

information regarding the Y2K issue in S-407 of the Capitol, and I further ask the Senate stand in recess for the weekly party caucuses between the hours of 12:30 and 2:15 on Tuesday, March 2.

I further ask at 2:15 on Tuesday, the Senate immediately proceed to S. Res. 7, having discharged the resolution from the Rules Committee, and there be 3 hours of debate, being equally divided between Senators BENNETT and DODD, with no amendments or motions being in order, and a vote to occur on adoption of that resolution at the conclusion or yielding back of that time.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, in light of that order, the Senate will not be in session on Friday and will be in pro forma session only on Monday. The Senate will debate the Y2K loan program bill on Tuesday morning, with a rollcall vote on passage at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday. Therefore, the next rollcall vote will be at 10:30 on Tuesday. Following that vote, the Senate will proceed to the briefing in S-407. I want to encourage Senators to attend this briefing because it does involve very important, classified information with regard to the Y2K issue.

At 2:15, the Senate will proceed to the funding resolution for the special committee on the year 2000 technology and related issues, for up to 3 hours.

I thank my colleagues for their cooperation and, again, I commend those who have been involved in S. Res. 45. I yield the floor.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The Senate continued with the consideration of the resolution.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution. The yeas and nays have been ordered on S. Res. 45.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. TORRICELLI) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 27 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Abraham	Bingaman	Byrd
Akaka	Bond	Campbell
Allard	Boxer	Chafee
Ashcroft	Breaux	Cleland
Baucus	Brownback	Cochran
Bayh	Bryan	Collins
Bennett	Bunning	Conrad
Biden	Burns	Coverdell

Craig	Hutchinson	Murray
Crapo	Hutchison	Nickles
Daschle	Inhofe	Reed
DeWine	Inouye	Reid
Dodd	Jeffords	Robb
Domenici	Johnson	Roberts
Dorgan	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Durbin	Kerrey	Roth
Edwards	Kerry	Santorum
Enzi	Kohl	Sarbanes
Feingold	Kyl	Schumer
Feinstein	Landrieu	Sessions
Fitzgerald	Lautenberg	Shelby
Frist	Leahy	Smith (NH)
Gorton	Levin	Smith (OR)
Graham	Lieberman	Snowe
Gramm	Lincoln	Specter
Grams	Lott	Stevens
Grassley	Lugar	Thomas
Gregg	Mack	Thompson
Hagel	McCain	Thurmond
Harkin	McConnell	Voinovich
Hatch	Mikulski	Warner
Helms	Moynihan	Wellstone
Hollings	Murkowski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Torricelli

The resolution (S. Res. 45) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 45

Whereas the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, provides a forum for discussing human rights and expressing international support for improved human rights performance;

Whereas, according to the United States Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to commit widespread and well-documented human rights abuses in China and Tibet and continues the coercive implementation of family planning policies and the sale of human organs taken from executed prisoners;

Whereas such abuses stem from an intolerance of dissent and fear of civil unrest on the part of authorities in the People's Republic of China and from a failure to adequately enforce laws in the People's Republic of China that protect basic freedoms;

Whereas such abuses violate internationally accepted norms of conduct enshrined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas the People's Republic of China recently signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but has yet to take the steps necessary to make the covenant legally binding;

Whereas the President decided not to sponsor a resolution criticizing the People's Republic of China at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in 1998 in consideration of commitments by the Government of the People's Republic of China to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and based on a belief that progress on human rights in the People's Republic of China could be achieved through other means;

Whereas authorities in the People's Republic of China have recently escalated efforts to extinguish expressions of protest or criticism and have detained scores of citizens associated with attempts to organize a legal democratic opposition, as well as religious leaders, writers, and others who petitioned the authorities to release those arbitrarily arrested; and

Whereas these efforts underscore that the Government of the People's Republic of

China continues to commit serious human rights abuses, despite expectations to the contrary following two summit meetings between President Clinton and President Jiang in which assurances were made regarding improvements in the human rights record of the People's Republic of China: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that at the 55th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, the United States should introduce and make all efforts necessary to pass a resolution calling upon the People's Republic of China to end its human rights abuses in China and Tibet.

Mr. FRIST. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The distinguished Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Under a previous agreement, this time has been allotted to Senator COVERDELL or his designee, and I have been designated to oversee this next 45 minutes to an hour to talk about the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999.

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we will be discussing two critical areas as we address the education of our youth in this country. Those two areas are flexibility and accountability. Discussing this topic with me will be Senators CHAFEE, BOND, CRAIG, VOINOVICH, GREGG, HUTCHINSON, and COLLINS.

The issue that we will discuss is called Ed-Flex. Specifically, it is the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999. The shorthand version is "Ed-Flex." That is the way it will be referred to, I am sure, over the next several hours and the next several days as we look at this particular bill which I expect to come to the floor next week.

