

(A) INTERIM PLAN.—An interim plan for the achievement of the plan's objectives shall be submitted to Congress not later than September 30, 2000.

(B) FINAL PLAN.—The final plan for the achievement of the plan's objectives shall be submitted to Congress not later than May 1, 2001.

(C) REPORTS.—

(1) MONTHLY REPORTS.—Beginning 30 days after the date of enactment of this joint resolution, and every 30 days thereafter, the President shall submit a report to Congress on the total number of troops involved in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, the number of United States troops involved, and the percentage of the total troop burden that the United States is bearing.

(2) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—Beginning 3 months after the date of enactment of this joint resolution, and every 3 months thereafter, the President shall submit to Congress a report on—

(A) the total amount of funds that the United States has expended on peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, and the percentage of the total contributions by all countries to peacekeeping operations in Kosovo that the United States is bearing; and

(B) the progress that each other country participating in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo is making on meeting—

(i) its financial commitments with respect to Kosovo;

(ii) its manpower commitments to the international civilian police force in Kosovo; and

(iii) its troop commitments to peacekeeping operations in Kosovo.

(d) CERTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts appropriated by this Act for fiscal year 2000 for military operations in Kosovo, not more than 75 percent may be obligated until the President certifies in writing to Congress that the European Commission, the member nations of the European Union, and the European member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have, in the aggregate—

(A) obligated or contracted for at least 33 percent of the amount of the assistance that those organizations and nations committed to provide for 1999 and 2000 for reconstruction in Kosovo;

(B) obligated or contracted for at least 75 percent of the amount of the assistance that those organizations and nations committed for 1999 and 2000 for humanitarian assistance in Kosovo;

(C) provided at least 75 percent of the amount of the assistance that those organizations and nations committed for 1999 and 2000 for the Kosovo Consolidated Budget; and

(D) deployed at least 75 percent of the number of police, including special police, that those organizations and nations pledged for the United Nations international police force for Kosovo.

(2) REPORT.—The President shall submit to Congress, together with any certification submitted by the President under paragraph (1), a report containing detailed information on—

(A) the commitments and pledges made by each organization and nation referred to in paragraph (1) for reconstruction assistance in Kosovo, humanitarian assistance in Kosovo, the Kosovo Consolidated Budget, and police (including special police) for the United Nations international police force for Kosovo;

(B) the amount of assistance that has been provided in each category, and the number of

police that have been deployed to Kosovo, by each such organization or nation; and

(C) the full range of commitments and responsibilities that have been undertaken for Kosovo by the United Nations, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the progress made by those organizations in fulfilling those commitments and responsibilities, an assessment of the tasks that remain to be accomplished, and an anticipated schedule for completing those tasks.

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—If the President does not submit to Congress a certification and report under paragraphs (1) and (2) before July 15, 2000, then, beginning on July 15, 2000, the amount appropriated for military operations in Kosovo that remains unobligated under paragraph (1) shall be available only for the purpose of conducting a safe, orderly, and phased withdrawal of United States military personnel from Kosovo, unless Congress enacts a joint resolution allowing that amount to be used for other purposes. If Congress fails to enact such a joint resolution, no other amount appropriated for the Department of Defense in this Act or any other Act may be obligated to continue the deployment of United States military personnel in Kosovo. In that case, the President shall submit to Congress, not later than August 15, 2000, a report on the plan for the withdrawal of United States military personnel from Kosovo.

(e) CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITY PROCEDURES.—

(1) JOINT RESOLUTIONS DEFINED.—

(A) For purposes of subsection (a)(1)(B), the term "joint resolution" means only a joint resolution introduced not later than 10 days after the date on which the report of the President under subsection (a)(1)(A) is received by Congress, the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: "That Congress authorizes the continued deployment of United States ground combat troops in Kosovo."

(B) For purposes of subsection (d)(3), the term "joint resolution" means only a joint resolution introduced not later than July 20, 2000, the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: "That the availability of funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for military operations in Kosovo is not limited to the withdrawal of United States military personnel from Kosovo."

(2) PROCEDURES.—A joint resolution described in paragraph (1) (A) or (B) shall be considered in a House of Congress in accordance with the procedures applicable to joint resolutions under paragraphs (3) through (8) of section 8066(c) of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1985 (as contained in Public Law 98-473; 98 Stat. 1936).

Mr. WARNER. I thank my distinguished colleague for yielding the time. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT—Continued

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, this is an amendment that I have introduced with 27 cosponsors, and we invite other Members to join us. It is an amendment to deal with early learning opportunities of our children.

Research shows that children's brains are wired—literally wired—between the ages of birth and 6 years of age. The number of synapses that the

brain forms, that is, the connections in the brain, depends upon the level of brain stimulation. The capacity to learn and interact successfully in society is determined even before children begin school. Long-term studies looking at data over 30 years show that children who participate in early learning programs are less likely to require special education, less likely to suffer from mental illness and behavior disorders, less likely to become pregnant before they are married, more likely to graduate from high school and college, less likely to be arrested and incarcerated, have lower recidivism rates if they are incarcerated, less likely to be violent and engaged in child or spousal abuse, and they earn higher salaries when they become adults. Both the General Accounting Office and the Rand Corporation made studies which showed that for each dollar invested in early learning programs, taxpayers saved between \$4 and \$7 in later years.

