit, perhaps it would be better spent in focusing on questions such as quality teachers.

We know, for example, that good teachers benefit students dramatically. We have studies, that I think are not disputed, that top-quality teachers can produce learning in a year of 1.5 year's worth of learning under their tutelage, whereas a poor teacher may produce an average of .5 year's worth of learning. In other words, an excellent teacher could gain for a child in learning a full year's advantage over a poorer teacher.

If we are going to go out and hire one-third more teachers to reduce class size further down, aren't we running a risk, and isn't that probably why the numbers do not show the kind of improvement we desire? Because we are bringing in less qualified teachers, who may not be producing the kind of quality learning environment that excellent teachers would be. Which would you prefer?

Mr. KENNEDY. May I ask the Senator a question?

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Did you review the Rand study? You mentioned that they did the STAR school study and that he questioned that. They had the SAGE review in Wisconsin. And they have the Rand study, which involved 1,800,000 children last year, with very positive results. This is the Rand Corporation. I wonder if——

Mr. SESSIONS. I would like to see the Rand study. I would just say this, that Michigan Professor Linda Lim has done comparative studies of the United States and Asian schools and found that class sizes are 50-plus in places such as Taiwan and they have not kept those schools from surpassing ours.

Mr. GREGG. If the Senator from Alabama would yield?

Mr. SESSIONS. I will.

Mr. GREGG. The Rand study came out after Professor Hanushek completed his study in Rochester. The Rand study has been referred to by the Senator from Massachusetts. I think it is important to note that what the Rand study concluded was that class size might impact student performance but it was the most expensive way to accomplish it; that, in fact, you got much more benefit from the dollars spent if you improved the teacher quality, if you improved the resources of the teacher, in most instances. That was the specific conclusion of the Rand study.

In fact, the average cost per pupil for reducing class size to 17 students, under the Rand study, was found to be $450 per student in a high-poverty district, whereas the same academic aims could be achieved with the average cost of $90 per pupil by providing increased resources and improving the capability of the teacher to teach.

The point, of course, of the underlying bill, which the Senator is trying to amend, is that we give that flexibility to the local school districts. We say to the local school districts: If you need to hire more teachers, you can. But if you think you want to improve the support facilities for the teachers, you can do that, or if you want to improve their talents, you can do that.

We are giving that option to the State and local school districts to decide which is the most efficient, effective and cost-effective way to do this.

Mr. SESSIONS. I think the Senator from New Hampshire is precisely correct. It may be that a school system is in circumstances where they believe that class-size reduction is important. That can be done under this bill as it is written today. They can use the funds for class-size reduction.

But I think we ought to be careful that we do not require them to take steps that could cost tremendous sums of money, money which could be better spent for bringing in a high-quality computer laboratory, a new science laboratory, the latest and best ways to teach mathematics, sending teachers to attain advanced degrees and advanced training in history and science and math and how to teach reading. Those kinds of things may be more important than simply whether the number of students in the classroom is 20 or 16. If you go from 20 students to 16 students in a classroom, that is a 20-percent increase in the number of teachers you have to hire. If you go from 20 students to 16 students, you have to have 20 percent more classrooms and 20 percent more overhead and cost.

So I would just say that from Professor Hanushek's analysis, and from what appears to be common sense over 40 years of rapidly reduced class size with no academic benefit, we ought to be a little bit humble in this body before we start suggesting that it is the sole and best way for any school system in America to spend its money to enhance learning. That is all I am saying in opposition to this amendment.

I have serious doubts that this is the best leadership we can give to American schools. If the best we can say is, don't make any changes, keep on with business as usual, we will just give you more money and more teachers and a smaller class size, that is not going to

guarantee that learning will improve in America. We have not seen that improvement. The data does not show it. Serious scientific questions have been raised about the importance of it.

With regard to the highly touted Tennessee STAR experiment, that experiment was based on a class reduction of eight students over the comparative-size classroom—a very expensive proposition. If you have 24 students in a class and you reduce the class size by 8 students, and go to 16 students, you have increased the number of teachers needed by one-third and increased the number of classrooms needed by one-third. That is a huge increase and huge reduction in class size. We have, at best, according to Professor Hanushek, something like a .2 percent statistical or standard deviation improvement, raising real questions about the validity of that.

