

am certainly disappointed that we have not provided full funding, and we have not addressed all of the issues to the complete satisfaction of parents, teachers, and schools, I am confident that this bill will help students with disabilities achieve to their highest potential.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I am pleased that Congress is in the final stage of reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. While I am glad that the bill emerged in a bipartisan way, I am still frustrated that Congress has yet again failed to fulfill its promise to fully fund IDEA. With IDEA still drastically underfunded, schools are left without the necessary resources to provide the best services to children with disabilities, and our communities are burdened with an unfulfilled federal promise.

In my home State of New Jersey, school budgets are capped by law at 3 percent annual growth. Therefore, districts often have to cut other programs to accommodate mandated and rising special-education costs. Or—local property taxpayers, who already are overburdened—have to pay increased taxes to cover expenses that the Federal Government should be sharing.

I have received many letters, phone calls, and emails from concerned constituents urging Congress to fulfill the promise of full funding for the services mandated under IDEA. I have supported efforts to require full funding of IDEA and intend to continue the fight so that every child receives the free and appropriate public education the law guarantees and we can ease the burden on our local communities.

In addition, I would like to highlight one specific issue related to IDEA that has not only affected the children of New Jersey, but children across this nation. That is the staggering increase in the number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, ASD. Recent epidemiology studies have shown that autism spectrum disorders are ten times more prevalent than they were just 10 years ago, making ASD the second most common developmental disability. While there is currently much debate and still no conclusive evidence as to the cause of this alarming trend, it is clear that this trend will continue. Equally clear is the critical need for Congress to address the issue of early intervention and effective treatment for children diagnosed with ASD.

Scientific evidence has proven that early intervention is a key to success when treating ASD. Over the last 20 years, experts have developed effective strategies for the correction of autism disorder, and research shows that with the early application of an effective therapy, substantial gains can be accomplished toward the remediation of autistic disorder in many children. With autism diagnoses escalating, expanding access to treatment, especially at an early age, is vital to improving

the outcomes for children affected by ASD. That is why I introduced the Teacher Education for Autistic Children Act or TEACH Act. I worked closely with New Jersey Center for Outreach and Community Services for the Autism Community, NJCOSAC, Autism Coalition for Research and Education, and Parents of Autistic Children to create this legislation that addresses the needs of autistic children by bringing more qualified teachers into the classroom, helping families receive the support and services they need for their children, and ensuring quality vocational programs to assist people with autism transition from school to work.

I am happy to report that some critical provisions of the TEACH Act have been included in the IDEA conference report currently being considered by the Senate. These provisions will make Federal funds available to develop and improve programs for children with autism, using research grounded in science. The grants will help ensure quality professional development for special education teachers by providing in-service training to schools and personnel who teach children with ASD. With the demand for services grossly outpacing the supply of qualified teachers and therapists, these provisions are critical to increasing the number of special education teachers trained to teach children diagnosed with ASD and help them reach their full potential.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire HELP Committee for their tireless efforts in working with me to get this essential language included in the bill. In particular, I would like to single out Connie Garner for her dedication and diligent work on behalf of children with special needs. I look forward to continuing to work on this important issue with my colleagues in Congress and with the autism community to ensure that all children with ASD have access to quality teachers trained in providing cutting-edge treatments.

The conference report was agreed to. Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will note that is a significant piece of legislation that just passed. I serve on that committee. We spent several years working on it. We have improved some of the discipline problems. We have reduced some of the paperwork. I believe maybe there is more we can still do, but that is a big deal for hundreds of thousands of teachers and students all over our country.

MAKING CERTAIN CORRECTIONS TO THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 1350

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 524, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 524) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make certain corrections to the enrollment of H.R. 1350.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the concurrent resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 524) was agreed to.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE IN SUPPORT OF A REIN- VIGORATED UNITED STATES VI- SION OF FREEDOM, PEACE, AND DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 477, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 477) expressing the sense of the Senate in support of a reinvigorated United States vision of freedom, peace, and democracy in the Middle East.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the matter be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 477) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 477

Whereas the President articulated to the world on November 12, 2004, a vision of freedom, peace, and democracy for the broader Middle East;

Whereas this vision was also shared and expressed by Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom;

Whereas that vision includes a just and peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on 2 democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security;

Whereas the President again stated his commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish State;

Whereas the road map, endorsed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations, remains a realistic and widely recognized plan for making progress toward peace;

Whereas the international community should support Palestinian efforts to build the necessary political, economic, and security infrastructure essential to establishing a viable, democratic state;

Whereas there will be no lasting peace in the Middle East without a Palestinian State that is democratic, free, and based on the rule of law, including free press, free speech, an open political process, and religious tolerance;

Whereas the Palestinian leaders must meet their commitments under the road map to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations;

Whereas the Palestinian Authority will need a credible and unified security structure capable of providing security for the Palestinian people and fighting terrorism;

Whereas Palestinian leaders, with help from the international community, must also develop effective and transparent financial structures that provide for the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people;

Whereas the President stated that now is the time to seize the opportunity of new circumstances in the region to redouble our efforts to achieve this goal;

Whereas achieving the goals of peace, security, and stability will require the United States, its international partners, and the parties involved to take the following steps articulated in a Joint Statement by President Bush and Prime Minister Blair on November 12, 2004:

