

SENATE—Tuesday, May 9, 2000

The Senate met at 10 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:

O God of love, give us a fresh experience of Your love today. Help us to think about how much You love each of us with unqualified acceptance and forgiveness. May the tone and tenor of our words to the people in our lives be an expression of Your love. You have called us to love as You have loved us. May we know when to express not only tough love but also when to be tender in withholding judgment or condemnation. Help us to love those we find it difficult to bear and those who find it a challenge to bear with us. All around us are people with highly polished exteriors that hide their real need for esteem, affirmation, and encouragement from us. Show us practical ways to express love in creative ways. May we lift burdens rather than become one; may we add to people's strength rather than becoming a source of stress. Place on our agendas the particular people to whom You have called us to communicate Your love. And give us that resolve of which great days are made: If no one else does, Lord, I will! Place in our minds loving thoughts and feelings for the people in our lives. Show us caring things we can do to enact what's in our hearts. Direct specific acts of caring You have motivated in our hearts. Don't let us forget, Lord. Give us the will to act, to say what we feel. Through Him who is Your amazing Grace. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MIKE ENZI, a Senator from the State of Wyoming, 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Chair recognizes the Senator from New Hampshire.

SCHEDULE

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, this morning Senator LIEBERMAN will be recognized to offer his alternative to S. 2, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Debate

on this amendment is expected to consume the morning session.

At 12:30 p.m., the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to accommodate the weekly party conference luncheons. When the Senate reconvenes, it will proceed to a vote on the Gregg amendment regarding teacher quality. It is hoped that an agreement regarding the Lieberman amendment can be reached so that votes can be stacked to occur at 2:15 p.m.

Following the disposition of the Lieberman amendment, the next two amendments in order are the Kennedy teacher quality amendment and the Jeffords-Stevens early childhood investment amendment.

Prior to today's adjournment, the Senate is expected to begin consideration of the African trade-CBI conference report.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 2, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2) to extend programs and activities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Pending:

Coverdell (for Lott/Gregg) amendment No. 3126, to improve certain provisions relating to teachers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Connecticut is recognized to offer an amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 3127

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask that amendment No. 3127, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to the bill, be called up at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. LIEBERMAN] for himself, Mr. BAYH, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. KOHL, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ROBB, Mr. BREAUX, and Mr. BRYAN, proposes an amendment numbered 3127.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the read-

ing of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. KENNEDY. Is it necessary to set aside the pending amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It was done under the previous order.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I am very proud to offer this amendment on behalf of the colleagues who have been mentioned, eight in number, and myself. We have worked for a very long time on the contents of this amendment. We have spent a lot of time in our home States and elsewhere observing what is happening in our public schools today, and this amendment is a response to what we have seen.

I would roughly categorize that in two ways, which I will describe in a little more detail.

The first is, there remains an unacceptable gap in achievement levels between children in America's public schools who are disadvantaged economically and those who are advantaged, and that is unfair and unacceptable.

Secondly, there is occurring, and has been occurring throughout our country over the last decade really, an extraordinary outburst of educational reform at the local level. Superior efforts are being made by teachers, by school administrators, by superintendents, by parents, by whole communities, to try to do everything possible to improve the status quo because when the status quo is not adequately educating our children, in this information age particularly, we are not achieving one of the great goals of our Government.

This proposal we make today is an attempt to respond to both of those observations and to use the 5-year reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as an opportunity to leverage Federal dollars, perhaps small in percentage in the overall cost of public education in our country but large in absolute terms, to do better at educating the poor and disadvantaged in our country and do much better at encouraging, facilitating, and financially supporting the extraordinary educational reform efforts going on around the country. I am pleased to say particularly in States such as my own State of Connecticut.

As we continue this debate on the ESEA, Congress itself is facing a major