

from the contingent fund of the Senate or the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives pursuant to resolutions, which, in the case of the Senate, shall specify the maximum amounts which may be used for such purpose, approved by the appropriate House pursuant to resolutions, which shall specify the maximum amounts which may be used for such purpose, approved by such respective Houses, to provide assistance for members of its professional staff in obtaining specialized training, whenever that committee determines that such training will aid the committee in the discharge of its responsibilities. Any joint committee of the Congress whose expenses are paid out of funds disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate or by the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Majority Policy Committee and Minority Policy Committee of the Senate are each authorized to expend, for the purpose of providing assistance in accordance with paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of this subsection for members of its staff in obtaining such training, any part of amounts appropriated to that committee.

(2) Such assistance may be in the form of continuance of pay during periods of training or grants of funds to pay tuition, fees, or such other expenses of training, or both, as may be approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration or the Committee on House Administration, as the case may be.

(3) A committee providing assistance under this subsection shall obtain from any employee receiving such assistance such agreement with respect to continued employment with the committee as the committee may deem necessary to assure that it will receive the benefits of such employee's services upon completion of his training.

(4) During any period for which an employee is separated from employment with a committee for the purpose of undergoing training under this subsection, such employee shall be considered to have performed service (in nonpay status) as an employee of the committee at the rate of compensation received immediately prior to commencing such training (including any increases in compensation provided by law during the period of training) for the purposes of—

(A) subchapter III (relating to civil service retirement) of chapter 83 of title 5,

(B) chapter 87 (relating to Federal employees group life insurance) of title 5, and

(C) chapter 89 (relating to Federal employees group health insurance) of title 5.●

UNACCEPTABLE AND OUTRAGEOUS CUTS TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very concerned about the drastic cuts the Republican budget makes to our foreign affairs budget. In his budget request, President Clinton asked for \$21.3 billion in funding for foreign affairs. The budget before us cuts \$3.2 billion from that request.

U.S. leadership around the world requires adequate resources both for embassy security and for international programs. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Ranking Member of the International Operations Subcommittee, I have heard many times that our embassies abroad are in dire need of security upgrades.

We should not forget the terrible tragedy that took place last year when over 100 people died in the embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It was a stark reminder that the men and women who conduct our diplomacy abroad put their lives on the line to promote U.S. interests throughout the world. We have the obligation to ensure their safety in every way possible.

These cuts to the State Department budget are so deep that Secretary Albright called them "outrageous and unacceptable."

Let me outline some of the important programs that will have to be eliminated from the budget under the Republican budget. A \$24 million anti-narcotics initiative and programs to fight money laundering and trafficking in women could not be realized. The new Expanded Threat Reduction Program to reduce the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union could not be implemented. And, the U.S. request of \$500 million to support the Wye Implementation accord would not be achievable under the Senate Budget Resolution.

I cannot believe that my colleagues would chose to undermine our efforts to fight the international war on drugs, control the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and support the peace process in the Middle East, in Ireland and in Bosnia.

We live in a very dangerous world, and this budget puts us at greater risk. We must find the resources to fix this problem and properly fund the international affairs budget.●

FLEXIBILITY IN EDUCATION

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to support the Education Flexibility Act. This legislation will address our continuing problem in education policy: too many Washington-knows-best policies and red-tape getting in the way of States and local districts as they attempt to address their unique educational needs.

Mr. President, over the past 16 years the Education Department has spent more than \$175 billion on education programs. Yet achievement scores continue to stagnate and more young people than ever are dropping out of school. One crucial reason for this failure of Federal programs has been the enormous burden of Washington strings and mandates on the States and local school districts.

While the Federal Government provides only 7 percent of total spending on education, Washington demands 50 percent of the paperwork filled out by local school districts. That is wrong. It is inefficient, it is unfair and it is not the way to improve our children's education.

And this is why I support the Education Flexibility Act. This bill would

give every State a chance to waive many of the cumbersome rules, regulations, and red-tape often associated with education programs run by Washington.

The State of Michigan currently enjoys the benefits of the Ed-Flex program. In applying for its Ed-Flex waiver, Michigan streamlined several of its State regulations. Further, the very process of seeking waivers has brought Michiganians together to improve education. A working group of State and local officials, school board members, parents and principals was put together in Michigan to determine the best way to streamline regulations and deliver education services.

I believe this legislation is moving in the right direction, and would like to see it move even further. I believe Congress should be even more flexible in new authorizations and appropriations. Communities are different and have different needs. Local school districts need to have more options on how to spend Federal education dollars. While some schools may need to hire additional teachers, other school districts may need to implement a summer school program or a literacy program. The point is, schools should have the flexibility and the resources to meet the specific needs of their students.

A number of amendments have been offered during debate on this bill. My general view is that to offer new authorizations for additional Washington-based programs is moving in the exact opposite direction of the intent of this bill. This bill seeks to free up local education agencies from the Federal bureaucracies administering programs not to add to them. To the extent that these issues have been raised, I have supported the notion that we should first meet our current fiscal obligation to IDEA in addition to giving State and local education agencies flexibility in administering Federal education resources. I look forward to a fuller discussion of these issues in the proper context of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

There has been a great deal of debate about the need to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provisions affecting education. I believe that this raises an important point, particularly given the President's calls for new Federal programs such as his request for 100,000 new teachers, money for which would then compete with IDEA appropriations.

For years now parents and local schools have been expressing concern over the rising costs of education for children with special needs. The Federal Government has made a strong commitment to the education needs of disabled children in every way, with one telling exception: it has not lived up to its promise to provide its share of the funds necessary to educate these

children. The result has been an increased burden on local school districts, which must make a choice between hiring a new teacher or paying the Federal Government's share of the IDEA bill.