This amendment provides for block grants to States. States will work with local governments, nonprofit corporations, and even faith-based institutions to determine what is needed most at their own local level. Local entities can use the funds to expand Even Start, the program for children from birth to 3 years of age; expand Head Start to more children, expand it to full day or year-round coverage; offer nursery and preschool programs; train parents and child care professionals in child development, and provide parent training and support programs for stay-at-home moms and dads.

The amendment provides set-asides for Indian tribes and Native groups and provides for a small State minimum of 0.4 percent. This amendment has been endorsed now by the Christian Schools International, by Parents United, United Way, some 1,400 local organizations, Fight Crime—Invest In Kids, 700 police chiefs, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Children's Defense Fund, Child Care Resource Center, National Black Child Development Institute, and the National Education Association.

As a father of six children, I come to this amendment late in my life. I only wish I had had the opportunity to have had this type of information available to me and my wife when we, as a very young, newly married couple, decided to have our family very quickly. We had five children in less than 5 years, and there is a lot we had to learn along the way.

This is a bill to try to make America think about what we want to be. We have invested heavily in science, and through the decade of the brain that was stimulated by our late departed friend, David Mahoney, and the group of scientists he put together with Dr. Jim Watson, who worked with him, we now know a lot more about the brain than we did a decade ago. Basically, we

learned of the fantastic capability of young people to absorb knowledge and to be stimulated to develop the abilities to absorb even more knowledge as they grow older. I think this is one of the most important things I have been involved in during my life.

I believe it is a time for change, a time for us to recognize that young children—little babies—can be stimulated in a way that will assure their capability will be improved to learn and to be good citizens and, in particular, to be able to lead the kind of lives their parents dreamed they would lead. I thank every Member who has cosponsored this amendment, and I hope for its early adoption.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all, I express my appreciation for the excellent statement that the Senator from Alaska has just given and thank him for his leadership on this issue. I also thank the chairman, Senator JEFFORDS, for his hard work on this issue as well. Both of them have helped us understand how parents and other caregivers can have a very positive impact on children and infants at very early ages. I thank colleagues on our side, including my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator JOHN KERRY, who has been particularly interested in this issue and has spent a great deal of time on it, and also the Senator from Connecticut, Senator CHRIS DODD, who has led our efforts on issues involving children for many, many years. Finally, I want to thank Stephanie Robinson of my staff, who is sitting here on my left, for her insight and diligence as we have worked through the details of this early learning proposal.

I think the Senator from Alaska has really outlined a compelling case for this issue. If we go back a little while and think of the first studies—the Perry Preschool Program, which Senator STEVENS mentioned—almost 30 years ago, where the results have been followed over a period of years and have documented how early interventions for children resulted in more positive academic and lifestyle outcomes for many children.

I think that the Perry Preschool study caught the attention of a lot of educators. Then we had the meeting in 1990 when the Governors were together—the Charlottesville meeting. Many of the issues we have been talking about these past few days recall the discussion surrounding early learning that the Governors initiated back in 1990. And there the Republican and Democratic Governors together announced that our first priority should be to have children ready to learn when they enter school. They understood what was happening in the States, and that early learning was a matter of enormous positive consequence for all

educational and social service efforts. Even before brain research provided a clear medical basis, Governors sensed that “the earlier the better” in terms of early interventions.

Then we had the studies done by the Carnegie Commission in 1993, which focused on impacts of these early interventions. Later, when we had the Year of the Brain in 1996, I believe, we found further information as described by the Senator from Alaska, about the importance of proper stimulation to the formation of brain synapses in young children. Important work continued throughout the 1990’s by Dr. Brazelton and Dr. Zigler, who are really the godparents of this concept of early intervention.

The bottom line is that quality early learning experiences help children develop self-confidence, curiosity, social skills, and motor skills. These are the building blocks that children use to expand their interest in learning when they get to school. They may also develop a sense of humor. They certainly learn consideration of others. These are basic benefits of early learning, and they last a lifetime. They are absolutely essential in terms of learning and academic achievement, but also essential in terms of interpersonal skills, their own personal happiness, and their own productivity and contributions as members of a society.

As we debate education policy, we must continue to find common ground that enables us to act effectively. One of the most important opportunities is in early learning. Last month’s Senate Budget Resolution included a bipartisan amendment that reserved \$8.5 billion to improve early learning services throughout the Nation. The Senate is clearly moving toward a commitment to ensure that each of the 23 million American children under age six is able to enter school ready to learn.

Senator STEVENS and I worked together to build a strong bipartisan coalition for this reserve fund in the Senate resolution, and now is the time to continue these efforts. As we consider the investments that are needed in education, we cannot ignore early childhood learning.

Education occurs over a continuum that begins at birth and extends throughout life. The need to do more to make greater educational opportunities available in a child’s very early years is clear. Study after study proves that positive learning experiences very early in life significantly enhance a child’s later ability to learn, to interact successfully with teachers and peers, and to master needed skills. It is long past time to put this research into practice.

Just last week Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a 700-member bipartisan coalition of police chiefs, sheriffs, and crime victims, released yet another convincing report. It finds that children who re-

ceive quality early learning are half as likely to commit crimes and be arrested later in life.

Early learning programs are good for children, good for parents and good for society as a whole. Unfortunately, far too many parents lack access to quality early learning activities for their children while they work. Although two thirds of mothers work outside the home, only 58% of 3- and 4-year-olds living above the poverty level, and 41% of those living below the poverty level, are enrolled in center-based early learning programs.

