

If Congress were unable to agree on how to use trust fund revenue or if Congress simply doesn't commit enough resources to trigger the use of the trust fund, the trust fund assets would be carried over to the next year. The trust fund would work similar to the Social Security trust fund. On paper, those assets would carry forward to the next fiscal year. In reality, unspent funds would be used to pay down the public debt.

Trust fund revenue would not be available for anything other than these education specifics. Appropriators could not tap those trust fund moneys for sugar subsidies, for pet projects, or for other related purposes. Tax writers could not tap into trust fund money to pay for special interest tax breaks. But tax writers could use the trust fund money for education purposes ranging from school construction bonds to any other number of priorities on which the Congress could reach consensus. In effect, the trust fund would create a budgetary firewall protecting our national commitment to young people for early learning and education generally.

I have strong views about how some of that money might be best spent. But that is a debate for a different day. The question before us, as we think about the budget as a whole, particularly since it is the first budget of the new millennium, is, What is our commitment as a nation to education? Are we satisfied that one penny per dollar less than we used to commit under Ronald Reagan and less than we used to commit under Richard Nixon is currently being committed by the Federal Government for the purpose of building the future fabric of this Nation? I don't think I am alone in believing that surplus funds ought to be used to some degree in some manner for these education expenses.

In the State of the Union Address, the President pledged to increase our commitment to the Nation's education system by using surplus funds. In fact, his fiscal year 2001 budget requests an increase in discretionary spending for \$5.7 billion for elementary and secondary education. I wholeheartedly support that critical increase. But I know and you know, Mr. President, and all of us in this Congress know that if we put together the proper structure that requires accountability that changes the relationships that currently exist in our public education system, that embrace choice, competition, accountability; that if we unleash the capacity of our school systems to be the best they can be, whether it means adopting the best of a charter school, the best of a parochial school, the best of a private school, the best of the best public schools, we have the ability in this Congress to find a way to guarantee that local communities embrace real concepts of reform. But none of those concepts can be properly

implemented without some commitment of resources for communities that have no tax base and no ability to fund those systems through the property tax.

This is our mission, and \$5 billion is not enough to fix our schools, or to guarantee a qualified teacher in every classroom, or to provide students with meaningful afterschool programs.

I am not suggesting a Federal mandate. I am not suggesting the long arm of Washington reaching in and telling people how to do it. To the contrary. I am suggesting that we leverage the capacity of local districts to make those choices for themselves. If we don't tell them how to get there as true fiscal watchdogs looking over our taxpayers' dollars, we will look on the back end to see they did get where they said they were trying to go. If we in this body intend to make education a top priority and work for serious reform, we have to guarantee children have access to those things that will contribute to their education's success.

I have never been able to reconcile in the Senate how it is that we are so ready to augment the expenses for the juvenile justice system, build new prisons and house people for the rest of their life for \$35,000 to \$75,000 a year, but we are unwilling to invest \$35,000 a year to keep them out of those prisons and to provide them with a set of other choices when it matters the most. That, it seems to me, is the obligation of this country. The American people want funding for education increases. The American people in community after community know they can't take any more on the property tax burden. Seniors who want to live out their years in the house they paid for can't see the property tax go up. Young families with a fixed stream of income who bought into their first home can't see the property tax go up. However, we fund our education system as if we were still the agrarian society which set up the entire structure for property tax in the first place.

Our obligation is to find a way to release the creative energies and learning capacities of our Nation. If we were to find a bipartisan consensus and reach across the aisle to end this wasteful debate about saving a few kids rather than saving all of the kids, it seems to me we would have the ability in the Congress to achieve something that would truly be a long and lasting legacy. It would be a great beginning for this millennium.

Education is the No. 1 issue in America. It deserves more than a penny, a dollar. That, it seems to me, is the mission we should embark on over the course of these next months.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LOTT. It is such pleasure to see the distinguished Senator from Kansas in the chair. I know the Chamber will be kept in order, and we will make real progress.

PROVIDING FOR CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 80, the adjournment resolution, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 80) providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 80) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 80

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on Thursday, February 10, 2000, or Friday, February 11, 2000, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Tuesday, February 22, 2000, or until such time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Wednesday, February 16, 2000, Thursday, February 17, 2000, or Friday, February 18, 2000, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 29, 2000, for morning-hour debate, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the Senate and House, respectively, to reassemble whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.