

thoughtful gift for the education of our nation's children that was announced today by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Although relatively young, the Foundation already has a track record of making significant contributions for the sharing of new technologies and improving the educational opportunities of all our children. For example, in 1999, Bill and Melinda Gates provided \$1 billion to establish the Gates Millennium Scholars program, which will provide scholarships for academically talented minority students who would otherwise not have the financial resources to attend college.

Today, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will announce a new gift of approximately \$350 million, and more than \$200 million of this gift will be directed to Washington state schools and districts. This gift is comprised of a series of grants that are designed to raise academic standards and help all students meet those standards.

The grants are broken into two elements. The first is a series of grants for the development state, district, school and classroom leadership. Our educators are doing an outstanding job teaching our children. This funding, however, will give our teachers even more support and enhance their education which will in turn improve the education of our students. This series of grants consists of \$100 million for state challenge grants for Leadership Development, \$45 million for the Teacher Leadership Project, and \$25 million for national teacher training and teacher quality initiatives.

The second series of grants will encourage the development of model schools and districts. Throughout our state, educators and school administrators have hundreds of innovative and creative ideas to improve education. With this funding, educators can turn their ideas into reality and implement new solutions and ways to teach. This series of grants consist of the \$30 million Washington State School Grant Program which will serve approximately 140 schools, and the \$150 million School District Grant Program which includes \$50 million for 10-11 districts in Washington State.

Finally, the Foundation is providing the Seattle School District with a \$26 million grant that will assist the district in its use of technology to help students meet Washington state's challenging academic standards.

I'm sure my colleagues join me in thanking Bill and Melinda Gates for their significant and considerate contribution to education. I know that current and future generations of students will benefit greatly from this gift. The education of our children is the key to the success of our country and the Gateses have given all of our students an even greater chance of succeeding.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to share with my colleagues some great education news for schools in Washington state and around the country. Today, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced a nationwide commitment to provide \$350 million over three years to help students succeed in the classroom.

As a former educator in Washington state, I'm especially pleased that more than \$200 million dollars will go to Washington state classrooms. This generous contribution will put money where we know it will make a difference: helping all students achieve by developing strong leadership skills in our teachers and administrators.

As we work here in the Senate on our national education policy, today's announcement is a reminder that educating our children is a team effort—and there are important roles for federal, state, and local officials, as well as businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individuals.

For years, the people I represent have seen first-hand the generosity and sense of community that Bill and Melinda Gates possess. Their foundation has worked to vaccinate poor children against diseases, to bring computers to libraries across the country, and to provide scholarships to talented minority students. We in Washington state have known about it since the beginning, and I'm proud that today, the whole nation gets to see it—and benefit from it.

I couldn't be more proud of the Gates Foundation on this special occasion and can't wait to see the many ways this will improve education for millions of students.

As we begin our work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, I hope that this major announcement serves to remind us that local school districts—on their own—don't have all the resources they need. Individuals have a role to play as mentors, volunteers and coaches. Charitable foundations have a role to play, and the federal government also has a role to play.

I hope the Senate will follow the important and thoughtful example set by the Gates Foundation to do our best to give all students the resources and the tools they need to reach their potential.

RECOGNITION OF THE "FROM THE TOP" PROGRAM

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I would like to announce the winner of my 33rd Innovation in Education Award. This award goes to a national group sponsored by Boston Public Radio titled "From the Top." I learned about this program when I attended a "From the Top" performance in Spokane on January 29th. Two students from Washington state, Stephen Beus of Othello

and Justin Mackewich of Vancouver, participated in the concert and I was amazed by their technique and their immense talent. I was delighted to see such outstanding students excelling in the arts and am pleased to award Stephen and Justin and recognize this exceptional program.

Both Stephen and Justin are very gifted musicians. I was amazed by Stephen's skill at the piano and the Four Seasons Quartet that Justin played in was astounding. I hope to attend more of their concerts in the future.