So the critical issue for us, it seems to me, is that we do not need to be pressing this mandate down on schools, requiring them or making them think that the only way they can get Federal money for this project for teachers is to go on a commitment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. May I have 30 seconds to wrap up?

Mr. GREGG. I yield the Senator another 2 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. We need to be sure we are not spending $2.4 billion a year in encouraging a further investment in classrooms and overhead for schools on a policy that sounds good—that is, to reduce class size even further than we have reduced it in the last 30, 40 years—when we may not be receiving an educational benefit from it.

I do not know about all the studies, but I know this professor examined 277 of them as of 1994. He found no benefit statistically proven for smaller class sizes in education. Isn't that stunning? It is almost counterintuitive. But that is what he found. No studies that I have seen have shown any dramatic improvement.

So I think we ought to allow the local school systems a choice as to whether they want to go to smaller class sizes, improve their science lab, or have better teachers, more funding for top-quality teachers, more training for teachers who are weak. That kind of choice would be better for education.

We need to be more humble in this body about what we think we know.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mrs. MURRAY. How much time remains on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Eleven and a half minutes on the Senator's side and a little over 20 minutes on the other side.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

I yield 7 minutes to the Senator from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized for 7 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of Senator MURRAY's amendment to authorize class size reduction. I have been listening to this rather pedantic discussion of studies and analyses. We can point on one side to a study from Tennessee and on another side to a study from an eminent expert from the University of Rochester. The reality is much more obvious.

Ask any parent in America if they want to have their children in a class of 27 or 15. The answer is always 15. Go to any prestigious private school in America and they are not advertising: Come to our school; we have 50 in a class just like Taiwan. They are saying: Come to our school; small class size; constant contact with teachers—the kind of atmosphere that provides for academic success.

Look around. Just last week, the headline in the Washington Post read: ''Pr. George's Test Scores Show Best Gains Ever.'' What did the superintendent want to do with these remarkable results? The superintendent said she hoped that the county and State leaders would see the test scores as proof that the county is serious about improving academic achievement and that they would reward it with more funding to reduce class size and repair deteriorating buildings. That is not some scholar from Rochester or some statistician looking at Tennessee. That is the superintendent, a local school official, who said: We are doing better, but we can do better if we lower class size and repair our buildings.

The other point that should be made is that this program is voluntary. It is not a mandate. It does not say: If you take this program, you cannot have any other Federal program in the realm of education. I have seen the results firsthand.

In Providence, the capital city of my State, they use this program very flexibly, very innovatively. They sought a waiver to use class size funding for literacy coaches that would coteach in elementary schools half the time, and deliver school-based professional development the other half of their working time. Through this program, we are able to do what everyone on this floor seems to be talking about: reduce class size and enhance professional development.

This is a program that we have supported over the last several years on a bipartisan basis. We made a downpayment to help communities hire 100,000 teachers. That is something that every parent in this country wants. That is something, apparently, that school leaders such as Superintendent Metts of Prince George's County want. It is something that scientists and researchers have indicated is working in Tennessee and elsewhere. It is something that obviously should be done, and I support Senator MURRAY.

I make two other points: First, class size reduction has to be tied to funds to increase the number of classrooms. That is another portion of an amendment that has been brought to the Chamber.

In addition to that—and this is reflected in a note I received from Jonathan Kozol—by gearing up with an elaborate testing regime, we are putting the cart before the horse. We should first be reducing class size. We should be first increasing title I moneys. We should then go ahead and provide for funds to improve the physical structure of schools. Maybe at that point, maybe when urban children have the same environment, the same teacher ratios as you see in suburban communities, we can start testing them.

We are going to test these children, and urban kids are going to do much worse than suburban kids. Why? Not because they are not capable. But when you are in a school that is falling down, when you are in a school with a large number of children, much larger than the suburban areas, when you have teachers who are not getting the professional development they need, you are not going to get the kind of results you get elsewhere. That is the reality.

We can talk about tests and studies in Rochester and elsewhere, but the reality we know. Frankly, most of us, if we had a choice to send a child to school, we would look for smaller classrooms. We would look for buildings that are not falling down, teachers who are highly motivated, highly qualified, and highly prepared. That is where we would send our child.

Let's give every American family that chance. The one way to do it is to support the Murray amendment.

