CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE  
April 13, 2000


ELIAN Gonzalez

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to take this occasion to say something about the Elian Gonzalez case. I have not spoken formerly in the Senate about it, but it has been addressed by several of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. For me, it is simple because it is not about politics; it is about the heart; it is about family.

Some may call me old fashioned. I think kids belong with their parents, and sometimes--unless there is some reason a child should not be with the parent, if the child has a bad parent. There is no proof of that in any way, or suggestion of that, except at the last minute the relatives who are caring for Elian, now, have made these charges.

It seems as if every time the father comes closer, he becomes a worse person. First, he was wonderful. They said, he is wonderful but he doesn't care about his son; he is not here. Now he is here, and they still will not turn the child over.

I have a little grandson. He is about a year younger than Elian, so I am pretty familiar with kids that age because I have watched him so closely. They are babies; they really are. They are little children. They are babies. They are impressionable. That is why it is so important to treat them well and to not use them for any purpose--let them be children.

I have to say unequivocally as a grandmother, not as a Senator, I believe it is very harmful for a child to be exposed to screaming adults outside of his home, day in and day out, shouting that he belongs with his living parent. I just would like to make a plea to those who do not want to do that and who have said that to get Elian with his father is going to take people coming to the door, that they will not do this. If there is force used, that is not the way we do things in this country.

This is a country of peaceful laws. That is why we have courts. That is why people have to obey court orders. We have laws. When we disagree with them--God knows, every one of us disagree with jury verdicts; we disagree with laws; we disagree with decisions. The beauty of our Nation is that we are a country of laws. We must make it clear those laws should be obeyed. We ought to do it in the best interests of this child, which means gently and peacefully.
series of mounds in a wooded area about 10 miles west of Smolensk. On April 13, 1943, German officials made a gruesome discovery: 4,500 corpses. Unable to continue to dig through Katyn Forest, German requested the assistance of the International Red Cross and representatives of neutral countries to determine the circumstances surrounding the execution and burial of these 4,500 Polish officers.

After examining the bodies, these representatives reported to the appropriate authorities their conclusion that the men buried in Katyn Forest were those of Polish military officers, along with a number of civilian cultural leaders, business leaders, and intellectuals—scientists, writers, and poets—who had been in the portion of Poland occupied by the Soviet Union in September 1939. The Soviet Union vehemently denied the allegations of responsibility. Once the Soviet Union had recalled Katyn Forest, a pro-Soviet investigation of the Katyn Forest Massacre determined that the Polish officers and leaders had been massacred by the German army. It would take another 45 years before the truth of the massacre would finally be acknowledged by the leaders of the Soviet Union.

Aside from United States congressional hearings held in Britain, Italy, Germany and the United States in the early 1950s, the Katyn Forest Massacre was largely forgotten by the international community. But the truth of Katyn Forest remained vivid for the Polish nation. It was determined to discover the truth. These individuals wanted justice for the fallen comrades.

After the publication of an account of the Massacre by a Soviet historian in 1990, Polish President Wojciech Jaruzelski quickly arranged a series of meetings with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and other Soviet officials in an attempt to finally bring a conclusion to the Katyn conspiracy. On April 13, 1990, the day after President Jaruzelski’s final meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet news agency published a statement of acknowledgment on behalf of the Soviet government for summary execution of 15,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest during late April and early May of 1940. The statement claimed that the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, followed the orders of their chief, Lavrenti P. Beria, and massacred these 15,000 Polish captives.

We cannot forget the crime against humanity which was carried out in this rural section of Poland. As our nation looks towards the 21st Century and the promising future, we must always remember the sacrifices of brave and gallant men in the defense of their nation and their heritage which have helping the world achieve greater freedom and democracy. April 13 should always be remembered not as a day in which hope briefly dimmed when they were ACCR, but as a day in which freedom triumphed and shown brightly after decades of silence.

FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last week the Senate passed the FY 2001 Budget Resolution. I would be remiss if, upon reflection, I did not take this opportunity to talk about the federal commitment to education in my state of Utah.

In my state of Utah, education consistently ranks as one of the highest priorities for Utahns. During this year’s legislative session, Utah reaffirmed its commitment to improving education, reducing class size and paying dedicated teachers a salary commensurate with their efforts and qualifications. Utah takes its commitment to education funding very seriously. During the 1995–96 school year, education expenditures in Utah amounted to $92 per $1000 of personal income. The national average was $98 per $1000. In other words, Mr. President, Utah’s education expenditure relative to total personal income is nearly 50 percent more than the national average. It is the third highest in the nation.

In education expenditures as a percent of total direct state and local government expenditures, Utah ranks 2nd in the nation. Utah’s expenditure for education was 41.5 percent of the total amount spent for government. The national average is 35.5 percent.

Mr. President, no one can tell me that Utahans are not serious about funding education. And these efforts have garnered results. Utah’s scores on ACT tests are equal to or better than the national average in English, math, reading and science. Utah ranks 1st in the nation in Advanced Placement tests taken and passed.

Still, even with these efforts, Utah remains at the nation in terms of class size and last in per-pupil expenditure. This is due to Utah’s unique demographic. Utah families are, on average, larger than any other state. Utah has the highest birth rate in the nation.

While it is important that these factors contribute to the allocation of federal education funds, most notably the Title I funds, the Clinton administration has done very little to help Utah. Indeed, many of the proposals in the administration budget would be detrimental to education efforts underway in Utah.

Among other things, this administration has consistently cut funding for Impact Aid. Impact Aid is a vital program for Utah because it helps make up the lost property tax revenue in school districts where there is a significant federal presence. Since half of our state is federally owned or controlled, that means our schools would suffer even greater financial difficulties without impact aid. I applaud this Budget Resolution rejects the 15 percent cut requested by the Clinton administration.

Indeed, in addition to support for Impact Aid, there is much to applaud in this Budget Resolution relative to education. It assumes an increase of more than $600 million over the administration’s request. Over $11 billion will be dedicated to funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This will greatly assist Utah fund the education of students with special needs.

Moreover, because the federal government will be contributing more toward the costs of special education, fulfilling more of its promises, Utah can use the 25 percent of the cost for educating students with disabilities, the state will be able to use its own resources to address state and local priorities such as lowering class size, improve facilities, increasing teachers’ pay, upgrading instructional equipment and textbooks, or offering enrichment programs.

Finally, this administration has never recommended funding for the Education Finance Incentive Grant program which, instead of a per-pupil expenditure as a proxy for a state’s commitment to education, uses a combination of a state’s effort to fund education and a state’s willingness to more equitably distribute resources among a state’s economically diverse school districts. As I have noted, Utah allocates a significant amount of state revenue to education, demonstrating our state’s effort. Utah also has in place a “fair share” program for assisting schools with smaller tax bases. Nationally, we ought to be encouraging states to make such effort, and we ought to be rewarding states that do. This is an important program that deserves a consistent funding stream, and I will be addressing this issue in the context of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

In the area of higher education, this Budget Resolution rejects the administration’s proposal to require guaranty agencies, which finance guaranteed student loans (GSLs), to pay accelerated and increased funds from their federal reserves. This would be expensive and devastating for Utah’s Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA). Utah has one of the lowest average incomes in the nation; and, therefore, Utah students who are not reliant on their parents for financial assistance will rely instead on assistance from UHEAA.

During past assessments, because UHEAA had maintained one of highest