Under the Republican Congress, funding for IDEA has increased significantly. Unfortunately, it is still not adequate to meet the costs imposed by federal mandates. I believe we have an obligation to do more to meet these previous commitments before we create new programs and start spending on them money which could go to fulfill our IDEA promise. Moreover, if Congress would actually meet the federal government's obligation to pay 40 percent of the costs for educating special needs children, it would free up millions for schools to spend meeting other specific, local education needs.

For example, my state receives approximately \$73 million from the federal government for the educational needs of disabled children. If the 40 percent mandate was reached, my state would receive \$378 million. By meeting the federal government's obligation to current programs, my state would have \$305 million per year more (or one-quarter of the amount appropriated for the new teacher program last year) to be used for whatever needs local school districts might have—including hiring more teachers, after-school programs, or tutoring programs.

Mr. President, I recently asked a school district in my state what kind of difference fully funding IDEA could make to them. Here is what I found: If the federal government met its obligation in funding IDEA in the Oakland School District, that district would have \$60 million more to spend on educating their students.

I think we can all agree on our commitment to elementary and secondary education. The main point of disagreement is over how to deliver federal resources to schools. I suggest that by freeing local school districts of regulations and redtape and by giving them more flexibility in how they administer federal resources, we can free local schools to do what they do best: educate our children.

Education flexibility is not the answer to all our educational problems. But I submit that it provides the best means available to get at those answers: allowing the parents, teachers, and local officials in a position to know what their students need to make the important decisions involved in setting education priorities.

This is a crucial piece of legislation, Mr. President, and I am proud to lend my full support behind this bill.●

COMPREHENSIVE BORDER PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Comprehensive

Border Protection Act of 1999 which Senator GRASSLEY and I introduced on March 23, 1999. This bill enhances our efforts to secure our borders by providing the U.S. Customs Service with the necessary funding it requires to perform the multi faceted functions of drug interdiction, trade facilitation, and international passenger and cargo inspection services. The bill also addresses the concerns that I, as well as many of my colleagues, have regarding the U.S. Customs Service and its ability to efficiently and effectively: Determine enforcement and trade facilitation goals, objectives, and priorities; allocate assets and resources in response to changing threats and needs; address employee misconduct and integrity concerns; and ensure full participation in a comprehensive strategy to combat international drug trafficking and money laundering.

Combating international drug trafficking is critical to our national security. While we have experienced some success in our counter drug operations along the Southwest border, there are undeniable signs that drug traffickers are adapting to our law enforcement efforts.

During the 1980s, as our law enforcement presence increased along the Florida coast, drug traffickers responded by relocating their operations to the Southwest border. Reacting to this change, we abandoned Customs marine operations in Florida and intensified our efforts along the United States-Mexico border. Now, drug traffickers have renewed the use of established smuggling routes in the Caribbean and off the coast of Florida to surreptitiously import their destructive cargo into the United States.

During fiscal year 1998, Customs cocaine seizures in my home State of Florida totaled 69,479 pounds, a 23 percent increase over 1997 seizures. Drug related deaths in Florida also increased as more and more of our young adults experimented with heroin—the most pure heroin we have ever encountered; heroin so pure it can be smoked, rather than injected into a vein with a syringe.

An effective U.S. drug enforcement strategy must be proactive, including an intensified interdiction effort that exploits the inherent vulnerabilities of transporting drugs into the United States by air, land and sea. As one of our primary interdiction agencies, Customs must have the necessary assets and resources to meet its interdiction responsibilities.

Interdiction, however, is but one part of a successful drug enforcement strategy. Our strategy must also emphasize fundamental investigative work required to identify, infiltrate, disrupt and dismantle drug smuggling and money laundering organizations. To perform its investigative responsibilities, Customs must have the appro-

priate funding to sustain an experienced work force of inspectors and agents dedicated to drug enforcement operations. These inspectors and agents must be assigned to the most vulnerable and critical locations where illegal shipments of drugs enter the United States—our border with Mexico, as well as Florida and the Gulf Coast.

Our counter drug strategy must also recognize the importance of, and be sensitive to, the needs of the international trade community. Enhancing and facilitating open trade is essential to our economic health. To sustain U.S. economic growth, we must maintain the free flow of trade across our borders, while remaining vigilant to ensure that our open borders are not exploited by those who would use legitimate commerce to conceal their illegal activities.

Over the past few years, U.S. seaports and airports have benefitted from the increasing growth of international commerce. During 1998, international traffic at Florida ports increased approximately 17.9 percent. In response to the increase in international passenger and cargo arrivals, a number of new cruise ship terminals, container freight stations and passenger inspection facilities have been constructed and expanded. Additionally, operations in free trade zones and bonded warehouses have increased. However, in the face of this growth, I am concerned that Customs have been unable to adequately respond through the reallocation of personnel and funding.

We must ensure that Customs, in response to growth and change in international commerce, is prepared to review its resource allocation process on a regular basis. Customs must be able to shift both personnel and funding as threat and need dictate. States, such as Florida, that depend on the presence of Customs personnel to facilitate international trade, must be assured that sufficient Customs assets are in place to inspect and process both international passengers and cargo as they arrive in our seaports and airports.

The Comprehensive Border Protection Act of 1999 establishes a more accountable Customs Service by requiring Customs to report to this body, no later than 120 days after this legislation is enacted, on the methods utilized to identify enforcement priorities and trade facilitation objectives. This legislation requires that Customs establish performance standards and objectives against which we may evaluate the progress toward the goals identified in the customs annual plan. This legislation is a significant step toward giving customs the ability and authority to reallocate resources in order to meet enforcement demands and commercial operations needs.

The bill also directs Customs to develop and implement an accountability model to address violations of administrative policies and procedures, as well