(1) recommit to the overarching 2-State vision set out by President Bush in his statement of June 24, 2002 and repeated in the road map;

(2) support the Palestinians as they choose a new President within the next 60 days, and as they embark upon an electoral process that will lead to lasting democratic institutions;

(3) mobilize international support behind a plan to ensure that the Palestinians have the political, economic, and security infrastructure they need to create a free, viable, and democratic State, including free press, free speech, an open political process, and religious tolerance;

(4) support the disengagement plan of Prime Minister Sharon from Gaza and stipulated parts of the West Bank as part of this overall plan; and

(5) recognize that these steps lay the basis for more rapid progress on the road map as a reliable guide leading to final status negotiations;

Whereas the United States will join with others in the international community to foster the development of Palestinian democratic political institutions, support the new leadership of the Palestinians that is committed to those institutions, assist in the reconstruction of civic institutions, promote the growth of a free and prosperous economy, and endorse the building of capable security institutions dedicated to maintaining law and order and dismantling terrorist organizations; and

Whereas in order to promote a lasting peace, all States in the region must oppose violence and terrorism, foster the development of democratic political and civic institutions, support the emergence of a peaceful and democratic Palestine, and state clearly that they will live in peace with Israel: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Senate—

(1) endorses the Joint Statement made by President Bush and Prime Minister Blair on November 12, 2004, expressing a shared vision of freedom, peace, and democracy in the broader Middle East and supports a reinvigorated and concerted United States-led international effort to achieve that vision;

(2) supports explicitly the steps presented by President Bush and Prime Minister Blair in that Joint Statement as the basis for more rapid progress on the road map as a reliable guide leading to final status negotiations;

(3) reaffirms its commitment to a vision of 2 democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security as the key to peace; and

(4) expresses its commitment to the road map, which was endorsed by the United States, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations, as a realistic and widely recognized plan for making progress toward peace.

—————

**TO AMEND AND EXTEND THE
IRISH PEACE PROCESS CULTURAL
AND TRAINING PROGRAM
ACT OF 1998**

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2655, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2655) to amend and extend the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Lugar substitute at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 4071) was agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 4071

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT AND EXTENSION OF
IRISH PEACE PROCESS CULTURAL
AND TRAINING PROGRAM.**

(a) IRISH PEACE PROCESS CULTURAL AND TRAINING PROGRAM ACT.—

(1) PROGRAM PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS.—Section 2(a) of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(5) PROGRAM PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS.—An alien entering the United States as a participant in the program shall satisfy the following requirements:

“(A) The alien shall be a citizen of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland.

“(B) The alien shall be between 21 and 35 years of age on the date of departure for the United States.

“(C) The alien shall have resided continuously in a designated county for not less than 18 months before such date.

“(D) The alien shall have been continuously unemployed for not less than 12 months before such date.

“(E) The alien may not have a degree from an institution of higher education.”.

(2) EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.—Section 2 of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(3), by striking “the third program year and for the 4 subsequent years,” and inserting “each program year;”; and

(B) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

“(d) SUNSET.—

“(1) Effective October 1, 2008, the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 is repealed.

“(2) Effective October 1, 2008, section 101(a)(15)(Q) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(Q)) is amended—

“(A) by striking ‘or’ at the end of clause (i);

“(B) by striking ‘(i)’ after ‘(Q)’; and

“(C) by striking clause (ii).”.

(3) COST-SHARING.—Section 2 of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note), as amended by paragraph (2), is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b), the following new subsection:

“(c) COST-SHARING.—The Secretary of State shall verify that the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland continue to pay a reasonable share of the costs of the administration of the cultural and training programs carried out pursuant to this Act.”.

(4) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—The Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended—

(A) by striking “Attorney General” each place such term appears and inserting “Secretary of Homeland Security”; and

(B) by striking “Immigration and Naturalization Service” each place such term appears and inserting “Department of Homeland Security”.

(b) IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.—

(1) REQUIREMENTS FOR NONIMMIGRANT STATUS.—Section 101(a)(15)(Q) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(Q)) is amended—

(A) by striking “Attorney General” each place such term appears and inserting “Secretary of Homeland Security”; and

(B) in clause (ii)(I)—

(i) by striking “35 years of age or younger having a residence” and inserting “citizen of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, 21 to 35 years of age, unemployed for not less than 12 months, and having a residence for not less than 18 months”; and

(ii) by striking “36 months”) and inserting “24 months”).

(2) FOREIGN RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT.—Section 212 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182) is amended—

(A) by redesignating the subsection (p) as added by section 1505(f) of Public Law 106-386 (114 Stat. 1526) as subsection (s); and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(t)(I) Except as provided in paragraph (2), no person admitted under section 101(a)(15)(Q)(ii)(I), or acquiring such status after admission, shall be eligible to apply for nonimmigrant status, an immigrant visa, or permanent residence under this Act until it is established that such person has resided and been physically present in the person’s country of nationality or last residence for an aggregate of at least 2 years following departure from the United States.

“(2) The Secretary of Homeland Security may waive the requirement of such 2-year foreign residence abroad if the Secretary determines that—

“(A) departure from the United States would impose exceptional hardship upon the alien’s spouse or child (if such spouse or child is a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence); or

“(B) the admission of the alien is in the public interest or the national interest of the United States.”.