A dramatic recent survey found that more parents are satisfied with Head Start than any other federal program. But only two in five eligible children are enrolled in Head Start - and only one in 100 eligible infants and toddlers are enrolled in Early Head Start. As a result, literally millions of young children never have the chance to reach their full potential. What a waste! We must do better. We can do better.

The Committee for Economic Development reports that we can save over five dollars in the future for every dollar we invest in early learning today, the investment significantly reduces the number of families on welfare, the number of children in special education, and the number of children in our juvenile justice system. Investment in early learning is not only morally right - it is economically right.

We must steadily expand access to Head Start and Early Head Start. We must make parenting assistance available to all who want it. We must support model state efforts that have already proved successful, such as Community Partnerships for Children in Massachusetts and Smart Start in North Carolina, which rely on local councils to identify the early learning needs in each community and allocate new resources to meet them. We must give higher priority to early childhood literacy. In ways such as these, we must take bolder action to strengthen early learning opportunities in communities across the Nation.

The Rand Corporation reports: “After critically reviewing the literature and discounting claims that are not rigorously demonstrated, we conclude that these [early learning] programs can provide significant benefits.” Governors, state legislatures, local governments, and educators have all called for increased federal investments in early learning as the most effective way to promote healthy and constructive behavior by future adults. As we strengthen education policy, we cannot lose sight of the evidence that education begins at birth—and is not a process that occurs only in a school building during a school day.

We must examine children’s experience during the five or six years before they walk through their first schoolhouse door. Our goal is to enable all

children to enter school ready to learn, and maximize the impact of our investments in education.

It is especially important that low-income parents who accept the responsibility of work under welfare reform to have access to quality early learning opportunities for their children. The central idea of welfare reform is that families caught in a cycle of dependence can be shown that work pays. Today I am proud to stand with so many Senators who agree that children's development must not be sacrificed as we help families move from welfare to work.

A decade ago the Nation's Governors agreed that helping children enter school ready to learn should be America's number one priority. We have made some progress since then, but we are still falling far short of our goal.

In Massachusetts, the Community Partnerships for Children Program currently provides quality full-day early learning for 15,300 young children from low-income families. Yet today in Massachusetts over 14,000 additional eligible children are waiting for the early learning services they need—and some have been on the waiting list for 18 months. A 1999 report by the Congressional General Accounting Office on early learning services for low-income families was unequivocal—"infant toddler care [is] still difficult to obtain."

Even as the need to provide these opportunities increases, it is clear that many current facilities are unsafe. The average early learning provider is paid under seven dollars an hour—less than the average parking attendant or pet sitter. These low wages result in high turnover, poorer quality of care, and little trust and bonding with the children.

Here in the Senate, we have worked together for several months on a proposal to enable local communities to fill the gaps that impair current early learning efforts. Our amendment provides \$3.25 billion for early learning programs over the next three years. Local councils will direct the funds to the most urgent needs in each community. The needs may include parenting support and education—improving quality through professional development and retention initiatives—expanding the times and the days children can obtain these services—enhancing childhood literacy—and greater early learning opportunities for children with special needs. These funding priorities are well-designed to strengthen early learning programs in all communities across the country, and give each community the opportunity to invest the funds in ways that will best address its most urgent needs.

I urge the Senate to approve it as a long overdue recognition of this important aspect of education reform.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that several letters of support for

this amendment be printed in the RECORD immediately after my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered. (See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, when the Senator brings this to the attention of the Senate, it is a matter of enormous importance and significance. I pay tribute to him and to our chairman, Senator JEFFORDS, who has been a strong supporter. I know there are others on that side, but they have been real giants in this area of concern and have been enormously constructive and helpful in moving us towards a legislative initiative in this area.

I am very grateful to my colleagues, Senator KERRY and Senator DODD, for the extraordinary work they have done.

I am very hopeful that at an early time we can have favorable consideration.

EXHIBIT 1

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
Malden, MA, May 5, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Russell Senate Building, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I want to express my strong support for the Early Learning Opportunities Act as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. High quality early care and education programs are vital to children's development as well as to the national goal for all children to enter school ready to learn. It is also essential that the methods used to increase support for families and young children be flexible and responsive to the diverse needs and resources of communities and families across the country.

The program outlined in this proposal is quite consistent with our state preschool program, Community Partnerships for Children. For example, Massachusetts has many local councils working collaboratively to design comprehensive early care and education programs that ensure that funds are used in ways that are consistent with local needs. Our programs also conduct many family support and family literacy activities such as those described in your plan. Through our experience with Community Partnerships, we know that these elements as well as transportation and professional development are essential to helping early childhood programs achieve their potential to support young children and families.

With the in mind, I would like to express one concern. As is, the program is created within Health and Human Services and is "entirely independent of ESEA." Historically, child care has been administered through human services agencies and it is likely that the program would be passed on through the states' social services infrastructure. At the same time, many of the program's purposes are based on the potential of early childhood programs as educational for children and parents. Based on many years of watching how our local collaborations evolve, it is clear that state and local linkages among Head Start, private child care and public preschools and elementary schools are becoming increasingly important, but are not easy. I believe the separation from ESEA at the national and state levels would not encourage these linkages.

Although the program should support the growth and improvement of private child care and Head Start programs, a close connection with ESEA at the national and state levels would model the educational intention of the program and would build on existing Title I preschool programs at the local level.

To reiterate—the plan that has been proposed is very promising and I strongly support this amendment.

