

**SENATE—Tuesday, February 29, 2000**

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

**PRAYER**

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Loving Father, we ask for humility to accept leadership from You and from those called to be leaders in this Senate. We realize what a difficult task it is to work through conflicts, to work out compromises, and to work for consensus. Endow our leaders, TRENT LOTT and TOM DASCHLE, DON NICKLES and HARRY REID, with a special measure of wisdom as they seek to foster oneness in the Senate. Help all of the Senators to delight in the diversity that sheds varied shades of light on the truth and in the debate that exposes maximum solutions.

Dear Father, may the Senators never forget that they are brothers and sisters in Your eternal family. May this Senate be distinguished for its civility, courtesy, and compassion. Your spirit flourishes where men and women pray for each other, speak truth as they see it without rancor, and listen attentively to each other. Our prayer is that the bond of mutual love for You and for our beloved Nation will keep us one in the spirit of mutual trust and uncompromised trustworthiness. God, bless America and begin in the Senate. You are our Lord and Savior. Amen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Honorable PAUL COVERDELL, a Senator from the State of Georgia, led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Georgia is recognized.

**SCHEDULE**

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, today the Senate will immediately resume consideration of the education savings accounts legislation. The pending amendment is the Collins amendment regarding tax deductibility of teacher development supplies. It is expected that the Collins amendment will be laid aside so that other amendments may be offered and debated. Therefore, Senators may anticipate

votes throughout today's session of the Senate. As previously mentioned, Senators who have amendments should work with the bill managers on a time to offer those amendments. As a reminder, the Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. so that the weekly party conferences may meet.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

**ORDER FOR RECESS**

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess from 11 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. today to accommodate the bipartisan Governors' meeting and the weekly party conference meetings.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COVERDELL. I yield the floor.

**AFFORDABLE EDUCATION ACT OF 1999—Resumed**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1134) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Collins amendment No. 2854, to eliminate the 2-percent floor on miscellaneous itemized deductions for qualified professional development expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers and to allow a credit against income tax to elementary and secondary school teachers who provide classroom materials.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

**AMENDMENT NO. 2857**

(Purpose: To increase funding for part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk for Senator DODD, who is in transit, cosponsored by Senator REID of Nevada and Senator DORGAN.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Mr. DODD, for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. DORGAN,

Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. REED, proposes an amendment numbered 2857:

Strike section 101 and insert the following:  
**SEC. 101. IDEA.**

There are appropriated to carry out part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \$1,200,000,000, which amount is equal to the projected revenue increase resulting from striking the amendments made to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 by section 101 of this Act as reported by the Committee on Finance of the Senate.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senator DODD has worked on this issue for many years. He will be here shortly.

I am very happy we are finally getting the opportunity to have a serious debate about some of the educational problems we face in America today. It doesn't matter which of the 50 States you go to, there are problems dealing with education. I would be very happy if, rather than debating alternatives to public education, we started debating how to improve public education. More than 90 percent of the children in America go to public schools. We should be focused on how best to educate that 90-plus percent of children in America today.

The Federal Government provides 6 percent of the total education spending—roughly \$38 billion. That \$38 billion, by the way, is just 2 percent of the total Federal Government's budget. So we spend in America, the greatest nation in the world, the only superpower, 2 percent of our budget to educate our kids. Most Americans do not realize how little the Federal Government contributes to education.

I repeat that figure. The Federal Government spends about 2 percent of its budget on education. Within these tight budget constraints, we must focus on what works. I hope we will start talking about what works and about some of the things that maybe don't work as well and some new things we need to do in the area of education. I hope we can spend some time talking about and providing money for recruiting and training high-quality teachers, principals, and administrators. I hope we can spend some time talking about creating smaller classes and smaller learning communities in large schools. We have had experiences around the country from which we know that smaller schools work better than larger schools.

Deborah Meyer is an expert in this field. She was a school administrator in New York—a large school that is not doing well. She decided, because they were doing so poorly in all areas, that they had to do something radically different. She spoke to her superiors. They agreed to break the school up