Let me begin by discussing what Ed-Flex is so people will know what we are talking about. It is really pretty simple. Ed-Flex is a State waiver program that allows schools and school districts at the local level to obtain or have the opportunity to obtain a waiver to carry out and accomplish a specific educational mission, but with flexibility free of Washington red tape, free of the administrative regulatory burden which too often—and we hear it as we travel across the State again and again—shackles them in terms of meeting those specific goals. These regulations are often well intentioned.

We create them right here in this room in Washington, DC, and then we expect them to fit every local community. They simply don't fit. That is No. 1. That is what Ed-Flex is.

No. 2, we as a country recognize we are failing our children today in terms of education. We are trying hard, teachers are trying hard, local schools are trying hard, but we simply are not doing the job that our children deserve in preparing them for the next millennium.

Ed-Flex allows every State the option of participating in a demonstration program which has been enormously successful; this program was first established in 1994 and expanded in 1996. So we have a track record. Right now Ed-Flex is in 12 States. What this bill does is strengthen the accountability provisions and then gives all 50 States the opportunity to participate in Ed-Flex to help our States, to help our localities.

Education is primarily a local issue. That is where these decisions should be made. Washington must give these localities, these schools, these school districts, the flexibility they need in order to innovate, to do a better job, to do what they know is best.

Let me cite some examples that really make it clear to people. They understand Ed-Flex is a State waiver program that allows schools and school districts to accomplish goals free of red tape. Here are some examples:

In Maryland, Ed-Flex reduced class size for math and science students from 25 to 1 to 12 to 1. It has cut it in half. They wouldn't have been able to do it without Ed-Flex.

In Oregon, Ed-Flex allowed high schools and community colleges to work together to provide advanced computer courses to students who would otherwise not be able to receive this technical instruction.

A third example: In Kansas, waivers provide all-day kindergarten, preschool for 4-year-olds, and new reading strategies for all students. It would not be possible without Ed-Flex.

It is common sense. It is bipartisan. It is a plan that has been supported by every Governor in this country. It is one that we are going to move ahead, doing the Nation's business in a bipartisan way to accomplish what I believe is one of the most important goals before us, and that is to improve education in this country.

Now, that describes the flexibility, innovation, and creativity. The accountability is an important issue, because if you strip away Washington red tape, you have to be accountable. Accountability is built strongly into this bill. It is even tiered-in so that you have local accountability, State accountability, and Federal accountability to make sure that those missions are accomplished.

At the local level, schools have to demonstrate why this waiver is nec-

essary, what the objectives will be; they have to have specific, measurable goals.

At the State level, there must be in place an accountability system in three ways: You have to have content standards, No. 1; No. 2, you have to have performance standards; and No. 3, you have to have assessment standards. Backing that up at the Federal level, the Secretary of Education is required to monitor the performance of States, and in fact the Secretary can terminate the State's waiver authority at any time.

So we have a three-tiered approach to accountability.

Ed-Flex expansion has passed twice in the Senate Labor Committee. It has the support of 38 Senators from both sides of the aisle. It has the support of the National Governors' Association. It has the support of the Democratic Governors' Association. The Secretary of Education and the President have all called for Ed-Flex expansion.

Last year, we ran out of time to pass Ed-Flex. It has already gone through the Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee this year. We need to keep the bill clean and simple. There will be an unfortunate tendency to put a lot of amendments on the bill and attach your favorite education bill. We have an opportunity to have a bill passed in this body next week, passed by the House of Representatives within a couple of weeks, and at the President's desk within 6 weeks. It is a simple message: Congress cares about education.

Congress respects local control, local innovation, local creativity. And we, by passing this bill, demonstrate to the American people that we can work together in the interest of our children, preparing them for that next century, the next millennium. Let's untie the hands of local government. Let them do the jobs they are entrusted to do. Ed-Flex is a modest bill, but an important first step at administrative regulatory simplification with strong accountability built in. I look forward to the Senate's consideration of this bill next week, again, with strong bipartisan support.

I thank the Chair. At this juncture, I will yield to my distinguished colleague from Rhode Island. I will yield to colleagues, and they can take from my time as we go forth over the next 45 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and the manager of this legislation. I rise in support of this legislation introduced by the Senator from Tennessee, the Education Flexibility Partnership Act. Last week, while the Senate was in recess, I spent time in Rhode Island talking with educators about Ed-Flex. I had a group of edu-

cators from our schools come in; principally, they were principals of our schools. As a result of those conversations, I became a cosponsor of this legislation, Ed-Flex.

First, it is important to point out what it is not. It is not a block grant proposal. Senator FRIST's bill, which will be the next order of business, as I understand it, next week, expands a demonstration program, as he pointed out, for six States where it was created in 1994. Now, 2 years later, it is expanded from 6 to 12 States. This bill would permit all 50 States to benefit from it.