Sincerely,

DAVID H. DRISCOLL,
Commissioner of Education.

MAY 4, 2000.

DEAR SENATOR: I am writing to urge you to support the Early Learning Opportunities Act, sponsored by Senators Kennedy, Stevens, Jeffords and Dodd, as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This Early Learning Amendment would help states to create and enhance the programs and services that infants and toddlers, and their parents, urgently need to ensure that young children will enter school ready to learn.

As you know, research clearly shows that the first few years of a child's life set the stage for a lifetime of learning. Time and again we see that healthy children who have formed secured and loving attachments to adults grow up to be hard working, productive members of society. But children cannot develop in a healthy manner without access to early learning programs, quality child care and health care, and special services for children and families at risk. Furthermore, a recent report issued by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids concludes that federal, state, and local governments could greatly reduce crime and violence by assuring families access to quality, educational child care program.

Equally important is parent education. All parents, but especially those in at-risk populations, need to know not only how to effectively bond with their young children, but how to access programs and services that help them to raise a healthy child.

The Early Learning Amendment is an important step toward improving the lives of America's youngest citizens. Not only does it provide and vital funding for early childhood programs and services, it gives states and localities the flexibility to creatively meet the needs of their populations.

Again, I urge you to support America's youngest children and their families by voting for the Early Learning Amendment.

Sincerely,

ROB REINER.

PARENTS UNITED FOR CHILD CARE,
Boston, MA, May 8, 2000.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the membership of Parents United for Child Care (PUCC), I am writing to urge you to support the Early Learning Opportunities Act sponsored by Senators STEVENS, KENNEDY, JEFFORDS and DODD. This amendment would take important steps to ensuring the availability of high quality early care and education experiences for millions of American families.

PUCC is a grassroots membership organization of low- and moderate-income parents committed to increasing the supply of quality, affordable child care in Massachusetts. A small group of Boston parents founded PUCC in 1987 with the mission of creating and mobilizing a vocal constituency of parents to impact child care policy in their communities and on the state level. Since its founding PUCC has been working in neighborhoods

through Massachusetts to provide a parent voice on public policy issues related to children families. A local and national model of successful parent empowerment and leadership, P.U.C.C. employs cutting edge organizing and leadership development strategies to provide parents with the necessary tools to take the lead in advocating for their own child care needs.

As you know, recent research about the impact of the first three years of life on children's brain development testifies to the importance of a high-quality early care and education experience, especially for children who are growing up in poverty. In addition, policy makers—at the state and national level—are increasingly acknowledging the importance of child care an essential tool for building the economic stability of working families. Finally, the implementation of Education Reform across the country has focused a spotlight on the importance of quality early learning opportunities in preparing children for school. Unfortunately, too many parents do not have access to the type of high quality early care services that will allow them to go to work and help their children to learn, play and thrive.

By supporting the Early Learning Amendment, you can make children and families a priority and help parents, providers and educators promote healthy physical and emotional development for our children. Please do not hesitate contact me for further information about Parents United for Child Care. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,

ELAINE FERSH,
Director.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER,
Washington, DC, May 8, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
*U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: We are writing to express our support for your Early Learning Amendment to be offered to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Research on early brain development and school readiness demonstrates that the experiences children have and the attachments they form in the earliest years of life have a decisive, long-lasting impact on their later development and learning. Yet, despite the importance of early childhood learning, scarce resources limit the early childhood learning opportunities of many children. Your Early Learning Opportunities Amendment would provide grants to states and communities to help ensure that significantly more children across the country have positive early learning experiences. The added resources that your amendment offers will allow communities to improve and expand quality early childhood programs, and assist parents and early childhood providers meet the diverse developmental needs of young children.

We appreciate your efforts to increase the availability and quality of early childhood learning for children, and look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely yours,

NANCY DUFF CAMPBELL,
Co-President.
JUDITH C. APPELBAUM,
*Vice President and Director of
Employment Opportunities.*

NATIONAL BLACK CHILD
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, INC.,
Washington, DC, May 4, 2000.

DEAR SENATOR: I am writing to urge your support for the Stevens-Kennedy-Jeffords-Dodd Early Learning Amendment to ESEA.

Early care and education have been a leading tenet of the National Black Child Development Institute since its inception thirty years ago. Then, as now, we hold that there is no more effective way to prepare children to succeed in school and break the cycle of poverty than quality, accessible early care and education. Recent studies have shown that quality early education also reduces the likelihood that a child will later be involved in the juvenile justice system.

Despite its proven track record, Head Start is unable to serve all the eligible children. Less than 1 in 10 children eligible for the Child Development Block Grant are currently served. While Head Start has a comprehensive program with education and parental involvement, the programs funded under CCDBG could be greatly enhanced with community-based collaborations around parent training and developmentally appropriate learning programs.

The Early Learning Amendment provides support for communities to improve the quality of child care programs; to provide parent education and training independent of a child care setting; to provide training and professional development for providers of early care and education.

These are important goals that will improve the quality of life for our children and their communities for generations. When we strength a child, we shape the future of our nation.

I urge your support for the Early Learning Amendment to ESEA.

Sincerely,

ANDREA YOUNG,
Director of Public Policy.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTER, INC.,
Cambridge, MA, May 4, 2000.

