sure we are going to have the full funding for the IDEA, which the Senator fought for and is so important.

But let me just mention one final item—going back to the consolidation issue. Only 3 percent of the graduate degrees conferred in this country are in law and in medicine. If you remember the rationale of the administration, they said: we do not need to provide for consolidation at a fixed rate because these young people are all going to be lawyers and doctors, and they will be able to pay it off. They represent only 3 percent of the graduate degrees conferred.

The people I am concerned about are those childcare workers—who we are trying to help in terms of providing better quality childcare—who are trying to get their degrees and are going to have to borrow money. I am concerned about the nurses who are trying to get those advanced degrees so they can provide better care. And I am concerned about the teachers who are trying to get a better upgrading of their own kinds of skills who are going to have to go out and borrow. Those are the ones who would have been affected by denying these borrowers the lower interest rates. So that is why I am so glad the administration retreated on it.

I thank the Senator for bringing up these important points.

Mr. DAYTON. Will the Senator yield for another question?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes.

Mr. DAYTON. I applaud the Senator from Massachusetts whose leadership and commitment to these children for decades have been resolute. When I came to the Senate a year ago, I thought what a phenomenal opportunity I would have to work with the Senator and others of our colleagues, given the resources we seemed to have available at that time. As I recall, we had trillions of dollars of surpluses. That was the context in which I recall the Leave No Child Behind partnership was forged.

I wonder how the Senator feels about having made that commitment, and seeing that promise made for funding for all these areas, and now seeing a budget that comes out like this. What happened to all that money we were going to spend on children?

Mr. KENNEDY. The Senator is quite correct. As a matter of fact, the $1.3 billion the OMB had expected, if their proposal in terms of eliminating the consolidation of loans had taken place, would have effectively been used for the tax breaks. You would have had a transferring of resources from the sons and daughters of working families—and not just the sons and daughters because many now in these community colleges, I am sure in your State as well as mine, are mid-career people trying the upgrade their skills. So it is also mothers and fathers who are going for graduate degrees, as well as sons and daughters. But it effectively would have had those individuals paying more interest on their student loans so that the top 1 or 2 percent of the income-tax payers would have been able to get their additional kinds of tax relief. I think those are absolutely the wrong priorities.

It seems to me we heard in the Senate not long ago that we can have it all, we can have the tax cut and the education and the defense—we can have it all. And there were many of us who did not believe you could have it all. There are still some trying to say you still can.

But the Senator's question points out how the education for working families—in the K through 12, and also in college—is going to be limited because of the administration policy.

Mr. DAYTON. The Senator's use of the word ''priorities'' is exactly the right choice. I recall this year we approved another $43 billion in tax breaks for the largest corporations in this country. Combined with what was done last year, would the Senator agree that the priorities of this administration are just fundamentally at odds with the interests of children in America?

Mr. KENNEDY. It seems to me most Americans are agreeing, we have a new day in America as a result of the tragedies of September 11: enormous loss, incredible inspiration for the men in blue, who will be honored outside this Capitol today, and mindful of the 233 who were lost, and the incredible courage of those Americans. We have a new and different day. We have a different economy, different obligations in homeland security, in foreign policy. We have a responsibility here at home to meet the needs of our people.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 more seconds.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. I think that is what is enormously important: Be strong at home. And there is no place we can be stronger at home than investing in the children of this country.

Mr. DAYTON. I thank the Senator, again, for his courageous leadership on this issue for so many years.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the Republican leader or his designee.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes of that time. I understand the Senator from Ohio would like 15 minutes off that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized for 10 minutes.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I find the discussion of the Senators from Massachusetts and Illinois and Minnesota most interesting. It reminds me of that old story of the attorney up in northern New Hampshire who received a report from one of the logging camps he represented. There were seven people in this camp, five men and two women. The report came in that 50 percent of the women were marrying 20 percent of the men.