Now, what is this bill? Ed-Flex allows State departments of education to apply for waivers of Federal requirements for State administrative programs. Examples of these programs are: the title I program, the Eisenhower Professional Grants Program, and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. The States must agree to waive any corresponding State regulations for these programs. If we are going to waive the Federal regulations, we are going to waive the State regulations as well. The States must have made demonstrable progress in creating and putting into place the challenging statewide content standards. In other words, States must have a place in statewide school reform, and that is what this is designed to do.

One of the best examples of how Ed-Flex can benefit schools was offered by an elementary school principal in my State when I talked to him last week. He noted that for several years, his school district's emphasis had been on raising achievement in math and science. Professional development had been squarely focused on math and science, and students in his school were showing the results through increased test scores. Now he would like to be able to use the funds he receives from the Eisenhower Professional Grants Program, which is targeted to math and science—he wants to use it for professional development in reading, have his teachers become better reading teachers. Ed-Flex would allow him to do that. Absent Ed-Flex, he could not use these professional development moneys for anything except science and math. He could not use it for reading. This permits this legislation to be used with this flexibility.

Since enactment of Goals 2000, States and school districts have been working hard to develop schoolwide reform plans that will improve the quality of education for all children. I believe this legislation will help give schools the needed reforms that they seek. It has, as was mentioned, strong bipartisan support. A companion bill, I understand, is moving through the House, and the President has indicated his willingness to sign it. So this is a hopeful sign for all of us, and I think it is excellent legislation. I commend it to my colleagues.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Chair, and I thank my colleague from Tennessee for his great leadership.

Mr. President, I rise in strong support of Ed-Flex because it gives States and local officials in 12 States now greater freedom from regulation in the use of Federal education dollars. We need to expand that. This is moving in the right direction. It is not all the way there. They should be encouraging innovation, creativity, and flexibility on the local level in regard to education. We should not be handcuffing teachers, principals, and others from trying to do what is right for the kids in their schools.

I think expanding Ed-Flex is a step in the right direction of putting our Nation's children first and not the red tape and bureaucracy.

Ed-Flex is a step in the right direction because it moves in the direction of putting decisionmaking back where it belongs, on the local and State level. It proposes consolidating funding and removing the strings that Washington has put on.

My colleague from Rhode Island has talked about his meetings with local educators in Rhode Island. Over the last 2 years, I have met with principals, teachers, superintendents, parents, and school board members in every section of my State. It is amazing what they tell me when I ask them about how our Federal programs are helping them. They say, "They are burying us in red tape. We have to hire people to write grant applications, and to try to play 'Mother May I' with the Federal Government. We are taking away time from our task, which should be educating our children and providing them with a quality education." They say that too many of them—if they fight and finally get a competitive grant for 3 years, that grant runs out and then they are faced with taking away money from their basic programs of providing quality education to fund a Federal program that was stuffed down their throats.

At our best count, we have about 763 Federal education programs. I challenge every single one of my colleagues to go back home and ask the educators: Do you really need 763 different Federal prescriptions? Are they really helping you educate your children? I can tell you that the response from my State is overwhelming, and I believe it will be from your States as well.

When we think about the tremendous waste in time and bureaucracy with 4,500 people in the DOE, the bureaucracy overseeing them, and 13,000 at the State bureaucracies, those are dollars that are not going to the classrooms. Who is accountable for education? Are

we as a Congress? I don't think so. I don't think anybody elected us to a national school board. Ed-Flex is moving away from the concept that we have come to Washington to be a national school board.

I say to you, to the President, and I say to the Secretary of Education: If you want to run local education, run for the school board, or be a superintendent or a principal.

Now, I hope we can pass this bill cleanly out of here and send it on to the President, get it signed. Let's expand on this program. I will tell you one thing for sure. If they start adding amendments to it, I have something called a "Direct Check for Education." Direct check for education would put the money directly in the schools, not on the basis of a complicated formula, but on the basis of average daily attendance. I have explained that program to school districts throughout my State.

I have a sampling of letters from school superintendents. I ask unanimous consent that these may be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HARRISBURG R-VIII SCHOOL DISTRICT,
Harrisburg, MO.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senator,
Washington, DC.

SENATOR BOND. The Harrisburg School District is in support of "Direct Check for Education" proposed by yourself. The Senator's office indicated funds available at \$76.00 per pupil. The funds from this "Direct Check" would significantly enhance our educational offerings.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM E. VIEW,
Superintendent.

ROLLA PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
Rolla, MO, February 9, 1999.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: As per your request, I have reviewed your "Direct Check" proposal and am responding to your idea. I am very interested in what you are proposing through the "Direct Check" alternative. Our school district is, I assume, fairly typical of many within our great state in that we participate and offer many of the federally subsidized programs. Through your "Direct Check" proposal, our district will not only receive more dollars than it presently does, but also have the latitude to utilize those dollars as deemed appropriate by our Board of Education and this school system.