DEAR SENATORS: The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) in Cambridge, MA, is one of 13 child care resource and referral agencies across the state of Massachusetts. Agencies like CCRC strive to strengthen the field of child care in four ways: 1) we work with child care providers to increase the quality of child care, 2) we work with parents to provide consumer education, information and referrals to local child care programs, 3) we work with low-income families to ensure that they have access to quality affordable care and 4) work with communities to utilize child care demand and supply data for community planning purposes.

Working for a child care resource and referral agency provides a unique perspective on the child care system as a whole because we have the opportunity to work and interact with all aspects of this system, including the administration, the child care industry and families of all incomes who are struggling to make ends meet and find a safe nurturing environment for their child. From this vantagepoint, we see first hand what is and is not working with our system and where there are gaps in the services that are offered.

Based on this knowledge and experience, I am writing today in support of the Stevens-Kennedy-Jeffords-Dodd "Early Learning Opportunities" amendment to ESEA. Recent research has highlighted the importance of providing adequate stimulation to children between the ages of 0 and 5 in order to ensure the optimal physical and emotional develop-

ment of a young child's brain. This development can not be recaptured during later years. Brain synapses that are not developed are lost forever.

The Early Learning amendment is an important step towards ensuring the availability of high-quality educational child development programs to both child care providers and to parents, two equally important components of the lives of our children. As a country, we need to make a stronger investment into supporting the healthy development of our youngest resources. Children do not begin the learning process at the age of five when they enter kindergarten. We must lay the groundwork earlier to ensure that children not only develop appropriately, but more importantly, thrive.

If you need any information or other materials to help you in this important debate, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 547-1063 ext 217 or CCRC's Public Policy Manager Jennifer Murphy at (617) 547-1063 ext 234.

Sincerely,

MARTA T. ROSA,
Executive Director.

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS,
Washington, DC, May 3, 2000.

DEAR SENATOR: As an organization led by over 700 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, leaders of police organizations, and crime survivors, we write in strong support of the Stevens-Kennedy-Jeffords-Dodd "Early Learning Opportunities" amendment to ESEA.

The evidence is clear that well-designed early learning programs for kids can dramatically reduce crime and violence, and keep kids from becoming criminals. But these programs remain so under-funded they reach only a fraction of the youngsters who need them. For example:

A High/Scope Foundation study at the Perry Preschool in Michigan randomly chose half of a group of at-risk toddlers to receive a quality Head Start-style preschool program, supplemented by weekly in-home coaching for parents. Twenty-two years later, the toddlers left out of the program were five times more likely to have grown up to be chronic lawbreakers, with five or more arrests.

A new study of 1,000 at-risk children who attended the Chicago Child Parent Centers found that the children of a similar background who were left out of the program were almost twice as likely to have two or more juvenile arrests.

Yet inadequate funding for these high quality child development programs like these leaves millions of at-risk children without critical early childhood services. Making sure all children have access to educational childcare is one of the four points of our School and Youth Violence Prevention Plan, the key components of which have been endorsed not only by each of Fight Crime's 700 law enforcement leaders and victims of violence but also by the National Sheriffs Association; the Major Cities [Police] Chiefs Organizations; the Police Executive Research Forum; the National District Attorneys Association—and dozens of state law enforcement associations.

The Early Learning amendment is an important step towards ensuring the availability of high-quality educational child development programs. Those on the front lines of the battle against crime know these investments are among our most powerful weapons against crime.

For more information on the studies mentioned above, please see our new report

America's Child Care Crisis: A Crime Prevention Tragedy co-authored by Dr. Berry Brazelton, Edward Zigler, Lawrence Sherman, William Bratton, Jerry Sanders and other child development and crime prevention experts. The report is available on our website, <http://www.fightcrime.org>.

Sincerely,

SANFORD NEWMAN,
President.

UNITED WAY OF AMERICA,
Alexandria, VA, May 3, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of 1,400 United Ways across the country, United Way of America (UWA) urges you to support the Early Learning Amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) sponsored by Senators Stevens, Kennedy, Jeffords, and Dodd. The amendment allots \$6.25 billion over five years to create a new program within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that will improve opportunities for early learning and school readiness among young children from birth through age six.

For the past ten years, United Ways have been committed to early care and education through Success By 6®, an initiative that convenes local leadership (corporate, government and nonprofit) to leverage resources, raise awareness and impact policy on behalf of our youngest citizens. In over 300 communities, Success By 6® helps ensure a safe and nurturing environment for our children. Early childhood development is critical to an effective future workforce. Recent brain research has confirmed that investing early has lifetime benefits and positive implications for a child's success. The early learning amendment will allow local communities to take to scale existing early childhood initiatives and stimulate the creation of new ones.

An investment in early learning and development is a critical investment in our future. United Way of America hopes that the Senate will make a renewed commitment to America's children by supporting this amendment. If you need more information, please contact Ilsa Flanagan, Senior Director of Public Policy, at (703) 683-7817.

With appreciation,

BETTY BEENE.

MAY 2, 2000.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR: We urge you to support the following amendments to S. 2, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization that is currently being debated by the full Senate, to help ensure that young children have the strong start they need and older children the positive and safe after-school experiences and the comprehensive supports they need to succeed in school.

Stevens/Jeffords/Kennedy/Dodd Early Learning Opportunities Amendment. This amendment would provide grants to states and communities to improve and expand high-quality early learning programs serving children ages zero to five years old. This amendment would offer local communities much needed funds to help both parents and early childhood providers meet the varying needs of young children. Research is clear that children, particularly disadvantaged children, who have the opportunity to participate in high quality early childhood programs are more likely to succeed in school and in life.