"From the Top" consists of a series of public radio performances, taped in front of live audiences. These performances have been given across the country in places like Boston, New York City, Sarasota, Florida, and St. Paul, Minnesota. The concept for "From the Top" is to highlight the performances of exceptional, pre-college age, classical musicians. Indeed, their performances make a "From the Top" concert a remarkable experience.

An additional positive impact of "From the Top" is that it provides an arena for people of all ages to enjoy classical music. In today's modern world, we must take the time to enjoy the classics and encourage our youth to value the great symphonies and music from the past. "From the Top" is an excellent source for all ages and walks of life to learn more about classical music.

Each week, I give an "Innovation in Education" Award to individuals or groups within the education system who make outstanding contributions to the education of our children. I believe that "From the Top" gives our students exposure to the arts that provides an invaluable enrichment to any child's upbringing. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the great contributions of "From the Top".

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, in honor of Leap Day, which was yesterday, I am going to vary my regular format.

It is estimated that 200,000 people in the United States were born on February 29th. While these individuals may not share their birthdays with their families and loved ones every year, they do share—every year—in the less than desirable Federal debt like the rest of us.

Since 1970, the Federal debt has leapt remarkably—reaching \$5,735,333,348,132.58 (Five trillion, seven hundred thirty-five billion, three hundred thirty-three million, three hundred forty-eight thousand, one hundred thirty-two dollars and fifty-eight cents) at the close of business yesterday, February 29, 2000.

The previous Leap Day, February 29, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,016,041,000,000 (Five trillion, sixteen billion, forty-one million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$700

billion—\$719,292,348,132.58 (Seven hundred nineteen billion, two hundred ninety-two million, three hundred forty-eight thousand, one hundred thirty-two dollars and fifty-eight cents) during the past four years.

Today, Mr. President, each citizen's share of the Federal debt is \$20,727.13. Translating this figure into the amount that Leap Day citizens owe, the figure becomes \$4,145,426,000.00 (Four billion, one hundred forty-five million, four hundred twenty-six thousand). This amount may not seem like a lot, but it is when you consider it is only enough to pay down four days worth of the interest on the Federal debt.

Mr. President, I wish my Senate colleagues to note how tragic it is that our country's debt leaps with more frequency than the years do.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO VETERANS OF THE U.S. NAVY ASIATIC FLEET

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the heroism and sacrifices of the sailors and marines who served in the U.S. Navy's Asiatic Fleet.

The Asiatic Fleet established itself as one of the premier assets of the United States Navy during its years of operation. Officially commissioned by the Navy in 1910, The Asiatic Fleet's origins can be traced back to 1845, when the United States first established a naval presence in the Far East. The United States established the Asiatic Fleet to protect American interests in the western Pacific. The sailors and marines of the Asiatic Fleet ensured the safety of United States citizens and foreign nationals and provided humanitarian assistance in that region during the Chinese civil war, the Yangtze Flood of 1931, and the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities. The increasing risks faced by U.S. military personnel serving in this region were highlighted by the accidental bombings and sinking of a U.S. Navy gunboat belonging to the Asiatic Fleet, the U.S.S. *Panay*, in international waters by Japanese aircraft in 1937—four years before the U.S. entered World War II.

Following the declaration of war against Japan, the warships, submarines, and aircraft of the Asiatic Fleet singly or in task forces courageously fought many naval battles against a superior Japanese armada. General Douglas MacArthur evacuated most U.S. military personnel and equipment from the region to prevent them from being destroyed by Japan's military forces, leaving the Asiatic Fleet alone, without reinforcement, to do what it could to obstruct the Japanese advance. During these battles, the men of the Fleet discovered that much

of their equipment was defective. It has been estimated that one in three of the Asiatic Fleet's torpedoes, and one fifth of its anti-aircraft ammunition, were duds. Forced to rely on World War I-era equipment, the Asiatic Fleet directly suffered the loss of 22 ships, 1,826 men killed or missing in action, and 518 men captured and imprisoned under the worst of conditions. Many of those who survived later died while being held as prisoners of war. The Asiatic Fleet ceased to exist as a cohesive fighting force on March 1, 1942, when its flagship, the U.S.S. *Houston*, was sunk by the Japanese near Indonesia.

