

we must work to protect our citizens and businesses against harmful litigation that benefits no one.

On vote No. 121, amendment numbered 351 to S. 254 offered by Senator ALLARD regarding memorials in public schools, I would have voted "AYE." This amendment will allow students and faculty members to grieve for classmates and colleagues killed on school property in a way that makes them most comfortable.

On vote No. 122, an amendment numbered 352 to S. 254 offered by Senators KOHL and HATCH regarding mandatory safety locks on guns, I would have voted "AYE." This amendment was an example of the importance of bipartisan compromise. The Kohl-Hatch amendment requires all handguns sold or transferred by a licensed dealer to be sold with a locking device. In addition, this amendment provides important liability protections for gun owners who use these safety devices.

On vote No. 13, an amendment numbered 353 to S. 254 offered by Senators HATCH and FEINSTEIN I would have voted "AYE." This important amendment increased penalties for participating in a crime as a gang member; makes it illegal to travel or use the mail for gang business; makes it illegal to transfer firearms to children to commit a crime; makes it illegal to clone pagers; prohibits the distribution of certain information relating to explosives or destructive devices; makes it illegal to wear body armor in the commission of a crime and donates surplus body armor to local Law enforcement agencies; and strengthens penalties for Eco-terrorism.

On vote No. 124, an amendment to S. 254 offered by Senator BYRD I would have voted "AYE." This amendment allows states to enforce their own alcoholic beverage control laws by allowing state prosecutors to bring an injunction in Federal Court if interstate shippers violate State laws.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION'S VISION FOR EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, over the weekend Vice President Gore outlined his vision for American education if he becomes President. The speech was billed by the Washington Post as the Vice President's "vision for American education in the 21st Century". Unfortunately for our children, the Vice President's vision for American education in the 21st century looks a lot like the failed policies of the last 35 years.

The VP's speech laid out seven new proposals for American education—seven proposals that all say AL GORE knows more about educating children than do parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members all across America. Seven proposals to add to the hundreds upon

hundreds of education programs run by the federal government, so many in fact that no one, not the Department of Education, the General Accounting Office or even the Vice President, is sure how many there are. Seven proposals that will add to a system of top down control of education that puts a higher priority on adults filling out forms correctly than on children passing a math or a spelling test.

Today, President Clinton unveiled his proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Unfortunately, the President's proposal is filled with more of the "D.C. knows best" programs he has touted for the past 6½ years. For example, the President's proposal for reducing class size is filled with requirements for states and districts to comply with, but does not address the issue of children learning.

For most of this half century Washington, D.C., has been dominated by people who believe that centralized decisions and centralized control exercised by Washington, D.C., is the best way to solve problems, including those in the classroom. This approach has not worked. As Washington, D.C., has taken power and authority from local school districts, our schools have not improved. But, old habits die hard. The belief in centralized power is still very much alive, and embodied by the President's and Vice President's proposals.

I don't believe AL GORE or Bill Clinton know more about what America's schools and communities need than they do. In fact, I don't believe that I or any other member of Congress or the Administration knows more about educating children than do parents or local educators. Unfortunately, AL GORE and Bill Clinton have indicated that they will continue on the path they've trod throughout their administration—a path that begins and ends in Washington, D.C.

In 1997 I first proposed an amendment to the fiscal year Education funding bill. It was stated clearly in that amendment that I believe that those closest to our children—their parents, teachers, superintendents and school board members—are best able to make decisions about their children's education. Last year, I refined that legislation to include a "triple option" that would allow a state to decide where the federal education dollars should go. Both proposals passed this body by slim margins and were immediately met with a veto threat by the Administration.

This year, I have worked with a bipartisan coalition of members and groups to devise legislation that will allow states maximum flexibility in return for increased accountability for the academic achievement of their students. My bill, the Academic Achievement for All Act, or Straight A's, will be introduced after the Memorial Day

recess. I am hopeful that this time my colleagues in the Senate will join me in giving back to states and local communities the ability to make critical decisions about the education of their children.

This issue boils down to each Senator asking if he or she believes schools will be improved through more control from Washington, D.C., or by giving more control to parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members? I believe our best hope for improving the education of our children is to put the American people in charge of their local schools.

#### HEALTH AND THE AMERICAN CHILD

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, yesterday I met with former Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, who now chairs the prestigious Public Health Policy Advisory Board (PHPAB). Dr. Sullivan presented to me their new report entitled "Health and the American Child: A Focus on the Mortality Among Children."

I was immediately struck by the fact that the findings of the PHPAB report underscore both the need for the legislation we are debating here today and the tremendous importance we must place on prevention efforts so that we can reduce unnecessary deaths of our Nation's youth.

According to "Health and the American Child," in the past two decades, two causes of child death have dramatically increased—homicide and suicide, which account for 14% and 7% respectively of all deaths for children under age 19. In teenage black males, the levels are so striking that the report uses the term "epidemic" to describe an eight-fold increase in homicide rates among African American youth, now their number one cause of death.

"Homicide and suicide, the greatest new risks to children's health today, require both heightened preventive action as well as research into children's mental health and the social fabric in which they grow and develop." And that is precisely what we have been talking about during our debate on S. 254.

The PHPAB report goes on to define the contributing risk factors associated with mortality in children. Homicide and suicide, as the major killers of our children, are most closely associated with firearms, drug and alcohol use, and motor vehicles. These significant increases in both morbidity and mortality among our youth must be addressed and demand aggressive preventive action on our part.

I commend "Health and the American Child" to my colleagues and would be glad to make it available to any Senators who care to have the benefit of its considerable findings. "Health