I yield back the time to Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I have spoken at some length prior to this time on my concern for the Murray amendment. I know it is well directed and well intentioned, but it fails to appreciate the fact that local schools have a variety of needs for their teachers.

Some schools need more teachers, so they want to hire them. Some need better qualified teachers, so they will want to improve the ability of the teachers who are in the classroom. Some may have high-quality teachers they want to keep in the classroom but are being attracted to some other private sector activity or public sector activity, so they need to pay the teachers more. Some classrooms just need more technical support to assist the teacher or teaching aids such as computers or some sort of monitor capability that allows the student to interface with the teacher in a way that the teacher can guide them.

We don't know the answer to which one of those teacher tools are needed, whether it is more teachers, better teachers, better paid teachers, or better support for teachers. Therefore,

this bill addresses the issue by giving the local school districts the option of choosing, of taking the teacher money and the Eisenhower grant money, merging it and saying to local schools: You make the decision on teachers, if the money must be spent on teachers. You make the decision as to how you can best improve your classrooms. You, the principal, the family, the parents who participate in the PTA, or the school boards, the actual teachers make the decisions, rather than creating an arbitrary program which says every school in America needs to have more teachers, when that is not necessarily the case.

In fact, 48 to 46 States—something like that—44 States already have teacher ratios of 18 to 1 on average in their States. As a practical matter, a lot of States already meet the criteria for which the original concept of this bill was set up. What those States need is better teachers, better trained teachers, maybe teachers who are better paid, and keeping teachers in the classroom.

There was one thing said by the Senator from Rhode Island with which I agree. He said most parents are going to choose a school that has better teachers or smaller class size or better facilities. Unfortunately, the other side of the aisle isn't interested in allowing choice in the classroom. They have been resisting choice since the debate started.

There will be an opportunity to set up a demonstration program which will allow 3 States and 10 school districts to apply to use choice as an option so that parents can choose as to whether or not they want to stay in that school that is working or maybe a school that is failing, but in any event, whether they want to stay in a school or whether they want to move to another school.

We have in this bill something called supplemental services which says to parents, if your child is in a failed school, after 3 years you can go out and get tutorial support for your student. But if your child is in a failed school and that school has failed for 3 years, you should have some other choice—if you want to be able to take your child and move them to another school, a private school, if that is what you want as your option. That is what happens in Philadelphia. It is what is happening in Arizona and Florida. It is what is happening in a number of areas across the country where schools are consistently poor, consistently failing, which are not educating the children, where when you send your child off to school in the morning, you don't know whether they are going to be beaten up or subjected to some sort of exposure to drug sales or whether they are going to learn anything. A parent should not be put in that position.

Remember, it is interesting what we are talking about now. We are not talking about wealthy parents or even moderate-income parents. In those instances, most of those parents, if they have decided to choose—and many of them have by physically living in a different area than they otherwise might, than in an urban area, for example—those parents will make the choice. We are talking basically about low-income parents in urban areas and specifically single moms with children.

Those are the people we have trapped in schools that fail year after year after year. We say to that parent: I am sorry; your kid is never going to be given a chance in America because we are never going to educate your child. We are never going to give your child an opportunity to be educated. We are always going to send them to a class where we know that class is not working, a school that we know has failed for 3, 4, 5 years. We are not going to give you any options or any opportunities for choice.

I was interested to see that the Washington Post, which isn't necessarily a conservative newspaper, has come out very strongly in two editorials in the last 2 weeks saying: Let's at least try a demonstration program on the issue of choice, on the issue of portability. Let's pick a few districts across the country where people are locked into schools that are failing, especially low-income parents, and give those parents some other opportunities.

When the Senator from Rhode Island talks about giving choices, yes, I am for choice. I am for saying to schools that have for 2, 3, 4 years not met the grade and their children are locked in those schools on a path which means they cannot participate in the American dream because they are not learning: You have to straighten up. You have to do a better job or else the parents or the kids are going to get some options that are real. They are going to be able to take their kids and put them in schools where they are actually learning something. That is a big issue.

Back on the issue of class size, this bill as it is presently structured addresses that issue. It addresses it with flexibility. It makes a decision on whether or not a new teacher should be hired to the local school district. But it gives the local school district the discretion that if it does not need new teachers but, rather, needs to pay teachers more or improve the quality of teachers or give teachers technical support, they can do that instead.

