

pool of talented employees to choose from.

Like many States, Kansas is facing a shortage of math and science teacher applicants. I agree with my advisory committee that global competitiveness lies with our younger generation. It is imperative that we provide them with an education from science and math teachers possessing a solid knowledge base and effective teaching skills. We also need to find ways to spark students' interests in math, science, and technology while they are in the early years of education. The America COMPETES Act addresses these needs by strengthening the skills of math and science teachers, creating partnerships between National Laboratories and high-need high schools, facilitating the expansion of advanced placement programs, and increasing the number of students who study foreign languages.

Additionally, the bill provides an increase in research investment by doubling the funding for the National Science Foundation, NSF. The grants distributed to States from the NSF are being used to conduct extraordinary research in every corner of the world.

My advisory committee supports the America COMPETES Act, and so do I. It is only through our commitment to the underlying goals of this bill that we will see success in building our competitive workforce.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I would like to thank my colleagues Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, Senator PETE DOMENICI, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, and Majority Leader HARRY REID for their efforts to move this issue. I am so proud of this great bipartisan team of 54 Senators working to pass this bill. I can't say enough about the appreciation that many of us in the Senate feel about my colleagues' initiation of the report, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," which is the basis for this legislation, the America COMPETES Act.

America must remain an innovation economy. This legislation creates the building blocks that we need for a smarter America. Our Nation is in an amazing race—the race for discovery and new knowledge, the race to remain competitive and to foster an innovation society, to create new ideas that lead to new breakthroughs, new products, and new jobs, the innovations that have the power to save lives, create prosperity and protect the homeland, the innovation to make America safer, stronger, and smarter.

This legislation is called the America COMPETES Act or America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science. It is divided into three sections: research, education and innovation. It calls for getting new ideas by doubling Federal funding for research at the National Science Foundation and establishing the Innovation Acceleration Research Program to fund frontier research like testing new theories and using new research methods; getting the best minds with scholar-

ships for future math and science teachers, including \$10,000 scholarships from the National Science Foundation for undergraduate students majoring in math or science along with teacher certification; and establishing a President's Council on Innovation and Competitiveness to develop a comprehensive agenda to promote innovation and competitiveness in the public and private sectors.

Why is this so important? Because a country that doesn't innovate, stagnates. The whole foundation of American culture and economy is based on the concept of discovery and innovation. That is part of our culture. When you look at what has made America a superpower, it is our innovation and our technology. We have to look at where the new ideas are going to come from that are going to generate the new products and workforce for the 21st century.

I want America to win the Nobel Prizes and the markets. This legislation will help to set the framework. It will make sure that we're helping our young people with scholarships and helping our science teachers and those working in science with funding and research opportunities. We also are forming partnerships with the private sector and building an innovation-friendly Government.

The very essence of our culture is innovation and discovery. Remember we got here because someone wanted to discover. When Lewis and Clark set out on their expedition, it wasn't the National Geographic Society, to find a trail to the Pacific—it was called the Corps of Discovery. That is who we are. That is what our culture is, and that is what we need to maintain.

We are a nation of explorers and pioneers always searching for new frontiers. The next generation of pioneers, engineers, and scientists is out there. They will help us create jobs and win the markets. Most importantly, they will help us win the amazing race. I will use my position as chair of the subcommittee that funds science to make sure that there is money in the Federal checkbook to support these proposals, and I hope my colleagues will do the same.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have an amendment to S. 761, the America COMPETES Act. My amendment would allow competency-based institutions of higher learning to access grant programs which will help them train math, science, and critical foreign language teachers.

I applaud the goals of increasing the numbers of math, science, and critical foreign language teachers in our schools, including high-need schools. Our ability to compete as a nation is directly tied to our ability to educate our young people and retrain those who are in industries that are no longer viable.

We now have the finest system of higher education in the world. There is no doubt that if we provide the proper

incentives, many brilliant innovators and educators will take up the clarion call.

I come before this body today to introduce my amendment because many of today's teachers are teaching an older generation of students. The U.S. economy is in a state of continual change, and with that change comes displacement of workers and a need to retrain and retool. These nontraditional students often receive their training from accredited schools who assess student development based on a student's ability to demonstrate competency in the material being taught. Under the bill as drafted, these competency-based universities would not be able to access the grant money for teacher development. My amendment would remove this bias and allow competency-based universities access to the teacher development grant money. This in turn will increase the teaching quality in math, science, and critical foreign language, thereby providing the students attending these universities with a better education.

Current bill language would prevent participation by well-respected and widely recognized institutions, such as Western Governors University, WGU. WGU was set up by over 19 Governors to provide innovation in higher education and is now training over 1,000 math and science teachers, the majority of whom are women and minorities. WGU's innovative approach to teacher education has proven very successful.

As we set about to ensure that our Nation has the needed highly qualified teachers in critical subject areas, we must make certain that these institutions are included in this legislation. Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, recently we learned that the Ohio National Guard could face early redeployment. We learned the National Guard is being asked to train without the proper equipment. Our Guard will do the job well, General Wade and others in Ohio assure me, and their past history shows they will. Our Guard will do the job well regardless of the circumstances, but it is wrong to send them to Iraq with incomplete training, with inadequate equipment, with insufficient downtime.

The conference report released last night echoes what many of us in Congress and what so many military families across our great country have been saying: We need a new direction for Iraq.