Unfortunately, the heroism of the sailors and marines of the Asiatic Fleet are largely unknown to the American public. Today, March 1, 2000, the 58th anniversary of the *Houston's* sinking, I want to commend the bravery, resourcefulness and sacrifices of all who served in the United States Navy Asiatic Fleet from 1910 to 1942, especially those sailors and marines who put their lives in harm's way during the first few months of America's participation in World War II. No words can adequately express our nation's debt to its veterans, and it is essential that we provide them with the thanks and recognition they have earned. The American people should always remember the courage and determination displayed by the personnel of the Asiatic Fleet, honoring the sacrifices they made in defense of the United States.●

HONORING THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF GREAT LAKES SHIPPING

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the men and women of our U.S. Coast Guard. In particular, I salute the crew of the USCGC *Mackinaw* for their work, which ensures the full utilization of the navigation season in my state, and the Great Lakes region as a whole.

Mr. President, the ice that forms on the Great Lakes rivals that found anywhere in the continental United States. Even in a normal winter, ice six to eight feet thick will develop in the connecting channels. Windrows, chunks of ice piled atop one another by the wind, easily can reach 15 feet in height. Navigation under such conditions has been possible only because the Coast Guard's icebreaking forces are led by the *Mackinaw*. The icebreaker is capable of generating 10,000 shaft horsepower, and is wide enough—75 feet—to clear a track for Great Lakes vessels. Furthermore, the *Mackinaw* is crewed sufficiently to stay on station for days on end.

Annually, more than 10 million tons of iron ore, 4 million tons of coal, 1.5 million tons of stone, and 500,000 tons of cement are shipped across the Great Lakes. The iron ore, coal, stone, and Seaway trades generated nearly 14 bil-

lion tons of cargo during the 20th century. That commerce could not have been accomplished as safely and efficiently as it was without the assistance of the U.S. Coast Guard, and especially, the *Mackinaw*.●

INTERNATIONAL ABOLITION DAY

• Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I rise to mark International Abolition Day. This day marks the occasion in 1847 when the state of Michigan became the first English-speaking territory in the world to abolish capital punishment. As one of the first acts following conferral of statehood on Michigan, the Michigan legislature abolished the death penalty for all crimes except treason. I note, with tongue and cheek and with all due respect to my distinguished colleagues from Michigan, that the date marking International Abolition Day probably should be 1853, when my great state, the state of Wisconsin, became the first state to abolish the death penalty for all crimes. Wisconsin has been death penalty-free for nearly 150 years. It is clear that the people of the Midwestern states have shown great courage and leadership on this issue since almost the birth of our great Nation.

Mr. President, International Abolition Day is a day to remember the victims and survivors of violent crimes perpetrated by individual criminals. But it is also a day to remember those killed by state-sponsored executions. And it is a day for education and discussion of alternatives to the death penalty.

Just as the people of Michigan over 150 years ago learned the painful reality of the fallibility of our criminal justice system and confronted the death penalty's main use, as a tool of vengeance, people throughout the United States today are beginning to question their longstanding support for the death penalty. On January 31, Governor Ryan effectively imposed a moratorium on executions in Illinois until a state panel can examine the administration of the death penalty and why so many innocents have sat on Illinois' death row. In a recent Gallup poll, even though a majority of Americans still support the death penalty, support for the death penalty is at a 19-year low. And when asked whether Americans prefer the death penalty or life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, support for the death penalty drops even further.

These are just some of the many positive developments that have nurtured the reawakening of the American conscience to the great responsibility and stain that state-sponsored executions place on our society. I look forward to the day when our federal government and the 38 states with the death penalty will recognize the adequacy of sentencing alternatives and