I just don't understand the philosophy of a Government that says we in Washington know how to run the local schools. I don't understand that. That is essentially what this amendment does. It says if you want the money, you are going to have to hire more teachers; we in Washington know you have to have more teachers.

A lot of school districts in the country don't need more teachers; they need better teachers. By adding more teachers, you end up with worse teachers. The California experience is exactly that. They dramatically increased the number of teachers. They went from 1,000 unaccredited teachers to 12,000 unaccredited teachers, which meant 12,000 teachers who may not know how to teach because they were not accredited and who may not even know the subject matter they are teaching were added to the classrooms.

So reducing class size didn't help those kids. All it did was mean fewer kids got poorer teachers. Good teachers in the classroom is the key—a quality teacher, not necessarily class size. That has been shown in study after study.

As a practical matter, this is too much a one-size-fits-all amendment. This is that stovepipe approach that says we in Washington know how to run you, the local school district, versus saying to the local district: If you need more teachers, you can hire them—which is what our bill says—and if you need better teachers, you can try to improve teachers' ability. If you need to pay your best teachers more, you can do that. If you need to support teachers, use the money that way. It is a much more logical and flexible approach which addresses the needs of school districts in a much more practical way rather than simply command and control from here in Washington.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seven minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield 2½ minutes to the Senator from Washington and then 2½ to the Senator from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from my home State for yielding me time on this amendment.

I applaud Senator MURRAY for her consistent and passionate support for education throughout her political career. Her advocacy for education has deep roots dating back to her early experience as a legislator working for more funding for schools in her own special experience in volunteering and schoolteaching children in the Shoreline area.

This amendment is very important for the reasons some of my colleagues have said. It will provide the type of flexibility our school systems need. It is something that has been proven to work, and this is a program that works. Over the last 2 years, when we say a program has worked, we can show success. Thanks to this program, 1.7 million children across the country and over 23,000 schools are benefiting from smaller class size, primarily in the early grades when children most need personal attention from their teachers.

As we have heard from other speakers, smaller class size not only has demonstrated an impact on increasing educational performance but also has helped to limit disciplinary problems,

and, importantly, small class size has helped encourage greater parental participation in their children's education.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation that will lead to better student achievement, fewer discipline problems, more individual attention, better parent-teacher communication, and dramatic results for poor and minority students. This program does provide flexibility. Up to 25 percent of these funds can be used for other things. This is a program we cannot afford to cut but we need to continue because it is working.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I certainly thank the chairman, the sponsor of this amendment. I want to ask her if she would be kind enough to yield for a question.

Mrs. MURRAY. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I have listened carefully to the Republican opposition to this amendment to reduce class size in America. I am stunned at the suggestion that putting fewer kids in classrooms does not create a better learning experience. Every parent knows that. I can recall raising one child, then two, then three, and how the challenge grew geometrically as the number of children grew. I can't imagine facing a room full of 30 kids and saying it is just as easy to teach there as it is in a room of 13 or 18 children.

The thing that is said repeatedly by one of our colleagues is that ''this is a mandate.'' I ask the Senator from Washington to say once and for all, are we mandating school to districts that they have to reduce class size with this amendment?

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Senator for his question. Let me make it very clear, this is not a mandate. This is funds that are available to school districts to use to decrease class size. School districts that need those funds dramatically can apply for them with a simple application. The funds go directly to them. They are able to use them. It is not a mandate.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator.

The difference here is that most of us come to this debate as former students and parents. Senator MURRAY comes as a former teacher—one of the few in this body. She has stood in front of classrooms of children and taught them. The rest of us here have been pupils sitting at desks or parents wondering how our kids are doing. She comes here saying lower class size gives teachers a better chance to reach children. It is not just her opinion; studies show it.

The STAR project in Tennessee, which has been followed for years, showed significant gains in smaller class size. In Chicago last week, Larry Hedges at the University of Chicago and Barbara Nye of the University of Tennessee produced a study that found that smaller class size in the early grades produced better math scores not only in the third grade but all the way into high school—a full 6 years after the student was in a small elementary school class.

It stands to reason. Think about how discouraging it must be for a child who has a special need or a problem to be ignored day after day after day, until they have lost all interest and fall behind. In a smaller class a teacher can reach out and pick out a child who needs special attention. This is not a mandate; it is an option that makes sense.