Dodd Early Childhood Education Professional Development Amendment. This amendment would provide resources to local partnerships to provide professional development for early childhood educators with a focus on early literacy and violence prevention. Given the low salaries of child care providers across the country, providers must have access to resources from their communities in order to grow professionally and provide high quality care in their programs. It is exceedingly important to offer new opportunities to strengthen their ability to work with children. Gaining early literacy skills is essential to children's ability to start school ready to read. High quality early childhood programs have also demonstrated that they can be effective in reducing the violent behavior that can lead to delinquency.

Reed Child Opportunity Zone Family Centers Amendment. This amendment would provide resources to help schools coordinate with other local health and human services at or near the school site to support children's ability to come to school each day ready to learn. This will ensure that children have the health and other supports they need to be able to thrive and take full advantage of their education.

Dodd 21st Century Community Learning Centers Amendment. This amendment would strengthen the collaboration among schools and community-based organizations and bolster their ability to provide enriching and educational after-school and other community education programs.

These amendments would help provide critical support to both younger and older children and their families, helping to ensure that their school experience is a success. We urge you to support them.

Sincerely yours,

GERESH AND SARAH LEMBERG
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Waltham, MA.

From: Howard Baker, Executive Director.

To: Stephanie Robinson and Rachel Price,
Staff of Senator Kennedy.

Subject: Amendments to Early Learning
Part of ESEA.

COMMENTS: Thank you for sending me a copy of your proposed amendments ESEA. I support your addressing special educational needs (Part V.B.5), increased hours of care (Part V.B.6), and increases in compensation and recruitment incentives (Part V.B.7). I am glad to see the wording "grants supplemental not supplant existing early learning resources" (Part VII, G). As for the Funding total of \$6.25 billion over 5 years, more is better.

Also, I spoke with Kimberly Barnes O'Connor, she said: "Bringing up rates and wages in the ESEA is the wrong place. These are issues for the Child Care and Development Block Grant." Is this your position as well? Thanks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for his kind comments. I want to echo what he has said. Senator JEFFORDS has been a great leader in this area. As a matter of fact, he sort of encouraged me to get involved. I am happy to have been able to get involved. I told him it should have been the Jeffords-Stevens amendment. In his typical Vermont reticence—he is a Yankee as far as I

am concerned—he said, no, that I should put in the amendment and be the sponsor. I am proud to do that. But the real voice of reason in this amendment has been Senator JEFFORDS.

I am pleased to yield to him, and I thank him for his cooperation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I have an engagement pending, so I will proceed now. I would love to be able to stay and listen to my friends.

I certainly thank the Senator from Alaska for his very fine words. He has been an inspiration to all of us in bringing this forward. Without his help and support, I am not so sure that we would be here today. I appreciate his efforts in making sure that our amendment be heard in a timely manner.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the lady who is responsible for the cooperation is sitting to my right, our deputy chief of staff. She started on the mommy track about a year ago and taught me all I know. So thank you very much.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I thank the Senator very much. Mr. President, I am very happy to join a strong bi-partisan group of my colleagues in introducing the "Early Learning Opportunities Act" amendment. The twenty-eight cosponsors of the amendment are: Senators STEVENS, KENNEDY, JEFFORDS, DODD, DOMENICI, BOND, KERRY, VOINOVICH, LAUTENBERG, MURRAY, COCHRAN, BINGAMAN, SMITH of Oregon, DURBIN, CHAFEE, BAUCUS, MURKOWSKI, ROBB, ROCKEFELLER, ROBERTS, WELLSTONE, FEINSTEIN, MIKULSKI, SNOWE, BOXER, KERREY, SPECTER, and WARNER.

In 1989, President Bush met with Governors from across the nation and identified a set of educational goals for our nation's children. The first national educational goal was that "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." We have unfortunately failed to meet that critical goal.

Early childhood learning plays a key role in a child's future achievement and is the cornerstone of education reform. I am absolutely convinced that we must invest in early childhood learning programs if we are to have every child enter school ready to learn and succeed.

We know that from birth, the human brain is making the connections that are vital to future learning. We know that what we do as parents, care providers, educators, and as a society can either help or hurt a child's ability to gain the skills necessary for success in school—and in life.

Many of America's children enter school without the necessary abilities and maturity. Without successful remediation efforts, these children continue to lag behind for their entire academic career. We spend billions of dollars on efforts to help these children

catch up. As we demand that students and schools meet higher academic standards, these efforts become much harder. An investment in early learning today will save money tomorrow. Research has demonstrated that for each dollar invested in quality early learning programs, the Federal Government can save over five dollars—spend one, save five.

These savings result from future reductions in the number of children and families who participate in Federal Government programs like Title I special education and welfare.

This amendment is designed to help parents and care givers integrate early childhood learning into the daily lives of their children.

Parents are the most important teachers of their children. If parents are actively engaged in their child's early learning, their children will see greater cognitive and non-cognitive benefits.

Parents want their children to grow up happy and healthy. But few are fully prepared for the demands of parenthood. Many parents have difficulty finding the information and support they need to help their children grow to their full potential. Making that information and support available and accessible to parents is a key component of this amendment.

For many families, it is not possible for a parent to remain home to care for their children. Their employment is not a choice, but an essential part of their family's economic survival.

And for most of these families, child care is not an option, but a requirement, as parents struggle to meet the competing demands of work and family.

