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IMPACT AID SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AMENDMENT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, last week, I was successful in achieving the inclusion of a bipartisan amendment in the Manager's Amendment on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriation bill, on one of the most important issues we will deal with in this Congress—the poor condition of our Nation's school buildings.

Let me briefly describe this amendment before I talk about the larger problem this amendment is seeking to address.

This amendment is co-sponsored by Senator BINGAMAN, Senator DOMENICI, and Senator HUTCHISON from Texas—this bipartisan group should send a very strong signal that this amendment is worthy of support.

This is a very simple amendment. Both the House and Senate versions of the Labor-HHS Appropriations bill set aside \$25 million for Impact Aid school construction. This amendment increases that amount to \$10 million.

It offsets the increase by reducing the administrative and related expenses of the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education on a pro rata basis by \$10 million.

Allow me to explain why this amendment is so important to me and to the bi-partisan group of Senators that support this amendment.

As you know, there are a number of pending bills that address our nation's school construction needs. And in the past days, we have voted on a number of amendments addressing school construction issues generally.

These funds assist local school districts who are then able to raise the remainder of their construction funds through bond issues. Like other school costs, the bonds are paid for by taxes on local property.

Issuing bonds is a time-honored approach to school construction. But in the heated national debate, one group of children is continually left out in the cold—students who live on federally owned land, usually an Indian reservation or a military installation.

In Montana, some 12,000 children fall into this category.

These schools are located in areas where much of the local property can't be taxed because of Federal activities. This tax-exempt property may be a military base or an Indian reservation.

In many cases, the local public schools have to educate the children of families that live on the property. These so-called "Federal Students" could come from military families. They could come from civilian families. They could come from Native American families.

The Congress has recognized its responsibility for these schools through payments authorized by Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The House and Senate bills allocate \$25 million for school construction to be distributed under Section 8007 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

This is simply insufficient to meet the needs of these federally impacted schools.

In fiscal year 2000, Montana had 28 school districts that were 50 percent or more impacted with either Indian land children or military students. Nationwide, there were 249 such districts.

In FY2000, the average allocation per school district in Montana of Impact Aid funds is just below \$18,000. The average dollar received per student is \$57.

Think about that for a moment. \$57 for construction is not going to do a heck of a lot of good for schools that are literally falling down.

Now, under the FY2001 appropriations bill, funding would increase to approximately \$90 per student. And while that's better than \$57, it still falls way short of meeting the needs of our students.

Let me tell you a couple of stories to illustrate this point.

I remember talking last year with the Superintendent for the Harlem School District Don Bidwell. His district is so crowded, he has students using a closet, where they used to keep the snow blower, for a classroom. Now the snow blower is in the hall and the students are in the closet.

And let me tell you about a recent visit with Steve Smyth, the Superintendent of the Browning school district in Montana.

Browning is situated in one of the windiest areas of Montana. Mr. Smyth informed me that a year ago, the students, teachers, administrators and community watched the roof on the high school building literally curl up like the lid on a sardine can because of the harsh winds.

Just to replace that roof, the district spent \$115,881. And yet, they only received \$27,000 for school construction and repairs in FY 2000. How can we justify giving them only enough money to pay for one-fourth of their roof? That is a disgrace.

Let me give you another example. In 1998, the Box Elder school received \$13,000 in Impact Aid construction funding. In FY 2000, they received \$19,500. That might be enough to give half the building a paint job, but not for much more.

It's like trying to put out a fire with squirt gun. What this school really needs is a new building or a major renovation.

The condition of these schools is not a Montana problem. Nor a Nebraska problem. Nor a partisan problem.

Instead, it's a national problem. As a nation, we can no longer pretend that this is a problem in a few schools in a few states that can be solved with a few scraps from our federal education appropriation.

Every child in the United States deserves a healthy learning environment. An important and vital part of that environment is the physical structure the learning takes place in. Our children should be confident their school will still be standing by the end of the day. Our children shouldn't fear that their school is going to burn down because of faulty wiring.

Mothers and fathers should know that when they drop their children off at school or send them off to the school bus, that they are sending them to a safe place.

I am pleased the managers of this bill saw this amendment fit to be included in their amendment. I thank Senators BINGAMAN, DOMENICI, and HUTCHISON from Texas for their support. I hope that the conferees will maintain this increased level of funding.

REFORMING UNILATERAL SANCTIONS ON FOOD AND MEDICINE

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to address recent developments in the effort to reform our sanctions policy towards food and medicine.

Let me recall a bit of recent history. Late last year, the Senate passed legislation to end the use of food and medicine as a weapon of foreign policy. We passed it by a substantial margin—70 to 28—as an amendment to the FY 2000 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

We have both moral and commercial concerns. It is just wrong to inflict suffering on innocent people by withholding food and medicine because we oppose the policies of their government. This goes against the core values of our nation.

Commercially, the reform legislation would open markets to American producers, especially American farmers. They have been struggling through a long and terrible crisis brought on by low prices and bad weather. Opening new foreign markets would especially help our family farms.

The sanctions reform amendment ran into stiff opposition from House members in conference. Their main objection was that the bill would allow food

and medicine sales to Cuba. Unfortunately, they prevailed, and the amendment was struck from the conference report.

That was last year. What about this year? We've had two important developments.

On the Senate side, the Agriculture Committee included sanctions reform in the FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which was reported out in May. It is the section of the bill entitled the "Food and Medicine for the World Act." I would like to acknowledge the work of my colleagues on this important legislation, especially Senators DODD, DORGAN, ROBERTS, ASHCROFT and HAGEL.

