RECOGNITION OF THE MISS USA VOLUNTEERS

• Mr. BOND. Mr. President, as you know, this year the Miss USA Pageant will be held in my home state of Missouri this Friday. I rise today to recognize the hard work and dedication of the nearly 400 volunteers from Branson, Missouri who have donated multiple hours to ensure that this year's pageant runs smoothly.

The volunteer corps is an integral part of the pageant. They operate the entire pageant as well as all of the events leading up to it. It is the tireless effort and the many behind the scenes hours of the volunteers that make this pageant successful year after year. This year will be no different, as the people of Branson have done a wonderful job.

This Friday night, as millions of people across the country and around the world look to Branson for the crowning of the next Miss USA, I encourage all Americans to recognize the effort of the citizens of Branson who won't appear on camera and whose names won't scroll across the screen. Mr. President, I now ask the Senate to join me in recognition of these unsung heroes of the Miss USA Pageant.•

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SLADE GORTON TO THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE

• Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask that my testimony of January 26, 1999, in front of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, regarding education reform be printed in the RECORD.

The testimony follows:

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify here today. You have a significant task ahead—the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Today I will share what I believe is the proper role for the federal government in education policy.

When the original ESEA legislation passed in 1965, it included just over 30 pages. Today it is more than 300 pages long. The federal government has, with the best of intentions, vastly increased its role in the education of our children. What do we have to show for it? Virtually nothing.

The results of the Third International Math and Science Study were reported last year. Our high school's graduating seniors did not fare well. 12th grade students from the United States earned scores below the international average in both science and mathematics. In fact, the United States was outscored by 18 other countries in mathematics, coming in just ahead of Cyprus and South Africa. Verbal and combined SAT scores are lower today than they were in 1970.

For the last 35 years, Washington D.C.'s response to crises in public education has been to create one program after another—systematically increasing the federal role in classrooms across the country. While the exact number of federal education programs is subject to dispute, a report released last year by the House Education and the Workforce Committee found more than 700 such programs.

A review of the ''Digest of Education Statistics'', compiled by the Department of Education, shows that the federal government funds a multitude of federal education programs spread across 39 departments and agencies. Although the Digest shows that funding for these programs totaled $73.1 billion in 1997, it does not provide a list of the programs included. When asked, the Department was unable to provide a list.

One year ago, Dr. Carlotta Joyner of the General Accounting Office testified before the Senate Budget Committee Education Task Force. She informed us about 127 At-Risk and Delinquent Youth programs administered by 15 departments and agencies; more than 90 Early Childhood programs administered by 11 departments and agencies; and 86 Teacher Training programs administered by 9 departments and agencies.

The failure of these programs has not gone unnoticed. The federal government's largest education program, Title I, was developed as a part of the original ESEA in 1965 to narrow the achievement gap between rich and poor students. Chester Finn, in a recent article for the Weekly Standard, notes that despite pouring $118 billion into Title I over the past three decades, it has been unable to cause any significant improvement in the achievement of these needy children. Furthermore it is difficult to establish, as Dr. Finn also notes in his article, that the Safe and Drug Free Schools program has made schools either safe or drug free; that the Eisenhower professional development program has produced quality math and science teachers; or that Goals 2000 has moved us any closer to the national education goals set a decade earlier.

Such clear and compelling statistics demonstrate that, despite our best intentions, the federal government has failed to create a coherent set of programs that address the varied needs of children around the country. I submit to you that we have failed because we do not and can not possibly know and understand all the challenges faced by school children today.

Who does know best? It's simple. Our children's parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members know much better than we what our school children need in their own communities. Even within my own State, the needs of children in Woodinville, Wenatchee and Walla Walla differ greatly. Those working closely with our children should be allowed to make more of the vital decisions regarding their education.

This is not to say that the federal government should not continue to target resources to needy populations. We can and should hold States and local communities accountable for results. But we must not begin from a point that immediately ties their hands and strangles innovation.

It is time for the federal government to try something new. I'm sure many of you have heard the success stories I have about innovative education practices taking place in the Chicago Public Schools. Paul Vallas, the CEO of the Chicago school system, recently addressed an audience here in Washington, D.C. to discuss the reforms he's instituted that have done so much to turn his school system around. When asked by former Secretary of Education William Bennett what the most important power was that he'd been given, Mr. Vallas replied, ''The flexibility to allocate our resources as we see fit.''

In 1995, the Illinois legislature gave that flexibility to Mr. Vallas and the Chicago system by combining all state education programs into two grants—one for special education and one for everything else. The legislature allowed Mr. Vallas and the Chicago School Board to decide how to allocate their resources.

A request for similar authority has been made recently by the Seattle School district, in this case to the federal government. Seattle has asked the Department of Education to waive several Title I rules and regulations so it can reform its schools' funding system. It wants to provide a system of open enrollment, in which students can enroll in public schools of their choice. Schools in the district would then be ranked by concentration of poverty. Those with more than a 50% concentration of poverty would receive Title I funds, and could use those funds on a schoolwide basis. Although the funds would be used to address the needs of all children in a school receiving the funds, particular attention would be given to those who require additional support in achieving state learning standards. It is unclear, however, that the U.S. Department of Education will allow the waiver necessary to implement this innovative reform. The point is, Seattle shouldn't have to ask.

I have introduced legislation twice in the past two years that would allow such innovative reforms to take place. Although my amendment passed the Senate on each occasion, it was removed in conference committee discussions under the threat of a veto by President Clinton. I want to let this Committee know that I intend to introduce legislation again that will accomplish my goals of giving states and local communities the ability to implement reforms that they believe will benefit their students and provide them with a quality education. It is, I believe, somewhat more flexible than the similar and meritorious bills introduced by Senators Bond and Hutchinson. To ensure that a quality education is available I believe we need to trust the wisdom of those who spend each day with our children—their parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members.•

TRIBUTE TO TERRIE ARCHAMBAULT, 1998 MERRIMACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Terrie Archambault of New Hampshire for being selected by the Merrimack Chamber of Commerce as the ''1998 Business Person of the Year.''

Terrie began working with Citizens Bank in 1990 as a part-time teller and was quickly promoted through the ranks: first to customer service representative, then to assistant manager, and in 1996 she became manager of the Merrimack branch of Citizens Bank.

Terrie has shown an unwavering dedication to her community. She oversees a program at her branch called ''Bank at School.'' This program allows elementary school students to open new accounts, make deposits and, most importantly, learn the basics of personal banking. She organizes the collection of food and monetary donations for the Nashua Soup Kitchen and