We have decided in this bill to focus on the needs for reading—and I support that—and the needs for technology—and I support that, too. Just because President Clinton came up with this idea doesn't mean it is a bad one. It has worked. It has reduced the size of classes across America and has given kids a better chance. I don't think that President Bush, who has called for bipartisanship, should have a negative attitude just because this idea came about on someone else's watch. Aren't there some good ideas on both the Democratic side and the Republican side that we might put into this bill?

Sadly, unfortunately, that is the part of the debate we have overlooked. More than 29,000 teachers were hired with Class Size Reduction Program funds in 1999, benefitting approximately 1.7 million young students. This bill eliminates that program. To do that is to turn your back on basic human experience: A teacher with a smaller number of students is going to be a better teacher and the students will have a better chance.

I support the Senator's amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, how much time do we have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 12 minutes 50 seconds on the Senator's side and 1 minute on the other side.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to restate the significance of the vote that we will have in about 2 hours—exactly 2 hours, as a matter of fact. It is a vote that will reflect the underlying principles of freedom—freedom to identify local needs and respond to those needs in a way that is specific to the problem, to the challenge, to the need in the community, or in a school, and address the principle of who best decides how to accomplish the goal we all agree to, and that is boosting student achievement. Is it Washington, DC, the Federal Government, or is it parents, local communities, local schools, principals—the very people who can identify what the needs might be?

The legislation captures it all in many ways, and therefore I think that we, our colleagues, and the American people should follow closely how the votes go because the bill captures that principle of flexibility and local control versus sort of a one-size-fits-all programmatic approach, a categorical approach that has so characterized our efforts over the last 35 years.

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed. Since that time, there has been, literally, a litany of programs, not 10, 20, 30, or 40, but 50, 60, 70—up in the hundreds by some counts—of well-intended programs based on the idea that if there is a problem it can be fixed by Washington. For example, if there are too many students in classrooms in one part of the country; let's try to fix it in Washington by telling the local communities how to spend their education dollars.

Mr. President, this is about freedom, the freedom of local communities to use federal resources—resources that come from the taxpayers, the people back home, wherever our homes may be—as they see fit. Those resources, those dollars, begin with the taxpayer, then come to Washington, DC, where they are distributed through huge bureaucracies in these categorical programs—all well intended—but all of which have been layered one after another, like this amendment, over the last 35 years and essentially accomplishes nothing when measured against student achievement, or the goal, which President Bush has spelled out so beautifully and demonstrated such true leadership, of reducing over time the achievement gap that exists between the served and the underserved.

If that is truly the goal, we clearly need to do something different, and that something different, as outlined by President Bush, and as incorporated in the underlying bill, is to maximize accountability through assessments and testing, and to provide local communities with the flexibility they need to identify needs and use the resources we make available to address those needs.

As was spelled out today, as well as earlier this week and last week, we have emphasized, in the underlying bill, which is a bipartisan bill supported by both sides, the relationship between teacher and child. Close your eyes and see it: There is a teacher, students, books, technology, computers, but what really ends up having the most value is that relationship between teacher and child. There are many other variable, the number of students in the classroom, how disruptive the students are, how safe the classroom is.

But if we put all those variables in there, we know that at the end of the day, if you have a bad teacher or a poor-quality teacher at the head of the class, nothing else matters very much. It is the quality of the teacher—not just the number of teachers, not just warm bodies in the room—but the quality of that teacher matters. That, as indicated by the studies I cited earlier today, is what determines how well that individual child learns.

What is good about the underlying bill, and why I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose the Murray amendment, is that we do not make that decision. The data is there. We do not force or encourage or incentivize the system to go one way or the other in terms of higher quality teachers, better recruitment, or professional development versus hiring another teacher and reducing class size.

We basically say: No, you decide. If you are in Nashville, TN, in a disadvantaged part of Nashville, TN, or in rural Tennessee, you decide how you can best use that education dollar based on your local needs. The pooling of resources, the discretion we give to local communities about how to use that dollar we feel is so important, we believe that school districts should have the flexibility to decide whether to use the money we have made available for reduced class size, for teacher training, for technology in the classroom, or some other means to reduce the student achievement gap.

