

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I object to further consideration of this measure at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The measure will be placed on the calendar.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE
CALENDAR—S. 508

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, another bill is at the desk due for its second reading. I ask it be read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 508) to prohibit implementation of "Know Your Customer" regulations by the Federal banking agencies.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I object to further consideration of this measure at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The measure will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 280, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 280, a bill to provide for education flexibility partnerships.

The Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 3 hours 30 minutes under the control of the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. WELLSTONE, and 30 minutes under the control of the Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS, or his designee.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I make a point of order a quorum is not present.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that that time be charged to Senator WELLSTONE.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Ben Highton and Elizabeth Kuoppala be allowed to be on the floor during the duration of the debate on Ed-Flex.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me, first of all, explain to my colleagues and for those in the country who are going to now be focusing on this bill, the Ed-Flex bill, why I started out yesterday speaking in opposition to this motion to proceed and why I will be taking several hours today to express my opposition to this piece of legislation. There are a number of different things I am going to cover, but at the very beginning I would like to spell out what I think is the fundamental flaw to this legislation, the Ed-Flex bill. Frankly, I think my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, would have had an opportunity to carefully examine this legislation if we had a hearing, I mean a thorough hearing, or if we had waited to really examine in some detail and some depth what has happened in the different Ed-Flex States.

The General Accounting Office gives us a report in which they say it looks like some good work has been done, but we don't really have a full and complete understanding of what has happened in these Ed-Flex States. I think what this piece of legislation, called Ed-Flex—and I grant it is a great title, and I grant it is a winning political argument to say let's give the flexibility to the States and let's get the Federal Government out of this—but what this piece of legislation is essentially saying is that we, as a national community, we as a National Government, we as a Federal Government representing the people in our country, no longer are going to maintain our commitment to poor children in America. That is what this is all about.

What this piece of legislation essentially says to States and to school districts is: Look, when it comes to the core requirements of title I, core requirements that have to do with qualified teachers, that have to do with high standards for students, that have to do with students meeting those standards and there being a measurement and some result and some evaluation, these standards no longer necessarily will apply. What this legislation says is, when it comes to what the title I mission has been all about, for poor children in America—that is to say that we want to make sure that the money, first and foremost, goes to the neediest schools—that standard no longer will necessarily apply.

As a matter of fact, in 1994, one of the things that we did in the Elementary/Secondary Education Act reauthorization was we sought to concentrate title I funds by requiring districts to spend title I on schools with over 75 percent poverty-stricken students first. That restriction has had the desired effect. Only 79 percent of schools with over 75 percent poverty received title I funds in 1994. Today, over 95 percent of those schools receive it.

So, Mr. President—and I want to make it clear that I will have an amendment—one of the amendments that I will have to this piece of legislation, if we proceed with this legislation, is an amendment that says that the funding has to first go to schools that have a 75 percent or more low-income student population.

I cannot believe my colleagues are going to vote against that. If they want to, let them. But if they do, they will have proved my point—that we are now about to pass a piece of legislation or a good many Republicans and, I am sorry to say, Democrats may pass a piece of legislation that will no longer provide the kind of guarantee that in the allocation of title I funds for poor children that the neediest schools will get served first. I cannot believe that we are about to do that. I cannot believe this rush to recklessness. I cannot believe the way people have just jammed this bill on to the floor of the Senate. I cannot believe that there isn't more opposition from Democrats.

Mr. President, the second amendment that I am going to have, which I think will really speak to whether or not people are serious about flexibility with accountability, is an amendment which essentially says, look, here are the core requirements of title I.

The reason we passed title I as a part of the Elementary/Secondary Education Act back in 1965—that was almost 35 years ago—the reason we passed title I was we understood, as a nation, whether or not my colleagues want to admit to this or not, that in too many States poor children and their families who were not the big givers, who were not the heavy hitters, who do not make the big contributions were falling between the cracks.

So we said that, as a nation, we would make a commitment to making sure that there were certain core requirements that all States had to live up to to make sure that these children received some help. Thus, the core requirements of title I: Make sure they are qualified teachers; make sure low-income students are held to high standards; make sure there is a clear measurement of results.

Let me just read actually some of the provisions that would be tossed aside by Ed-Flex in its present form: the requirement that title I students be taught by a highly qualified professional staff; the requirement that States set high standards for all children; the requirement that States provide funding to lowest-income schools first; the requirement that States hold schools accountable for making substantial annual progress toward getting all students, particularly low-income and limited-English-proficient students, to meet high standards; the requirement that funded vocational programs provide broad education and work experience rather than narrow job training.