

In the same manner, there is no language in the House conference report that bans schools that receive these funds under the Katrina relief provisions from practicing employment discrimination. If the private and religious schools refuse to hire people who don't share their religious belief, according to this bill, that is just fine.

The bill also says if your family is forced from your home because of Hurricane Katrina, and your child is now attending a religious school because it is the only option available where you are now living, your child will receive religious instruction unless you opt out. It places the burden on the parents. Yet there is no language in this bill requiring that parents and students be notified of the right to opt out of religious instruction.

We can have a debate about using public school dollars for private and religious schools, but to use an unprecedented disaster to in a backhanded way include religious school vouchers in the Federal budget without adequate public debate is just wrong. When you combine these back-door cuts to public schools, the 1-percent across-the-board reductions in educational programs designed to help poor children and children with disabilities, this bill makes a mockery of the promise to leave no child behind.

There was recently an editorial, a column in the Chicago Tribune on Monday, written by Dennis Burns, in which he was arguing for the teaching of intelligent design in public schools. He believes Government should require that to be taught. He argued that faith-based belief is not inconsistent with science, and he felt the Government should step in and make it clear that you can include religious education as part of a public school curriculum.

What was interesting was the column next to it. It was a column by Charles Krauthammer, and it was about the President of Iran. If you have been following the lunatic ravings of the President of Iran about the fact that he believes there was no Holocaust and he believes that the Israelis have no right to their own homeland, you will find that his crazed beliefs are grounded in his strong religious convictions.

That tells us for a moment of the wisdom of our Founding Fathers, who understood the important necessity of separating church and state in America.

Our Constitution is explicit. It says that one has the right to believe what they want to believe, and if they want to believe in no God, they have that right in America, too. It is a matter of personal conscience. I believe they were absolutely right in that regard.

The second thing they said is this Government will not choose a religion, this Government will not have an official religion. That, too, was a very incisive and wise observation by those who founded this country.

I hope that many people who are now trying to force religious issues into ap-

propriation after appropriation and issue after issue should consider for just one moment what they are doing. This time of year, when many of us turn to our religious belief to enrich this holiday season, I hope that everyone will say a little prayer that the intelligent design of the Constitution of the United States of America will be respected by the Congress.

Finally, this conference report includes a 1-percent across-the-board cut in all Federal programs except veterans and spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Managing the Federal budget is supposed to be about making responsible and moral choices. A calculator can cut everything by 1 percent, but not every line item in the budget is of equal importance. We have been sent here to use some judgment. Cutting every program is an abdication of responsibility and no way to manage a budget.

We could spend hours listing examples of why this thoughtless approach to budgeting is bad government, but in the interest of time, I will simply highlight a few, based on the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

To really understand what these across-the-board cuts mean to the people and the programs, we need to compare this year's funding with the 1-percent cut to the funding level in 2005 adjusted for inflation. That is the budgetary baseline of the Congressional Budget Office.

When we look at the funding levels we have already appropriated and in some cases already cut for each program in 2006 and then impose an additional 1-percent cut, the results are troubling. Let me go through them quickly. In education, a 1-percent cut in elementary and secondary education amounts to \$1.2 billion cut in education for poor children, special education, school improvement efforts, and vocational and adult education. Senator TOM HARKIN of Iowa today told us that this is the first time we have lost ground in special education in recent memory. We will have less money to educate the children who are born with special needs and disabilities. In my State of Illinois, we will lose \$49 million for those kids.

A 1-percent cut in child and family services means \$350 million less for Head Start, less for services for abused and neglected kids, less for adoption-related services, less for abstinence education, less for services for homeless children and other programs. Funding for early education and health care through Head Start will be cut by \$195 million, and that means 25,000 more children will not be included in Head Start next year. Childcare development block grants helping lower and moderate-income families afford childcare face a 1-percent cut, meaning 11,000 fewer children from low-income families, working families, trying to make sure their kids are in a safe environment, will not be helped because of this 1-percent cut. In my State of Illinois, we will lose \$16 million.