There is some data, as I mentioned—again, I am one who thinks class size is, indeed, an important issue. I just think it needs to be determined by a particular school or a particular district rather than by Washington, DC.

There are studies that have prioritized the importance of class size. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that, if your goal is student achievement, then teacher quality is five times more important than class size per se. Class-size reduction is important, but in a relative sense it is less important than having a good quality teacher.

The New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies found student grades were not linked to class size. Smaller classes did not lead to better test scores, and that there was no difference in the achievement of students from small classrooms versus those from large classrooms.

In Dallas, researchers confirmed that one of the studies that was done at the University of Tennessee found that not only did high-quality teachers have an enormous impact on student achievement, but that low-quality teachers actually stunted the academic performance of their students.

We have a shortage of high-quality teachers. People who say class size is the answer need to recognize—again, it has been spelled out over the course of the morning and last week—that there is a shortage of high-quality teachers.

We do need to invest—remember, the purpose of this bill is to invest in education because the role of the Federal Government is no longer spender but investor. We know this because after about $120 billion over 35 years, we are still not accomplishing our goal. So, it's not just a matter of money but a matter of investment. If you are a prudent investor, you need to make sure that the outcome is delivered, and in education the outcome is student achievement.

If we have compulsory class size reduction, basically we are putting more teachers in the classroom. But if we have a shortage of high-quality teachers, by definition it means we are going to be taking lower quality teachers.

The data outlined is clear: You actually hurt children rather than help children if you are putting poor quality teachers in a classroom today and, therefore, it is very important that you weigh the relative importance of putting just bodies at the head of that class, interacting with your children, against putting high quality people at the head of the class.

The point is, we give the school, the school district, the parents, the opportunity to make that choice based on the needs they identify—it could be through assessments, it could be identification of that local need in any way that school district or that school sees fit.

Our underlying bill is very different from the Murray amendment which overrides the school district priorities, and overriding the school district priorities in many ways restricts that choice, that freedom. That is why I urge defeat of the Murray amendment and hope my colleagues will join me in defeating that amendment.

Again, as has been outlined in the underlying bill, we stress professional development, as well as class size, but it must be a local choice.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and urge my colleagues to vote against this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. One minute.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, in my last 1 minute, I will address two quick points. Our colleagues keep referring to local control. How can one define a bill against an amendment that it should be local control when this underlying bill itself requires Federally mandated testing, requires funding streams for reading, for technology, for 20 other programs? That is fundamentally a flawed argument against this.

Our argument is about local control. Local schools decide whether they want to reduce class size knowing they have a Federal partner if they want to make that happen.

Second, I keep hearing the Hanushek study referred to.

Let me remind my colleagues that the Hanushek study is based on study of pupil-teacher ratio which includes all of the certified people in the building which is today almost everybody. Hanushek is fundamentally flawed because he does not look at class size. All of the studies that we have shown from Wisconsin, Tennessee, the RAND study, and the California study dramatically show that reducing class size increases student performance.

How tragic it will be if this Senate does not approve this amendment and keep the commitment to reducing class size that we began 3 years ago.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I seek recognition to comment on Senator MURRAY's amendment regarding class-size reduction. Yesterday, I withdrew my second degree amendment, amendment No. 388, which would have accomplished what I sought to do last year on the appropriations bill covering the Department of Education. I would have preferred to give class-size reduction in hiring new teachers a presumption among the various items which the Federal funds could be spent for on teachers. If a school district would make a determination that other issues—such as training teachers to improve the education of students with disabilities or those with limited english proficiency—are more important, then I believe Federal funds should be available for those purposes as they may be decided at the local level.

As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee that is responsible for funding critical labor, health and education programs, I have sought to strike a balance between providing States and localities the flexibility they need to implement programs designed to improve the academic achievement of all students—thereby relieving them of Washington's straightjacket—and placing the highest priority on those issues that we deem critical to the success of America's schoolchildren.

I believe that we must weight carefully the flexibility our States and school districts need to improve student achievement with priority programs such as class-size reduction. The underlying bill will permit the Federal funds to be used for class-size reduction by hiring more teachers although it lacks the impetus which a presumption would have given.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, the Senate stands in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. THOMAS).

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We will now resume consideration of the Murray amendment No. 378. There are 5 minutes equally divided before the vote.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, in a minute we are going to be voting on a