Just as it is essential that we provide parents with the tools they need to help their children grow and develop, we also must help the people who care for our nation's children while parents are at work.

Today, more than 13 million young children—including half of all infants—spend at least part of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents.

In Vermont alone, there are about 22,000 children, under the age of six, in state-regulated child care.

This amendment will provide communities with the resources necessary to improve the quality of child care. Funds can be used for professional development, staff retention and recruitment incentives, and improved compensation. By improving local collaboration and coordination, child care providers—as well as parents—will be able to access more services, activities and programs for children in their care.

Our "Early Learning Opportunities" amendment will serve as a catalyst to engage all sectors of the community in increasing programs, services, and activities that promote the healthy de-

velopment of our youngest citizens. The amendment ensures that funds will be locally controlled.

Funds are channeled through the states to local councils. The councils are charged with assessing the early learning needs of the community, and distributing the funds to a broad variety of local resources to meet those needs.

Local councils must work with schools in the community to identify the abilities which need to be mastered before children enter school. Funds must be used for programs, activities and services which represent developmentally appropriate steps towards acquiring those abilities.

This amendment will expand community resources, improve program collaboration, and engage our citizens in creating solutions. It will help parents and care givers who are looking for better ways to include positive learning experiences into the daily lives of our youngest children.

When children enter school ready to learn, all of the advantages of their school experiences are opened to them—their opportunities are unlimited.

I urge all my colleagues to vote for the "Early Learning Opportunities Act" amendment.

I urge you to give our Nation's children every opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

MR. KERRY. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I rise today to lend my support to a critical component of our efforts to reform the public education system and ensure that all children can learn to high standards: a collaborative approach to increasing the availability of high-quality early learning initiatives for young children. The amendment before us today recognizes the importance that the early years of a child's life play in his or her future learning and development. This amendment acknowledges what we know to be true: children who begin school lacking the ability to recognize letters, numbers, and shapes quickly fall behind their peers. Students who reach the first grade without having had the opportunity to develop cognitive or language comprehension skills begin school at a disadvantage. Children who have not had the chance to develop social and emotional skills do not begin school ready to learn. Mr. President, we have the opportunity here today in this bipartisan amendment to see to it that all of our young children have access to high-quality early learning initiatives and that all of our children begin school ready to learn.

The beauty of the approach that I am advocating for here today, is that it

builds upon existing early learning and child care programs in each and every community in this country. Mr. President, this early learning amendment would provide support to families by minimizing government bureaucracy and maximizing local initiatives. This amendment would support the creation of local councils that will provide funding to communities to expand the thousands of successful early care and education efforts that already exist. It will establish an early learning infrastructure at the local level. This infrastructure will establish the necessary linkages between private, public, and non-profit organizations that seek to provide a healthy, safe, and supportive start in learning and in life for children of pre-school age. Mr. President, this amendment provides the Senate with a critically important bipartisan opportunity to support early learning collaboratives at the state level, in towns, in cities, and in communities throughout this country.

I can attest to the success and importance of this collaborative approach, because I have seen it work. I was so convinced by what I saw in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Mr. President, that I introduced legislation in the 105th and the 106th Congresses that is very similar to the amendment before us today. Let me tell you about the Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania—an innovative program which helps low-income children from birth to age five become successful, productive adults by enrolling them in high quality, neighborhood-based early care and education programs, ranging from Head Start, center-based child care, home-based child care, and school readiness programs. ECI draws on everything that's right about Allegheny County—the strength of its communities—neighborhood decision-making, parent involvement, and quality measurement. Parents and community groups decide if they want to participate and they come together and develop a proposal tailored for the community. Regular review programs ensure quality programming and cost-effectiveness. We're talking about local control getting results locally: 19,000 pre-school aged children from low-income families, 10,000 of which were not enrolled in any childcare or education program. Evaluations have shown that enrolled children are achieving at rates equivalent to their middle income peers. And as we know, without this leveling of the playing field, low-income children are at a greater risk of encountering the juvenile justice system.

In the United States, child care, early learning, and school-age care result from partnerships among the public sector—federal state, and local governments; the private sector—businesses and charitable organizations; and parents. Both the public and the

private sectors help children get a strong start in life by supporting and providing child care, by enhancing early learning opportunities, and by supplying school-age care. Attention to early childhood development by so many organizations and levels of government is important and appropriate. But oftentimes, early care and education is a hodgepodge of public and private programs, child-care centers, family day-care homes, and preschools and ironically the widespread concern for the provision and quality of such programs has led to what some experts in this field have called a non-system.

I'd like to tell you about one of the most ground-breaking studies in the effectiveness of early learning programs, called the Abecedarian Project, that is taking place at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. This highly-regarded study has found that low-income children who received comprehensive, quality early educational intervention had higher scores on cognitive, reading, math tests than a comparison group of children who did not receive the intervention. These effects persisted through age 21. The study also found that young people who had participated in the early education program were more likely to attend a four-year college and to delay parenthood. And the positive impact of the early learning program was not just limited to the children, Mr. President. Mothers whose children participated in the program achieved higher educational and employment status as well, with particularly strong results for teen mothers.

Community collaboration allows a vast array of people to assess what support children and families need, what resources are available in their own community, and what new resources are necessary. Collaboration is a way to meet the needs of parents who work full time. For example, children who attend a state-financed half-day preschool program in a child-care center are able to remain in the center after the formal preschool program has ended until a parent finishes working when linkages between disparate programs are made. This sort of continuity can eliminate transportation problems that often plague working families and stressful transitions for parents and children.