I fully understand the potential turf issues that you face with this "Direct Check" for Education proposal. I am also cognizant of the bureaucracy that is affiliated with each of these programs subsidized by federal education dollars. I am most appreciative of and agree with your assessment that this is substantive reform, and, therefore, our district would gladly offer any assistance that we might. If there is anything that we might do to further your "Direct Check" for Education proposal, please do not hesitate to ask. Again, we very much appreciate your

concern for public education and this demonstration of a return to local control.

Sincerely,

LARRY E. EWING, Ed. D.,
Superintendent of Schools.

CARTHAGE R-9 SCHOOL DISTRICT,
Carthage, MO., February 10, 1999.

Senator CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
Russell State Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: I appreciate the recent opportunity to attend the news conference in Joplin, Missouri, concerning your Direct Check proposal. Likewise, it was encouraging to receive your recent correspondence concerning the proposal.

On behalf of the Carthage R-9 School District in Carthage, Missouri, I want to express our strong support for the proposal. It is our belief the plan will bring about equity and benefit our students in numerous ways.

Your work to reform this payment process is highly valued. If at any time our district can be of service to you, please let us know.

Sincerely,

KENNETH C. BOWMAN, Jr.,
Superintendent of Schools.

VALLEY R-VI SCHOOLS,
Caledonia, MO.

CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senator,
St. Louis, MO.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: I am writing to let you know that I fully support your "Direct Check for Education" proposal. After so many false promises by lawmakers regarding help for education, your idea is one that I have hoped to see for many years. It should truly be the job of local decisionmakers to decide how funds are spent on each school. We do not mind being held accountable for producing results when we have the freedom to spend dollars as the local board sees fit. I congratulate you for the stand you have taken on this issue. I doubt it is popular among other lawmakers, because it will no doubt rock the boat in some circles.

Again, thank you for this initiative.

Sincerely,

LARRY GRAVES,
Superintendent.

BLUE SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT,
Blue Springs, MO, February 8, 1999.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: I am writing in response to your proposal to include a "Direct Check for Education" into the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Blue Springs R-IV School District overwhelmingly supports such a proposal. The "Direct Check" proposal would allow us, at the local level, to make the decisions we need to make without the restrictions that are often applied at the state and federal levels.

We encourage you to press forward with this initiative.

Sincerely,

CHARLES MCGRAW,
Superintendent.

REEDS SPRING R-IV SCHOOL DISTRICT,
Reeds Spring, MO, February 9, 1999.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: Your "Direct Check" proposal does what legislation should do. It

puts the money where it can do the most good. Leaders in local schools will be able to address specific needs of students rather than conform to directives from bureaucratic number crunches.

Respectfully,

Dr. BILL WHEELER,
Superintendent.

KIRBYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL,
Kirbyville, MO.

Senator CHRISTOPHER BOND,
*Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR BOND: "Direct Check" is one small "step" in the right direction. Sending tax money back to the people it came from has never been a bad idea. Eliminating federal and state bureaucratic taxpayer payrolls has always been a good idea but appears to be an impossibility.

Local boards of education should be held accountable for the quality of public education programs within their own communities. If state and federal governments want to support programming efforts through certification standards, a simple process that ties certification to funding would seem appropriate. If student performance is the primary indicator used for certification, it shouldn't require multi-billion dollar bureaucracies to manage the process.

Public education in America is in serious trouble. Solutions to the problems will require a comprehensive approach from every level, i.e., federal, state and local. I applaud your leadership with this effort at the federal level.

I encourage you to look for different funding approaches for public education. The local property tax is a very useful tool, but it has been extended beyond its limits. State funding is also very useful and has been a lifesaver for many Missouri Schools. However, the "Big Dogs", i.e., the industries that produce "adult" products, when used as directed can kill, have been allowed to advertise their products over airways owned by the federal government without regard to the collateral damage to the minds of our youth.

Public education should not be required to spend taxpayer money to remediate problems cause by these irresponsible industries that target the youth of our nation as future addicts of their products. It is my understanding that the top five contributors to the nations two political parties are: the tobacco industry, the liquor industry, the movie (media) and music industries and trial lawyers. Local taxpayers should not be the only responsible agent for the costs associated with drug education, violence prevention, sex education and character development programs for public schools. If the "Big Dogs" are going to play the game they should have the opportunity to pay for the dance.

Sincerely,

LONNIE SPURLOCK,
Superintendent

WEBB CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT R-7,
Webb City, MO, February 4, 1999.

Senator CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
*U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR BOND: Please accept my enthusiastic support for the "Direct Check" education initiative you are sponsoring. It is my opinion that a program of this nature is long overdue. Those of us who have spent a career in education have repeatedly experienced the jubilation of anticipation that

arose from promises made by the Federal Government toward education. Unfortunately, however, excitement was then always tempered by the reality of the red tape that accompanied the promise. As the result, frustration was generally the only product forthcoming.

