Medicaid, they lose the health care they get for their children under Medicaid, and they can't afford the health care bills. These parents have to refuse pay increases and advancement to remain below the income levels for Medicaid coverage. Of course, this not only does an enormous disservice to that individual but also to the other members of the family.

Many of these children with severe disabilities have brothers and sisters, yet the parent still has to work at a wage below the Medicaid level in order to qualify for health coverage of their children. It makes no sense. It is wrong. We have legislation that will address it, and we hope that will be considered.

We say once again that the proposal our Republican friends are putting forth is a nonstarter, because we know what they are trying to do; that is, to give a great bundle of cash—so to speak a blank check—to the HMOs that have been resisting our ability to take actions to protect American patients. It makes no sense. It is unfair, and it is fundamentally wrong.

We are going to do everything we can to try to fashion a proposal that is balanced, fair, and that really meets the health care needs of our people.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on Tuesday night the American people witnessed the third and final Presidential debate between Vice President AL GORE and Governor Bush.

We are now less than 3 weeks away from the election. As the debate demonstrated, the choices for the American people could not be clearer.

Are we going to continue the economic prosperity of the past 8 years? Or are we going to waste it on excessive tax breaks for the wealthiest one percent of Americans?

I remember in 1981 when the economic program of then President Reagan came to the Congress. It had the same kind of rhetoric around it. We are going to cut all of the taxes and increase defense spending and balance the budget, all at the same time. During that period of time, only a handful of us voted against it. It was so clear and obvious at that time that we were going to move into large deficits, which we eventually did—deficits in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

I am always amused to hear from others who say it really wasn't the establishment of economic policies; it was just the American energy. If it had been the American energy, why wasn't it the American energy when we were running up deficits? It is quite clear that you had two entirely different economic policies that were being followed. One was a disaster.

I am always interested in the fact that it was President Bush who called Ronald Reagan's proposal ''voodoo economics.''

Now we are coming right on back again to that similar kind of proposal of excessive tax breaks for wealthy individuals. That is the heart and soul of the Bush proposal, although it was difficult to quite understand what it was following the debate the other evening.

Are we going to continue to have balanced Federal budgets? Or are we going to return to the bad old days of trickle-down economics that created the biggest deficits in our history?

And perhaps most importantly—are we going to stand with working families to make the critical investments in education and health care that are needed to help children, help parents, help working men and women, and help senior citizens in their retirement years?

These issues are critical not only for the Presidential race but in Congress as well.

Governor Bush and the Republicans like to talk education and health care. But look what has happened in this Congress. For the first time in 35 years, they have not reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. They are 3 weeks late in providing the needed funds for the Nation's public schools.

The time has expired. The new fiscal year is here. Yet we haven't done our business. We always leave the appropriations bill which funds the schools in this country for last.

It is always interesting to me to hear and watch these promises that are made by the Republican leadership on education.

On January 6, 1999, Senator LOTT said:

> Education is going to be the central issue this year. . . . For starters, we must reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

On January 29, 1999, he said:

> But education is going to have a lot of attention, and it's not going to just be words.

On June 22, 1999 the Majority Leader stated:

> Education is Number one on the agenda for Republicans in the Congress.

On February 1, 2000 he said:

> We're going to work very hard on education. I have emphasized that every year I've been majority leader. . . . And Republicans are committed to doing that.

On February 3, 2000:

> We must reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. . . . Education will be a high priority in this Congress.

On May 1,2000:

> This is very important legislation. I hope we can debate it seriously and have amendments in the education area. Let's talk education.

Why don't you bring up the appropriations to fund education? Why is it 3 weeks late? Why is it the last appropriations bill? Why is it that we didn't reauthorize it? Don't come and tell American families that education is number one in your priorities when for the first time in 35 years we don't have a reauthorization.

What is the Republican leadership going to do? They are calling the bankruptcy bill back up—the bankruptcy bill. We had 14 days and 55 amendments on that bill. But that isn't enough. They are going to call that up later on for a vote this afternoon. They are going to try to jam that bill, which benefits a small group of credit card companies, rather than deal with the education of American families. That is their priority. Any American family can understand that.

We are here. We are prepared to deal with the education program. Oh, no. We can't do that. We are going to go back to bankruptcy which is so important. Important for whom? Important for the credit card companies. Just as in their patients' bill of rights, they have not been able to quote a single health organization in the country that supports them because it is fraudulent. Every health group in the country supports the proposal that was passed by a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives, and that was supported by the Democrats and a few Republicans in the Senate. Every health organization—over 300 of them.

Now we have the industry itself saying no, no—the HMOs saying don't pass the good bill, because we don't want it. Now what happens? The credit card industry says they want this bill. And what happens? The Republican leadership is trying to jam that right down here. What has happened to education in between? Not only are we not reauthorizing it, but we are not funding it. It is 3 weeks late already.

What happened to children in this country? If they hand their homework in 3 weeks late, they would be in the principal's office. They would be getting some kind of discipline in any school in the country. But, nonetheless, we are 3 weeks late. We haven't reauthorized it, and the appropriations have not been finished.

I hope our friends on the other side are going to ease off when they talk about how committed their party is on education. I hope they are going to at least have the decency not to try to say: Oh, yes. We are really interested in education—we really do care about it.

I was here when one of the first things the Republican leadership did in 1995 was to rescind some $1.7 billion that had been appropriated—the greatest rescission on any single bill that I can remember in my service in 38 years. On what subject? Education. Who offered it? Republicans. How many supported it? Virtually the whole Republican Party.