The numbers which have been thrown out here are, to say the least, a bit disoriented, dysfunctional, and inaccurate. They certainly don't reflect this President's commitment to education. In fact, I don't think anybody can seriously question this President's commitment to education. He not only has made it a priority, he has essentially made it his No. 1 domestic priority after the issue of fighting terrorism, which of course is our Nation's No. 1 issue right now.

It was under his leadership that we passed a landmark piece of legislation in which obviously the Senator from Massachusetts played a large role, as did the Senator who is presiding at the present time. That legislation essentially reorganized the way we approach legislation at the Federal level as it affects elementary and secondary school education.

Basically, it took a large number of programs and merged them together and turned that money back to the States with more flexibility, the purpose of which was to give the States and the local communities specifically more dollars with fewer strings and, in exchange for giving them more dollars with fewer strings, expect more for those dollars and have standards which have to be met to show that that has occurred; in other words, specifically saying, we don't expect any children to be left behind.

The Federal role in elementary and secondary education is a fairly narrow role; 92 to 93 percent of the money comes from the local communities or the States; they have the priority role in education. The Federal role in education has picked two targeted areas on which to focus. No. 1 is low-income kids, making sure they are not left behind. No. 2 is special needs kids, special education kids. This ESEA bill which we passed, the No Child Left Behind bill, essentially said we will give the local communities more money with fewer strings, fewer categorical programs; but in exchange for that, we will expect that especially low-income kids have a better opportunity to learn and that they are not left behind; we will ask the States to set up standards which test that.

What did the President do? He didn't give them less money. He gave more money into this program. If you look at the chart the Senator from Massachusetts held up, you will see that the increases in the Federal commitment to education have been massive over the last 2 years: 19 percent over the base 2 years ago; 16 percent on top of the 19-percent base; and then 3 percent on top of that, with the practical effect being that the dollar increase has been

absolutely huge, as has the percentage increase for education.

In fact, what the President did was consolidate that money into basically a more focused stream so that it goes back to the States in a more effective way. I have charts to reflect this, but I am not sure they are here. Hopefully, they will be arriving soon.

In any event, if you look at what we did, what the President did, you see he put the money into title I. Yes, some of these other programs—they held up five or six different programs—have been zero-funded. They should have been, because they were a little bits of money tossed around for the purposes of some Member of this legislative body getting out a press release.

What the President said was: Let's not do that. Let's put this money into one focused stream and have those dollars flow directly back to the communities. The practical effect of that is that the title I dollars over the last 2 years, the President's increase in title I spending, the money going to low-income kids, has seen a $2.5 billion increase. If you take all the money that went into title I, all the increases during the administration of President Clinton, which was 8 years, not 2 years, his increases only amounted to $2 billion in that account.

So in 2 years the President has exceeded by 20 percent the amount of money that went in as increases over 8 years into the Clinton accounts. This concept that the President has not funded education is absolutely fallacious.

You could hold up another chart on this relative to special education which would show the exact same thing. In fact, it would show that President Bush has made a stronger commitment to special education than President Clinton ever did during his entire term in office. President Bush in the last 2 years, in both of those years, has increased special education by $1 billion each year. President Clinton, of his entire 8 years, in only 1 year, the last year when he was basically forced into it, did he increase special education by $1 billion. In every other year, for the 7 prior years, his increase in the special education amount was actually negligible.

As we know, special education has a huge impact on the local tax base. The failure of the Federal Government to pay its fair share of special education has been one of the real problems local communities have had.

President Bush has made, from the start, a major commitment to funding special education, increasing that funding by over $2 billion, $1 billion in each year of the last 2 years and, as a result, has lived up to a commitment he made during the campaign which was that he was going to move towards full funding of special education. This concept that the President is not funding education really doesn't hold water.

Then there was some discussion of postsecondary activity and this consolidation issue, this ''bloody shirt'' that the other side continues to draw across the floor. Let's talk about a little bit of history. This concept was reported as a concept, as a trial balloon in the New York Times. That is where the issue comes from.