It is my opinion that one size does not fit all in anything, especially education. I would welcome your program and see it as an opportunity for real improvement of results that would arise from federal dollars that flow toward education. You can count on me as a supporter of your efforts.

Sincerely,

RONALD LANKFORD,
Superintendent.

PEMISCOT COUNTY
SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Hayti, MO, February 5, 1999.

SENATOR BOND, As a school administrator, parent, and taxpayer, I would like to commend your Direct Check efforts and offer my support in its passage.

I must remind myself daily that, even though some decisions appear to be more easily made from our Central Office, the best decisions are those that are made from the source of need.

The Direct Check concept would allow the decisions about utilizing education funds to rest in the hands of our constituents without losing some of the funds in state administrative procedures. I feel confident that our Board of Education indeed represents the wishes of our constituents and frequently engages in dialogue with parents and students to determine educational needs.

Thank you for your efforts. Please don't hesitate to contact me for additional support.

NICHOLAS J. THIELE,
Superintendent.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the direct check for education doesn't block grant education funds; it doesn't affect title I or include vocational education, special education, or Eisenhower Professional Development; it just says send the money directly back to the school districts, eliminating the time spent reviewing grant applications and the paperwork burden. It replaces a cumbersome and costly process with a resource of flexible funding.

Do we need 100,000 new teachers? In many small school districts, they figure it comes out to about .16 students for their entire district, or .1. How do you hire .16 teachers? Some districts may need to use that money to pay more so they can keep good teachers. This would allow them to do it. Some of my colleagues say you will take power away from the States and the States ought to be running it. I say the State regulations can still stay in effect, but the accountability is going to be at the local level.

We have school boards that we elect to take care of our educational needs and to make sure that our children get a quality education. I have a really radical proposal: Let's go back to the old system where school boards are responsible through the superintendents and principals and teachers and allow them to use the good ideas. We have lots of good ideas up here, and we

ought to offer those voluntarily and say: Here is a good idea; do you want to try it?

The President just came up with a whole new series of standard things he wants to do for every school district in the Nation. They may well be good ideas. If you were a school superintendent, they might be just the thing to do. Let's suggest to them that these are things they might want to require. They may have a different way of going about it. I am willing to take the chance on putting that money in the hands of the people, the local educators who know our kids, know kids' names, and know their problems.

I believe Ed-Flex is a tremendous step in the right direction. I urge that we pass it without amendment. If we do start amending it, I am going to give my colleagues an opportunity to vote on sending the money directly back to the schools. Let's be radical, and let's do something that can make a difference.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I join my colleague from Missouri and others who have spoken on the floor in relation to the legislation that we will begin to debate next Tuesday, I believe, Senate bill 280. We are calling it the Ed-Flex bill because of a demonstration project that has now gone on in 12 other States in our country where school districts have demonstrated that, given the flexibility to move dollars around, they can accomplish great things for the young people they are responsible for educating.

So for the rest of our country, I think the Senator from Missouri and I want to see a similar kind of flexibility.

What does it mean? It is very clear what it means. It means that when it comes to educating the young people of our country, we basically trust parents a great deal more than we trust bureaucrats.

For a long time, we felt that the promotion of education in our country would come only if you could have a national department of education, and from that would flow all good things to the rest of the country, and they would serve as the leaders to project our States and our school districts into the dynamics of improving our public education system. We found out that while there is a department of education necessary on occasion, that the real energy comes from a local school district, or a State, or a group of parents who do not like what they see, or the direction their children's education is heading in, and they want to make changes.

I am not at all opposed to public education. How could I be? I, my wife, and all of our children are the products of the public education system. And we

are very proud of it. In Idaho we have a very good public education system that could be a great deal better. The Governor of the State of Idaho, former Senator here in this body, just elected, has recognized in our State that one of the greatest needs is in the area of reading. Should he be allowed, along with local school districts, to shift to more concentration on reading from the first grade through to the fourth or fifth grade? If that is what Idaho needs, that is what he should be allowed to do. Even within that context, in some school districts in our State reading has already been a higher priority, and those students are doing better.

In the State of Texas, which has been able to operate under this demonstration project that we now want to send nationwide, the students there are outperforming others, because once again school districts are allowed to focus, to target, and on their standardized test scores they are moving up faster than they are in other States.

In Maryland, students are receiving a one-on-one tutoring—again, a demonstration on the part of the school districts that in Maryland they needed to focus on reading. That one-on-one relationship might otherwise be denied under the concept that a one-size education program fits all which would not have allowed the students to do so.

There are a good many stories out there. It is from those stories, those clear examples of understanding, that we bring S. 280 to the floor. I think it has the kind of dynamics we ought to be involved in. For some time we Republicans have recognized that bureaucracies just don't educate. They burn up a lot of money. They direct a lot of very well-meaning people sometimes in the wrong directions.