In housing, the section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is the Federal Government's main rental assistance program for low-income families. A 1-percent across-the-board cut means approximately 65,000 fewer low-income households receive rental assistance next year. Think of the struggle of working families in lower income categories to find decent housing. Section 8 is one of the fewer programs that helps them. We are going to make sure that 65,000 fewer people are helped next year. In my State of Illinois, we will lose 3,300 vouchers.

Community development block grant—a 1-percent across-the-board cut means \$777 million lost. That is nearly 16 percent below this year's funding level. Illinois loses \$24 million.

The Environmental Protection Agency provides Federal funding to States to improve water quality to construct and improve drinking and wastewater treatment. If we cut these programs by 1 percent, or \$243 million, it means we are cutting them 12 percent below current levels. Illinois loses \$11 million.

These examples are only the beginning. If one thinks these cuts are absolutely essential, remember that we will come back next year and consider another bill by this administration and by the Republican leadership in this Congress to give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in America. In the midst of a war, facing the biggest deficit in our history, with Hurricane Katrina and its responsibilities looming over us, we are cutting basic programs for education, health care, childcare, and environmental protection to provide tax cuts for the wealthy. Those are the priorities of the Republican leadership, priorities reflected in this bill. Real fiscal discipline requires thoughtful choices. Across-the-board cuts simply hack away indiscriminately at all programs.

I know the hour is late, and I thank my colleagues for their patience. I thank those in the Senate, the staff in particular, as we draw closer to the holiday season, and they are all wishing they could go home, and I am, too. I hope we will consider these bills tomorrow. I hope the votes in the Senate will reflect the priorities and values of America.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CONGRATULATING THE CARROLL COLLEGE FIGHTING SAINTS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to express a little hometown pride.

Last Saturday, I had the great opportunity to watch history in the making in Savannah, TN, as the Carroll College Fighting Saints from Helena, MT, marched to victory over the St. Francis Cougars from Fort Wayne, IN.

Carroll College is a private, Catholic college in my hometown of Helena, MT. Carroll is home to 1,500 students and enjoys a host of outstanding accomplishments in its nationally award-winning academic and pre-professional programs. Carroll is especially known for its flagship pre-medical, engineering and nursing programs.

The Carroll Talking Saints Forensics Team is ranked in the top five in the Nation and has reigned as Northwest Regional Champions for the past 15 years. It is a small school, with a huge record of accomplishment.

The Carroll College Fighting Saints are the only team on any level of college football in the modern era to win four national titles in a row.

They only gave up 9 points per game this season, adding to their outstanding national accomplishments.

Led by Tyler Emmer, who claimed the NAIA player of the year for the second time, the Saints offensive attack has piled up impressive numbers this season. The Saints can stretch the field with long passes or they can use their short passing game to keep the chains moving, as they did last Saturday.

It was wonderful to be there and watch, as the PA kept saying, "Move those chains, move those chains," as Carroll kept scoring on the first down.

Emmert has thrown for 3,039 yards and 33 touchdowns this season. He owns a career record of 50-to-3 wins as a starter for the Saints. Emmert and his teammate Jeff Shirley were named Frontier Conference Players of the Year. A class act, Tyler is the first to credit his teammates for his success.

To win Saturday, putting the Carroll College Fighting Saints in the record book, is more than just about football. It is about hard work, dedication, competitiveness, leadership, friendship, and family.

In his 7-year career at Carroll, head coach Mike Van Diest led his team to four national championships. Mike again was named Frontier Conference Coach of the Year. He is a class act.

Working tirelessly to inspire these young athletes, Mike has created more than a championship football team. He has taught them the value of a quality education, the strength of teamwork, and the importance of giving back to the community and those in need. Coach Van Diest defines what it is to be a true Montanan. I commend him for setting such high standards for all of us.

Also, congratulations go to Carroll College athletic director Bruce Parker and his staff.