It is very similar to the amendment the Senate passed last year. I would note that it contains a new provision which weakens the sanctions reform effort. This provision requires one-year licenses for sales of food or medicine to governments on the State Department's terrorism list. Currently this list covers seven countries, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba. I believe that this provision is an unnecessary restriction on our agricultural exporters.

But I am much more concerned about recent developments on the House side.

In late June, House members struck a deal to accommodate the same small group which fights against sanctions reform every year. Those members now have one main target: Cuba.

This recent House deal is billed as a move to lift unilateral sanctions on food and medicine. In fact, it does just the opposite. Let me explain.

First, it would outlaw all finance and insurance of food sales to Cuba, even sales to private groups. This would essentially prohibit all U.S. exports. In today's world, nobody trades without some sort of finance. It takes at least a letter of credit. What is the alternative? Only to ride along on the cargo ship to exchange your wheat for cash in Havana harbor. Everybody requires some sort of commercial insurance. In fact, the House agreement is so broadly written that it might even make third-country finance illegal. This is very bad legislation.

Second, the House agreement would impose even stricter licensing requirements than are in effect today on sales of food and medicine. These new restrictions would apply not just to Cuba, but also to Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria and North Korea.

Third, it would make it harder for U.S. exporters to travel to Cuba to explore the market.

Fourth, it would prohibit any food assistance, such as Food for Peace, to Cuba, as well as to Iran.

Accepting these provisions would be a major setback for the Senate.

The House agreement goes beyond sanctions for food and medicine. It includes provisions on travel to Cuba, an

entirely unrelated issue. It would remove all flexibility from the current travel regulations in two ways. First, it would make them statutory. They could only be changed in the future by new legislation. Second, it would deny the Treasury Department any discretion in issuing travel licenses.

I understand that the current House plan is to strip this bad legislation from their version of the FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill, and then bring it up in conference. We must not let a small group of House members prevail again this year. I firmly oppose the House agreement, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise. We should work to ensure passage of the Food and Medicine for the World Act.

Last year, the Senate took action that was correct and sound. We should continue to press forward.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, July 7, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,664,950,120,488.65 (Five trillion, six hundred sixty-four billion, nine hundred fifty million, one hundred twenty thousand, four hundred eighty-eight dollars and sixty-five cents).

One year ago, July 7, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,627,556,000,000 (Five trillion, six hundred twenty-seven billion, five hundred fifty-six million).

Five years ago, July 7, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,929,459,000,000 (Four trillion, nine hundred twenty-nine billion, four hundred fifty-nine million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 7, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$528,168,000,000 (Five hundred twenty-eight billion, one hundred sixty-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,136,782,120,488.65 (Five trillion, one hundred thirty-six billion, seven hundred eighty-two million, one hundred twenty thousand, four hundred eighty-eight dollars and sixty-five cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

• Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, each year the American Immigration Law Foundation and the American Immigration Lawyers Association sponsor a national writing contest on immigration. Thousands of fifth grade students across the country participate in the competition, answering the question, "Why I'm Glad America is a Nation of Immigrants."

In fact, "A Nation of Immigrants" was the title of a book that President Kennedy wrote in 1958, when he was a Senator. In this book, and throughout

his life, he celebrated America's great heritage and history of immigration as a principal source of the nation's progress and achievements.

As one of the judges of this year's contest, I was impressed by the quality of writing that was presented and the great pride of these students in America's immigrant heritage. Many of these essays told the story of their own family's immigration to the United States.

The winner of this year's contest is Kaitlin Young, a fifth grader at St. Anne Elementary School in Warren, Michigan. She wrote about her diverse immigrant background and how this diversity enriches her life. Other students honored for their creative essays were Shayna Walton of Arizona, John Klaasen of Washington, Allison Paige Sigmon of North Carolina, and Christa Conway of Connecticut.

I believe that these award winning essays from the "Celebrate America" contest will be of interest to all of us in the Senate, and I ask that they may be printed in the RECORD.

The essays are as follow.

IMMIGRATION & ME

(By Kaitlin Young, Warren, MI, grand prize winner)

If it weren't for immigration, the diversity in me

I might be a Who-not on my family tree.

English, Irish, Dutch, American Indian too

Italian ancestry in the mix, a family tree in bloom.

America welcomed my ancestors—a promise to be free

Ellis Island & the Statue of Liberty are symbols dear to me.

Our country's promise, the freedom to worship here

Practice our family customs and belief we hold dear.

The promise of America rings throughout me
The Torch of Freedom helped shape my family tree.

My Grandmas and Grandpas are from here and there

So when Mom married Dad, I came from everywhere.

I eat different foods from across the world
Irish stew, potatoes and pasta that is curled.
Salmon steak, pot roast, and Dutch Apple pie

Egg rolls, pizza, a menu diversified.

Soccer, Bocce Ball, and Cricket too.

Without immigration, you might not play the sports you do.

Without immigration what would you hear?
The same old sounds filling your ear.

If it were not for immigration, what would we see?

All the leaves the same on my family tree.

That is why I am so happy for diversity,

Because of Immigration—I am me!

WHY I'M GLAD AMERICA IS A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

(By Shayna Walton, Tucson, AZ, finalist)

Hooray Hooray for the U.S.A.

Life is good the American Way.

Immigrants come from far and near

To have a much better life right here.

They come in hopes of a freer life.

Sometimes they come to leave their strife.