Where it works is when the money gets to the local levels where parents, along with their educators, can determine what the needs are in a given area. That, of course, has always historically produced one of the most dynamic public systems in the Nation, in the world, and that is our public education system, stalled out in a good number of years simply because it did not have the flexibility to respond.

At this level we are going to put more dollars into education. We believe that is a high national priority. Unlike those of the past where money should have come from the State and local units, we are committed in our opportunity of surplus years to put some of those dollars into education, and in so doing, we don't want them to get hung up here where 25 or 30 percent will be spun over into bureaucratic inertia. We want them to flow directly to our units of education at the local level.

Ed-Flex, Senate bill 280, offers us that opportunity. We begin to debate it next week. I hope we can have strong bipartisan support in what is an extremely valuable initiative.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. VOINOVICH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of Senate 280, a bill to extend educational flexibility to all of the 50 States.

One of the nice things about becoming a Member of the U.S. Senate is that I am going to have an opportunity as a Member of Congress to promote some of the programs I lobbied for while I was mayor of the city of Cleveland and president of the National League of Cities, and programs that I promoted as Governor and chairman of the National Governors' Association.

Way back in 1991, we did a study in the State of Ohio in regard to our department of education to find out if there were ways we could change its direction. One of the things we discovered was that there were all kinds of reports that needed to be filed. What was astounding is that half the reports that were being filed by school districts were to the Federal Government and the Federal Government was only participating to the extent of about 6 percent of the money that was being spent in those school districts.

So at that time I came to Washington and I met with Lamar Alexander, who was at that time the Secretary of Education, and said to him that something had to be done about this. At that time he started to put some things together. I think he may have coined the word "Ed-Flex." Also, Secretary Riley, an enlightened former Governor, realized that the Department of Education could be of help to the States. They extended the right to local State secretaries to grant waivers to local school districts where they wanted to use certain Federal programs for different purposes.

Prior to—we have to put this in perspective—Ed-Flex, if a local school district had a Federal program and they wanted to use it differently, they had to go to their respective State capital, kiss the ring of the superintendent of education, and then that superintendent of education would have to go to Washington and do the same thing.

So Ed-Flex basically says to those States that want to participate, if you put together an overall plan of how you are going to in your own State eliminate a lot of excess regulations, if you will put together an overall plan on how you intend to take these Federal dollars and use them better to really make a difference for the kids in the classroom, we will allow you the authority that we have in Washington to grant those waivers to the local school districts—in Ohio, 611 of them.

One of the really unique things that came about as a result of Ed-Flex in our State was that every school dis-

trict had to prepare eight reports to the State department of education for Federal money, and then they would submit eight to the Federal Government. Today, they only provide one report to the State, and the State provides one to the Department of Education.

I think it is important also to point out that Ed-Flex is just the beginning of education reform in the 106th Congress. I would like to congratulate my colleagues on the Republican side and on the Democratic side for their willingness to allow Ed-Flex to be the first step in education reform in this session of Congress.

We all know that there are different ideas on how we need to reform education. The President has his ideas and some of us have a little different idea. You have heard from Senator BOND of Missouri about his program.

Many of us believe that the first thing we ought to do before we reauthorize elementary and secondary education is to inventory the 550 education programs that the GAO says we have or the 760 that the Congressional Research Service says we have and figure out what we are doing there, get rid of the ones that are not working, consolidate the money or save it, put it into a block grant, and send it back to the States and local governments so they can do a better job with the money we are making available to them. In other words, be a better partner with State and local government because they have the major responsibility for education in this country.

I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to see if we can't come up with a program that is really going to make a difference for our boys and girls throughout the United States of America.

In Ohio, this program has only really been in existence for 2 or 3 years, and there are some who say, why aren't you doing a lot more with it?

One of the things that needs to be emphasized is that school districts are interested in moving forward and taking advantage of Ed-Flex, but they are being very careful about when they ask for a change in the waivers and use the money differently because they want to make sure, if they ask for a change in the waiver, in fact they are really going to make a difference for the kids. They don't want to do this just to go through the motions.

In our State, we have testing in the fourth, sixth, and ninth grades, and we have a tough high school proficiency test. One of the things we are trying to do is to bring up the test scores in those first two tests, fourth and sixth grade. Through the use of Ed-Flex, we have been able to allow a local school district to use the Eisenhower professional grant money in a different way than is required under the Federal statute, and they are taking that

money and putting it into emphasizing reading and social studies. We have seen, as a result of reallocating those resources, a marked improvement in the students' performance on their fourth- and sixth-grade proficiency tests.

I would love to see the rest of this country take advantage of this Ed-Flex Program so that they can do the same thing for their boys and girls. So I strongly urge that we pass this Ed-Flex legislation, as I say, the first phase of our education reform program.