I was here a few years later after we were able to dull some of those rescissions when they came back and tried to

abolish the Department of Education. Who offered it? Republicans. Who supported it? The Republican Party. Who opposed it? We did. Not just because it is an agency, but because many of us believe that any President ought to have in the Cabinet office someone talking about education every time that Cabinet meets.

That is why we need a Department of Education. We have a department for housing. We have a department for the interior lands of this country. Many believe we ought to have a department for education. Not the Republicans. No, they wanted to abolish it.

We have the rescinding of education funding. We have proposals to abolish the Department of Education. We have the refusal to authorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and we have the denying of funding of the existing law—3 weeks late. That happens to be the record.

Now, we watched the other night the Republican candidate for office talking about how concerned they were. I wish he had called up our majority leader and said: Look, I am interested in education; why don't you take that up?

Let's take up our proposals. We know what they are. We are prepared to vote on them. We are prepared to take those to the American people. Why isn't the other side prepared to do it? What are they so frightened of? What are they so scared of?

All we have is silence. We have this empty Chamber where all of these other deals are going on—All these other deals that are not on education. They are on how we can try and get bankruptcy that will basically undermine families who in many instances are hard pressed, mothers who have not been able to get their alimony or child support and are going into bankruptcy. Half the bankruptcies are a result of health care costs for older workers. We cannot wait in order to draw out the last few dollars from those individuals for the credit card companies and shuffle aside education. That is what is happening. The American people ought to begin to understand it.

The Republican leadership keeps on saying how important education is. On July 10, 2000 the majority leader said:

> I, too, would very much like to see us complete the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. . . . I feel strongly about getting it done. . . . We can work day and night for the next 3 weeks.

On July 25, 2000 he said:

> We will keep trying to find a way to go back to this legislation this year and get it completed.

Mr. President, SAT scores are the highest in 30 years. They have not moved up greatly, but they are going in the right direction for males and females. Of course, it isn't going in the right direction in the State of Texas. Texas falls below the national average on SAT scores between 1997–2000. The national scores are going up a little bit in the right direction. Texas is going along in the wrong direction for SAT scores.

We have heard a great deal about what happened to the children in the State of Texas, being 48th of 50 for the number of children that are covered by health insurance. The other night, Governor Bush was talking about what a high priority they put on education and what they have done on education.

This tells the story. These are the SAT scores, standard scores. This reflects the national average moving up over the last 3 years, while Texas has been moving down the last 3 years. We don't have any explanation. I know the Vice President didn't want to appear negative, but the fact is, I don't think drawing out what the records are should be considered negative. These are the facts. The American people ought to be able to understand them. The national average has gone up; in Texas the scores have gone down.

I was here 30 years before we ever had a vote on education. We had Democratic chairs and Republican chairs. We had Senator Stafford, the education chairman of our committee; Senator Pell was the chairman. During that period of time, education was never a partisan issue. The American people don't want it to be partisan. But it is now. It is when you refuse to let us debate it and abide by the outcome. That is wrong. We ought to fund the education for the children in this country. The Republican leadership has not done it. We ought to be dealing with the education reauthorization prior to bankruptcy and other priorities, and the Republican leadership refuses to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

EDUCATION

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I listened with interest to my colleague from Massachusetts. I am always interested as he holds forth on these issues about which he feels passionately, and I congratulate him on his passion.

I have a similar commitment to education but a rather different view of things. Let me review again, as I have in this Chamber before, my own experience with respect to education that causes me to come to a different opinion and a different position than that of the senior Senator from Massachusetts.

As I have related to the Senate before, I was happy in a business career when I received a phone call that asked me to serve as chairman of the Strategic Planning Commission of the Utah State Board of Education. That got me into educational issues and actually started me down the road out of corporate life and into public life, ultimately leading me here to the Senate.

Apropos of the things that the Senator from Massachusetts has said, I share an experience I had that resonated with the comment that Governor Bush made the other night. The Senator from Massachusetts has already referred to the debate between the two Presidential candidates, so I think it is appropriate I should go there, as well.

We started, in my education about what happens in education by talking about the money. That is always a good place to start. Start with the numbers, start with the dollars. The dollars pretty much drive everything else.

I looked at the various things that were being done in the State of Utah, some of which struck me, as a businessman, as being maybe a lesser priority than some other areas. I asked the question: Who sets the priorities? Who determines that we spend more money on topic A than topic C? I was told, that is the Federal Government. The Federal Government puts up matching funds and requires that the States come up with their match, and the Federal Government determines that topic A will be topic A, topic B will be topic B, and so on.

I looked at some of the programs. I said, we would be better off in Utah if we spent that money on something else. Our needs in Utah are different than the needs in other States. Maybe it is nice to have the Federal dollars, but why don't we tell the Feds, sorry, we won't take your dollars for topic A, because for us topic C or topic D should be topic A, so we will forego the Federal dollars, and we will take the money that we have been forced to put up as matching dollars and spend it on our priorities.

The fellow who was briefing me on this kind of smiled at how naive I was, how foolish a notion that was. He said:

> You can't do that. The Federal Government will sue you and will win. They have already sued States that tried to do that and won.

So if the Federal Government says this is what you have to spend your money on, then you have no choice but to do that, even if it is not in the best interests of the schoolchildren in your State.

That was a disappointing thing for me to realize, but I thought: OK, we are dealing with 50-cent dollars here, at least. We are putting up matching funds. So the Feds put up 50 cents and we put up 50 cents, so it is not hurting us quite as badly to be spending 50-cent dollars on a project we would not have chosen.

Once again, smiles of indulgence on the part of the fellow who was briefing me. He said:

> No, no, you don't understand, BOB. The State doesn't put up 50 cents. The State puts up 80 cents, the State puts up 90 cents. When we say matching dollars, we don't mean matching dollar for dollar; we mean the Feds