

I did that because it is my intention to offer a sense-of-the-Senate resolution to the State Department authorization bill stating our support for this historic convention. I hope my colleagues will take the time to look at the material that I sent to their offices. I hope that we can all join together in a bipartisan effort to support this convention. This convention offers a brighter tomorrow for all of our world's children.

Yesterday, because I was in Geneva with the President for this very historic gathering and for this very historic speech by the President of the United States, I was necessarily absent from the Senate floor.

Had I been here, on the military construction appropriations bill, I would have voted yes.

Iowa is deeply saddened that I could not be here to vote on a bill for which I had worked for a long time with Senator KENNEDY and Senator JEFFORDS, and so many others. I am happy to see that it passed the Senate 99-0. Had I been here, it would have been 100-0; and that is the Workforce Incentives Act.

As the chief sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act, this was sort of one of the final building blocks of ensuring that people with disabilities not only have the right and the civil rights to go out and get jobs and work, but this bill provides them with the necessary support in the health care that they need. Too often, people with disabilities go out to get a job, and under the Americans with Disabilities Act they can get that job, but then they lose their health care. Because many of these jobs are low-paying, entry-level jobs, they simply cannot afford to take them. So I am really proud that the Senate, in a strong bipartisan fashion, passed the Workforce Incentives Act yesterday. Had I been here I would have of course voted yes.

On the lockbox provision that came up, again, I would have voted no on that because there were no amendments allowed. I feel very strongly that the provision, the loophole that I felt was in the bill, that said that this was only good until Social Security reform was passed, I do not believe was adequate enough. The question is, What reform are we talking about? I think we needed to define the reform before we voted for the lockbox.

On the energy and water appropriations, I would have supported that.

On the legislative branch appropriations, I would have voted yes on that had I been here.

I wanted to state for the RECORD why I was necessarily absent yesterday, and how I would have voted had I been here.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

#### WORK INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, the time has come. Our friends with disabilities have waited patiently. Our bipartisan coalition has remained united. The last obstacles have been resolved. Assurances have been given. I am referring to yesterday's passage of the landmark legislation, S. 331, the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

When I came to Congress in January 1975, one of my legislative priorities was to provide access to the American dream for individuals with disabilities. It was not an easy task. I learned quickly that providing access for Americans with disabilities was complicated.

It involved providing access to education, it involved removing physical barriers, and it involved ensuring access to rehabilitation, job training, and job placement assistance. It required obtaining access to assistive technology and health care. Most importantly, access to the American dream for people with disabilities meant gaining the opportunity to choose and to participate in the full range of community activities. Moreover, it involved making sure that the federal government, along with other entities, be made to comply with laws affecting access for people with disabilities. We have made tremendous progress in the last 24 years.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Assistive Technology Act have changed, and will continue to change lives. Children with disabilities are being educated with their peers. No agency or individual, including the Federal Government, can discriminate against individuals on the basis of disability in employment, transportation, public accommodations, public services, or telecommunications. Job training and placement opportunities for individuals with disabilities are ever expanding because of the reforms we achieved in the Work Force Investment Act of 1998. I am proud of these accomplishments.

I began work on the Work Incentives Improvement Act more than 2 years ago. Since then, I have learned a great deal. I suspect the same holds true for the 79 other co-sponsors of this bill. S. 331 addresses a fundamental flaw in federal policy. Individuals with disabilities must choose between working or having health care. This is an absurd choice. Yet, current federal law forces individuals with disabilities to make this choice. People with disabilities want to work, and will work, if they are given access to health care. S. 331 does just that—it gives workers with disabilities access to appropriate health care—health care that is not readily available or affordable from the private sector. People with disabilities

want to work, and will work, if they are given access to job training and job placement assistance. S. 331 does just that—it gives individuals with disabilities training and help in securing a job.

Over the past several months, we have all received letters in support of S. 331. I would like to share one such story with you. Don is a 30 year-old man, who has mild mental retardation, cerebral palsy, a seizure disorder, and a visual impairment. Don works, but only part-time.