I would like to underscore one other thing. One of the most important things the Congress of the United States did was to reform the welfare program in the United States of America. Prior to that reform, it was an entitlement program. We came and we lobbied Congress and said change it to a block grant, give us the flexibility so we can make a difference for our customers, the recipients of the welfare program.

We have seen a dramatic change in what is happening in our welfare program. For example, in my State we have 560,000 fewer people on welfare—a 60-percent reduction since 1992—because we have given the people closest to the customer the power and the authority to make a difference in their lives.

We never would have had welfare reform in the United States if it had not been for the fact that waivers were granted to the States prior to welfare reform and, as a result of that, Governors were able to show that with flexibility we can really make a difference in people's lives.

Ed-Flex will give Governors and local school district people that authority to change some of these Federal programs, these one-size-fits-all programs, change them and make a difference for our youngsters, and it will be a way we can show America that if you give people closest to the kids, the parents, the teachers in the classroom, give them the power and the authority to take those dollars and utilize them in a way that is really going to make a difference in the lives of our children, we will see the most revolutionary change and measured improvement we have seen in this country in terms of our public education system.

Mr. HUTCHINSON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank the Chair.

I want to applaud my colleagues who have been in the Chamber speaking of education reform, and my colleagues on the Republican side I think have come forward with a very progressive and innovative reform program for education. I know Senator VOINOVICH from Ohio led the way in education reform in that State.

But Ed-Flex, providing those waivers for State educational establishments to be able to avoid the kind of heavy-handed bureaucratic mandates that are imposed upon them; the Dollars to the Classroom Bill, which I am sponsoring, which would consolidate 31 of those hundreds of education programs and allow new flexibility to State governments in ensuring that 95 cents of every dollar get to the classroom as opposed to the 65 cents that currently get there; and the proposal to increase funding for disabilities programs, mandates that we placed on local schools but have not funded, I think are all very important ingredients to our education reform package which will truly lead to improvement in education in this country.

(The remarks of Mr. HUTCHINSON pertaining to the introduction of the legislation are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. VOINOVICH. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. VOINOVICH pertaining to the introduction of S. 468 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for not to exceed 8 minutes.

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to add my voice to those who are sponsoring the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 which would afford states important exemptions from burdensome federal regulations. Indeed, the bill would expand a 12-state demonstration program to all 50 states, and would allow for the waiver of stat-

utes and regulations that hinder State and local educational improvement plans. I thank my colleagues, Senator FRIST and Senator WYDEN, for their leadership on this innovative legislation. It is, indeed, a landmark bill that I am confident will improve the performance of our Nation's public schools by placing the control back where it belongs—in the hands of teachers, parents, school board members and the administrators of local school districts.

I am delighted to join my colleagues as an original cosponsor of this legislation, because I am confident that it will improve the academic performance of students in my home State of Maine and in States across the Nation. Our Nation's public school system is the foundation upon which the American dream is built. Time and time again, we see that education is the difference between poverty and prosperity, ignorance and understanding.

There is no doubt that America's public schools are in need of a boost, but not one that is dictated by the Federal Government in a "one size fits all" approach. Rather, we need a boost for our Nation's schools; a boost conceived of and built from the bottom up by the people who know best what our students need; namely, educators and administrators at the State and local levels.

The Ed-Flex plan does just that by cutting the bureaucratic strings that now entangle Federal education dollars. It would allow local communities to spend Federal dollars as they think best, as long as their programs accomplish the objectives of Federal guidelines.

In short, the Ed-Flex bill will help our public schools attain and, indeed, in many cases exceed Federal standards without resorting to a "Washington knows best" approach.

I note, Mr. President, that this approach is totally contrary to that proposed by the Clinton administration. The President wants to be the Nation's principal. He wants to decide everything from promotion policies to curriculum standards. That is not the approach that this bill takes. Rather, this bill reflects our philosophy that those who are most committed and best able to improve education are found at the State and local level—our parents, our school board leaders, our principals, and our teachers.

In Maine, our students rank near the top in many national tests. The State Department of Education, the State's elementary and secondary schools and the University of Maine have worked diligently to design and use challenging statewide learning standards.

National test results show that these efforts have been successful. Even more important, they demonstrate that a strong K-12 education system designed and supported by State and local officials, school board members, teachers,

and parents can produce first-rate students.

And, indeed, I am very proud of the accomplishments of Maine schools.

Dozens of schools across the country have participated in the current Ed-Flex Partnership Program. They have proven that test scores and learning increase most rapidly when guided by locally designed programs, not by Federal ones. We need to expand the Ed-Flex Program so that students in every State can reap these same benefits.

Public schools in Maine and across the Nation have made a good-faith effort to repair the deteriorated foundation of our system of public education. There is, however, much more that needs to be done. Our States cannot do it alone. They need assistance but not the dictates of Washington.

The Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 directly addresses the need for change within public schools by putting the power to plan, brainstorm, build, and implement back in the hands of State and local communities. Expanding the opportunity for the Ed-Flex Program will give every State the chance to experiment and innovate and to chart a path for better schools. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this very important initiative.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. BREAUX addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. BREAUX. I thank the Chair and welcome the Presiding Officer in that very important position that he has undertaken. We all have had an opportunity to do it in our careers.

I ask unanimous consent to proceed for up to 5 minutes. I take it we are in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

(The remarks of Mr. BREAUX pertaining to the introduction of S. 469 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BREAUX. I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business. Are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business, and there is a grant of 5 minutes per Senator.

Mr. GREGG. I thank you.

Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Ed-Flex bill we are going to take up next week, which has been brought to the floor by Senators FRIST and WYDEN and which is an excellent piece of legislation, a commonsense idea. The Ed-Flex bill simply gives freedom to the States to assist local school districts in meeting the particular needs of their particular students.

As a former Governor, I was very frustrated when I would receive Federal funds that were chock full of strings and Federal directions—strings that limited the ability of local school districts to address the educational needs of their students.

Had Ed-Flex been an option when I was Governor, schools could have chosen whether they would use Federal funds to hire more math teachers or instead if they wanted to use them to hire more reading teachers. Those choices should have been dependent upon the particular needs of each school.

They should have been dependent upon the particular needs of the students. Instead, those choices were being made by the Federal Government.

Under the current system, 38 States are prohibited from issuing the type of waivers the Department of Education can issue under the Ed-Flex Program. New Hampshire is one of those States. This means that someone at the Department of Education who doesn't even know the name of one student at, for example, the Rumford Elementary School in Concord, NH, has more authority over whether the Rumford Elementary School principal and the Rumford schoolteachers can decide whether they need math help or reading help for that student than the principals and the teachers have. It is difficult to fathom that some of my colleagues believe that the Federal bureaucrat, however well-intentioned, rather than a Concord school district principal or a Concord elementary district schoolteacher or a parent is a better judge of what a child needs in the Rumford Elementary School than they are.

It is hard for me to understand how we can turn to a Federal bureaucracy to make decisions about local schools rather than have the local schools make decisions about how the education should proceed.

This philosophy of Federal control over local education is insulting to the principals, to the teachers, to the superintendents, to the school board, to the parents. And more importantly, it is counterproductive because it doesn't put the resources where we need them. It doesn't help the student with the needs that that student has been identified as needing by the local school district, but rather with a set stringent regulated framework which has been determined by a Federal bureaucracy.

Furthermore, this philosophy of Federal control is unjustified. Twelve Ed-Flex States, in the words of Secretary Riley, have used their authority to grant waivers "judiciously and carefully." There is no compelling reason to delay expansion of Ed-Flex authority to all the States. In fact, Secretary Riley, President Clinton—both of whom are former Governors—and the

National Governors' Association support expanding Ed-Flex to all 50 States. I congratulate the President and I congratulate Secretary Riley for his support of this initiative.

With that said, Ed-Flex is a modest but important first step to driving more flexibility and control to the locals, thereby giving them the schools to improve education. However, it still leaves the bulk of decisionmaking and control regarding Federal education programs in the hands of the Department of Education rather than with the States and local communities. I hope that later on in this year we will address those additional regulations.

At this time, we are taking up Ed-Flex. That, at least, is a first step and a positive step. Ed-Flex is a bipartisan, widely supported bill with proven effectiveness. We should take this opportunity to provide much needed flexibility to the States.

Finally, I take this opportunity to commend Senator FRIST and Senator WYDEN for their diligent, bipartisan effort to expand Ed-Flex to all 50 States. They led the fight last year to ensure that all States benefit from the increased flexibility and innovation that Ed-Flex provides. I thank them for their efforts to bring Ed-Flex again to the floor of the Senate.

I believe the very fact that Ed-Flex will be considered on the Senate floor next week sends a clear signal to the American public that the top priority of this Senate is education and educational programs that are sensitive to the needs of the parents, the students, and the local schools. Ed-Flex is proof positive that the Senate is prepared to hit the ground running and promote proven educational reform measures such as the expansion of the Ed-Flex Program. I hope that in a strong, bipartisan manner we can work together to pass Ed-Flex and give the Governors, the local schools, the parents, teachers, and the principals this much needed tool which will free them from much unneeded Federal regulation.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, may I make a parliamentary inquiry? How are we operating at the moment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business and the general grant is each Senator speaking has 5 minutes.

Mr. BIDEN. I see the distinguished Senator from Maine is on the floor, ready to speak. The statement may take me as long as 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent I be able to proceed for 10 minutes.

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

RABBI HERBERT E. DROOZ: "THE RABBI SPEAKS"

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, it is with great honor, yet immense sadness that I stand today to pay tribute to a man—