I recognize Carroll College President Tom Trebon for his leadership and commitment to Carroll College.

Finally, I want to commend my good friend from Indiana, Senator EVAN BAYH. The Senator and I had a little wager on the game. We went double or nothing on a bet from last year—Montana-brewed beer against Indiana-grown popcorn. I look forward to the popcorn. We appreciate the Senator being such a good sport.

Carroll College is more than a 4-year experience; it is for life. As the 17 senior players complete their football careers, they begin life's journey more equipped to meet the challenges of their new lives. I am confident the Saints will continue to march on to many more victories. They are a wonderful bunch of guys and gals at Carroll College, a great team, a great coach. I was there Saturday to watch the game. I was so pleased to be part of the Carroll family, and I cannot commend all of them enough for what they do in the best sense of the term, all the values that mean so much to basic America. I thank Carroll College for what you do.

I yield the floor.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the fiscal year 2006 Intelligence authorization bill.

As every American knows, we are a nation at war—at war in Iraq and at war against radical terrorists. These are wars Democrats and Republicans agree we cannot afford to lose. These wars have demanded a great deal from our troops and our taxpayers and will require much more sacrifice before they are over.

Given the stakes involved and the sacrifices required of so many, you would think that funding our troops and our intelligence community would be this Republican controlled Congress's top priority. You would think that our friends on the other side of the aisle would take up this must do legislation at the start of the Congress not at the end.

Unfortunately, while the Republican leadership is fond of stating the importance of prevailing in these wars and taking care of our troops, they have not matched those words with action. In fact, the hypocrisy demonstrated by the Republicans in this Congress on national security matters is astounding. How else to explain that with less than a week to go before Christmas, in the waning hours of this session of Congress, our Republican friends have yet to complete action on three major pieces of national security legislation—the fiscal year 2006 Defense authorization bill, the fiscal year 2006 Defense appropriations bill, and the fiscal year 2006 Intelligence authorization bill.

In recent times, Republicans have been extremely fond of painting themselves as patriots and extremely quick to brand those who challenge their policies as traitors. Given the callous way Republicans have treated our na-

tional security and our troops, I feel I must speak out on the Republicans' hypocrisy.

Although this point could be made with respect to each of the unfinished national security bills bottled up in this Congress, right now, I want to focus my remarks on the Intelligence authorization bill—a bill Republicans have not even seen fit to bring to the Senate floor despite the fact that the bill was reported out unanimously by the Senate Intelligence Committee.

This bill should have been taken up months ago. And Democrats would have been more than willing to quickly debate and pass this legislation once it reached the Senate floor so it could go to a conference with the House. Democrats know that it is essential that we permit the men and women of the intelligence agencies to continue their critical work on the front lines of the war in Iraq and the war on terror.

Unfortunately, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle apparently don't share that view. Republicans have taken months to move this bill through the legislative process. Once the committee acted and the bill was ready for the floor, an anonymous Republican placed a hold on the bill and prevented the Senate from working its will. As a result, the bill can't go forward. Vital intelligence operations are on hold while the bill languishes. And the men and women who selflessly serve are left wondering whether the Congress understands how vital their work is to this Nation's security.

I hope the Republican-led Congress will eventually get its act together and get this bill passed before we adjourn for the year.

In the meantime, to the men and women of the intelligence agencies, I say: Senate Democrats stand with you. We are proud of your bravery and your patriotism, and we thank you for your sacrifice working in silence and in the shadows against the threats America faces.

USA PATRIOT ACT

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity today to speak yet again on reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act.

I spoke earlier in the day on my dedication to fighting terrorism and in my support for giving law enforcement the tools to fight terrorism, the need and desire to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act, the political games surrounding extension of the PATRIOT Act, and the true patriotism of my colleagues in striving to uphold the Constitution and its liberties.

The President acts irresponsibly when he refuses—for purely political purposes—to allow the extension of the PATRIOT Act.

If the PATRIOT Act expires at the end of 2005, the responsibility lies with