At the end of his letter, Don wrote:

The Work Incentives Improvement Act will help my friends become independent too. Then they can pay taxes too. But most of all, they will have a life in the community. We are adults. We want to work. We don't need a hand out, we need a hand up.

S. 331 will give Don and his friends a hand up. Doing so would be good for Don, and good for the nation.

Hard facts make a compelling case for S. 331:

The growth rate of Social Security disability programs between 1989 and 1997 was 64 percent.

Social Security disability cash payments grew from \$34.4 billion in 1989 to \$62.9 billion in 1997.

For 1997, GAO estimated weekly disbursements in cash payments to be \$1.21 billion.

In my state of Vermont, 24,355 Social Security disability beneficiaries are waiting for S. 331 to become law. Nationally, that figure is 7.5 million. Under current law, if these people work and earn over \$500 per month, they lose cash payments and health care coverage under Medicaid or Medicare. There are few if any private insurance options available to these individuals, so only one-half of one percent of the 7.5 million forgo cash payments and federally subsidized health care, and work without health insurance. Would any of us take that risk?

Let's take a closer look at some numbers. As I indicated, there are 7.5 million Social Security disability beneficiaries. Of those who work, very few make more than \$500 a month. In fact, of working individuals with disabilities on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), only 17 percent make over \$500 per month and only 10 percent make over \$1000 per month. Another 29 percent make \$65 or less per month.

Let's assume that S. 331 and the companion bill in the House, H.R. 1180 become law, and only 200 Social Security disability beneficiaries in each state work and forgo cash payments. That would be 10,000 individuals across the country out of the 7.5 million disability beneficiaries. The annual savings to the Federal Treasury in cash payments for just these 10,000 people out of 7.5 million would be \$133,550,000! Imagine the savings to the Federal Treasury if this number were higher.

Clearly, the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 is targeted, fiscally responsible legislation. It enables

individuals with significant disabilities to enter the work force for the first time, re-enter the work force, or avoid leaving it in the first place.

These individuals will no longer need to worry about losing their health care if they choose to work a forty-hour week, to put in overtime, or to pursue a career advancement. Individuals who need job training or job placement assistance will get it.

Private insurers will begin to have access to data that describes the health care-use patterns of workers with disabilities, and as a result, will be able to expand or develop appropriate health care packages for individuals with disabilities who work.

I would like to highlight a few of the health care provisions in S. 331. First, S. 331 allows states to expand Medicaid coverage to workers with disabilities and to require the workers, depending on their income, to pay a part or all of the premium for this coverage.

A state that elects to expand coverage receives a grant to support the design, establishment, and operation of infrastructures to support working individuals with disabilities.

The bill also includes a 6-year trial program that permits Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries to continue to receive Medicare coverage if they work.

Finally, the legislation includes a time-limited demonstration program allowing states to extend Medicaid coverage to workers who have a disability which, without access to health care, would become severe enough to qualify them for Social Security disability cash payments. This demonstration will produce important information on the cost effectiveness of early health care intervention in keeping people with disabilities from becoming too disabled to work.

S. 331 reflects what individuals with disabilities say they need. It was shaped by input across the philosophical spectrum. It was endorsed by the President in his State of the Union Address. And, it's companion bill H.R. 1180 has recently been reported out of the House Committee on Commerce with unanimous support.

The passage of S. 331 allows responsible change to federal policy and the elimination of a perverse dilemma for many Americans with disabilities—if you don't work, you get health care; if you do work, you don't get health care.

S. 331 is a vital link in making the American dream, an accessible dream, for Americans with disabilities.

Let me tell you about the dream of a young constituent of mine. Her name is Maria, and she faces many daily challenges as a result of her disabilities. She contacted my office to let me know that she is counting on S. 331 being signed into law. Maria is a junior majoring in Spanish at a college in Vermont. She plans to graduate next

year, and hopes to attend graduate school to become a Spanish teacher for children and adults from Central and South America.