Somebody in OMB, which is not the education policy arm of the administration, threw out the idea: We have to pay for the Pell grant shortfall which is $1.3 billion. One way to do that would be to disallow consolidation of student loans. That is one of the many ways we could do it.

It was reported in the New York Times as a concept. It was a trial balloon. The education arm of the administration, which is the Education Department, immediately rejected it. The OMB was told to forget it. In fact, the OMB called around the Hill to the staff of the appropriate committees and members of the appropriate committees and said they would not pursue it. Yet for 3 weeks now we have heard it as if it were a policy. How outrageous. I refer to the approach the other side is taking as the thought police, where, if you have an idea, you just beat it into the ground, like those mullahs who run around with sticks and beat people if they have ideas. This idea doesn't even exist as a policy. Yet we continue to hear about it.

What does exist as a policy, however, is what this administration has done in the area of postsecondary education, which is huge in the way of funding. The largest increase in Pell grants in the history of this country has occurred under this administration. More students, 500,000 more students, will get Pell grants this year than got them in the last year of the Clinton administration. This administration has committed huge dollars into this program. The rate of interest which a student will pay on their student loans will drop to below 2 percent by the beginning of next year—below 2 percent—as a result of this administration supporting language which allowed those loans to be reorganized in a way that students could get a less than 2-percent rate of interest on their student loans—incredibly low-cost money to help kids go to school, huge benefits to students trying to go to graduate school. And equally important, the tax bill which passed this Congress and which a number of Members on the other side did vote for but nobody who just spoke voted for, the tax bill which passed this Congress gave a massive increase, something in the vicinity, I think, of $30 billion of incentive money to help parents fund their children's education in the expansion of the Coverdell accounts, the expansion of the deductibility of interest for student loans, and a variety of other initiatives—teacher tax credits for people who stay to go on to teach, a supplemental payment there—all sorts of initiatives which dramatically increased the funding available to assist parents who are trying to put their children through school.

So to come to the floor of the Senate, as some of the Members have from the other side for literally 3 or 4 weeks now, to berate the administration for the consolidation proposal, which was never a proposal, which was simply a trial balloon, and to berate the administration for not funding education is, in my opinion, tilting at windmills by the other side and trying to set up straw men because the issues hold no water on the basis of fact.

Mr. President, I appreciate the courtesy of the Senator from Ohio letting me go forward, and I appreciate the courtesy of the Chair.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, over the last couple of weeks during the debate on this trade bill we have heard arguments for and against trade promotion authority, the Andean Trade Preference Act, and trade adjustment assistance. Many of the arguments have focused, and I think rightfully so, on the impact of those issues on American jobs and on the American economy. American workers and the American economy benefit from free and open trade. Granting the President trade promotion authority will greatly help to facilitate open trade. It will help our economy and it will help jobs.

Today, I would like to focus on another benefit of the passage of this legislation. I would like to talk about the benefit to our foreign policy, to our national security. A top priority in our foreign policy must be to promote freedom, peace, and stability in the world and particularly in this hemisphere, the Western Hemisphere.

Last year, a Dallas Morning News editorial put it very well. Here is what they said:

> In the post September 11 world, free trade is not just good economic policy. It is also good foreign and security policy.

We, as a nation, stand to lose or gain depending on the economic health and security of our neighbors. A strong, a free, and prosperous Western Hemisphere means a strong, free, and prosperous United States. That prosperity depends in large part on free and fair trade. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan told Soviet Premier Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall. It was a symbol of repression, keeping freedom and prosperity out of Eastern Europe. Today, we need to destroy another wall, a wall that prohibits the free and fair trade that Ronald Reagan envisioned for not just the people of Eastern Europe but for all of the world.

I am talking, of course, about the tariffs, quotas, the lack of trade agreements that are really bricks in the walls that surround all countries. We must work to eliminate those barriers while also negotiating free trade agreements so our Nation has reciprocal access to these foreign markets. Such efforts are key foreign policy steps that