Maria has her whole life ahead of her. She has dreams, and she has contributions to make. Yesterday's passage of S. 331 made Maria's dreams possible. She will be able to pursue a career without fear of losing the health care she needs.

The enactment of S. 331 is our graduation present to Maria . . . and to the millions of other Americans with disabilities, who also want to work, a sign of our recognition of their right to contribute to the economic and social vibrancy of America.

In closing, I would like to thank my many colleagues who contributed to making yesterday, with a record vote of 99-0, a reality.

First, I must thank my bipartisan co-sponsors Senators KENNEDY, ROTH, and MOYNIHAN the original co-sponsors of this bill. Each of them made a commitment many months ago to work together to create a sound piece of legislation to address a real problem for millions of Americans with disabilities. Such commitment represents the best of what the Senate can accomplish when principle is placed above partisanship.

I also thank the additional, original 35 co-sponsors of this bill and the subsequent 45 co-sponsors who represent a total of over three quarters of this body, perhaps a Senate record on health care legislation. Together, we have come to understand the importance of health care and a job to individuals with disabilities. Sometimes the power of common sense and the voices of reason transcend politics and help us to forge new policy that will make America a better place for all of its citizens.

Over the last two weeks, the Majority Leader has been the driving force who urged us to work out policy differences that were delaying floor consideration. We did so through good faith efforts that broadened support for the bill and reduced its overall modest cost. In particular, I want to recognize Senators NICKLES, BUNNING, and GRAMM for their willingness to reach consensus with us on policy without compromising the integrity of the legislation, thus, allowing S. 331 to move forward.

I must strongly thank the over two hundred national organizations that offered time, energy, and ideas to create and support a bill that will improve the quality of life for millions of Americans with disabilities who want to work.

And finally, I would like to thank several individuals and groups who have contributed to the development and to the Senate passage of this legislation. In particular, I would like to thank my staff including Patricia

Morrissey, Mark Powden, Paul Harrington, Lu Zeph, Erik Smulson, Joe Karpinski, Leah Menzies, Chris Crowley and the many others who worked long and hard to bring this bill about.

Additionally, I would like to recognize and thank the staff members of the three other primary co-sponsors who took the lead in their offices: Connie Garner from Senator KENNEDY's Staff, Jennifer Baxendell and Alec Vachon from Senator ROTH's staff, and Kristen Testa from Senator MOYNIHAN's staff.

In addition to staff, I would like to recognize the contributions of the Work Incentives Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities who met weekly with staff for over a year to build the consensus necessary to get us here today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

#### OBJECTIONABLE PROVISIONS IN S. 1186, ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2000

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, the energy and water appropriations bill is fundamental to our Nation's energy and defense-related activities, and takes care of vitally important water resources infrastructure needs. Unfortunately, this bill diverts from its intended purpose by including a multitude of additional, unrequested earmarks to the tune of \$531 million.

This amount is substantially less than the earmarks included in the FY '99 appropriations bill and I commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for their hard work in putting this bill together. In fact, this year's recommendation is about 60 percent lower than the earmarks included in last year's appropriation bill. My optimism was raised upon reading the committee report which states that the Committee is "reducing the number of projects with lower priority benefits." Unfortunately, while the Committee attempts to be more fiscally responsible, there is a continuing focus on parochial, special interest concerns.

Funding is provided in this bill for projects where it is very difficult to ascertain their overall importance to the security and infrastructure of our nation.

Let me highlight a few examples:

\$3,000,000 is provided for an ethanol pilot plant at Southern Illinois University; \$300,000 is provided to the Vermont Agriculture Methane project; \$400,000 is included for aquatic weed control at Lake Champlain in Vermont, and, \$100,000 in additional funding for mosquito control in North Dakota.

How are these activities connected to the vital energy and water resource needs of our nation? Why are these projects higher in priority than other flood control, water conservation or renewable energy projects? These are the