Child care and early learning are necessities for millions of American families. Children of all income levels are cared for by someone other than their parents. Each day, an estimated 13 million children under age six—including children with mothers who work outside the home and those with mothers who do not—spend some or all of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents. Many of these children enter non-parental care by 11 weeks of age, and often stay in some form of child care until they enter school.

I commend my esteemed colleagues, Senator STEVENS, Senator JEFFORDS, Senator BOND, Senator DODD, and the senior Senator from Massachusetts, Senator KENNEDY, who, as you all know, is a true leader in this area, for working so diligently on this amendment. And I'm pleased to have the opportunity to be here on the floor to discuss this bipartisan legislation. Indeed, supporting states and local early learning collaboratives is not a partisan issue. In fact, Mr. President, the legislation that I introduced in the 105th and 106th Congresses, the Early Childhood Development Act, would support a collaborative approach and sustain an early learning infrastructure. My legislation has been supported by Senators on both sides of the aisle. I commend my colleagues—Senator BOND, Senator GORDON SMITH, Senator SNOWE, Senator COLLINS, and the late Senator CHAFFEE, for supporting this important, non-partisan educational priority and approach to improving early learning opportunities for all children. And I particularly commend the bipartisan group of leaders on this amendment.

Early childhood programs are cost effective and can result in significant savings in both the short- and the long-term. For example, the High/Scope Foundation's Perry Preschool Study examined the long-term impact of a good early childhood program for low-income children. Researches found that after 27 years, each \$1.00 invested in the program saved over \$7.00 by increasing the likelihood that children would be literate, employed, and enrolled in postsecondary education, and making them less likely to be school dropouts, dependent on welfare, or arrested for criminal activity or delinquency. A study of the short-term impact of a pre-kindergarten program in Colorado found that it resulted in cost savings of \$4.7 million over just three years in reduced special education costs.

Child care and early learning are particularly important for low-income children and children with other risk factors. Good early care and education programs help children enter school ready to succeed in a number of ways, and have a particularly strong impact on low-income children who are at greater risk for school failure. Mr. President, reading difficulties in young children can be prevented if children arrive in the first grade with strong language and cognitive skills and the motivation to learn to read, which are needed to benefit from classroom instruction.

Law enforcement has attested to the importance of early learning programs. A poll of police chiefs from across the country found that nearly none out of ten (86 percent) said that "expanding after-school and child care programs like Head Start will greatly reduce

youth crime and violence." Nine out of ten also agreed that a failure to invest in such programs to help children and youth now would result in greater expenses later in crime, welfare, and other costs. Police chiefs ranked providing "more after-school programs and educational child care" as the most effective strategy for reducing youth violence four times as often as "prosecuting more juveniles as adults" and five times as often as "hiring more police officers to investigate juvenile crime."

I urge my colleagues to think about what is at stake here. Poverty seriously impairs young children's language development, math skills, IQ scores, and their later school completion. Poor young children also are at heightened risk of infant mortality, anemia, and stunted growth. Of the millions of children under the age of three in the U.S. today, 25 percent live in poverty. Three out of five mothers with children under three work, but one study found that 40 percent of the facilities at child care centers serving infants provided care of such poor quality as to actually jeopardize children's health, safety, or development. Literally the future of millions of young people is at stake here. Literally that's what we're talking about. But is it reflected in the investments we make here in the Senate? I would, respectfully, say no—not nearly enough, Mr. President. But today, during this debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we have a genuine opportunity to make a meaningful difference and contribution to the lives of poor children in this country.

I'd also like to discuss the results of a study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. This study has been following a group of children to compare the development of children in high quality child care with that of children in lower quality child care. Researchers have thus far tracked the children's progress from age three through the second grade. At the end of this most recent study period, children in high quality child care demonstrated greater mathematics ability, greater thinking and attention skills, and fewer behavioral problems. These differences held true for children from a range of family backgrounds, with particularly significant effects for children at risk.

Let me explain why this legislation is so fundamentally important and why it is clear we are not doing enough to ensure that our youngest children are exposed to meaningful learning opportunities:

A study in Massachusetts found that the supply of child care in communities with large numbers of welfare recipients was much lower than in higher-income communities. The 10 percent of zip code areas with the greatest share of welfare recipients had just 8.3

preschools operating per 1,000 children ages 3 to 5. This was one-third lower than in high-income communities.

Four out of five children already know what it means to be in the full-time care of someone other than one of their parents.

A study by the U.S. Department of Education found that public schools in low income communities were far less likely to offer pre-kindergarten programs (16 percent) than were schools in more affluent areas (33 percent).

Kindergarten teachers estimate that one in three children enters the classroom unprepared to meet the challenges of school.

Only 42 percent of low-income children between the ages of 3 and 5 are in pre-kindergarten programs compared with 65 percent of higher income children.

Our country has struggled, and this body has struggled, with ways to improve the lives of young, poor children in this country. The debate we are engaged in today centers around how to more effectively educate disadvantaged children, how to hold schools, administrators, and teachers accountable for providing a high-quality education, and ensuring that all children are given the opportunities to learn. Mr. President, early learning is a critical element of the fundamentally important goal of ensuring all children learn to high standards. We must go where the children are—in child care centers, in family-based care—and guarantee support of meaningful early learning services.

The intent of a collaborative approach to early education and child care is to create a system that supports children's development and is also responsive to the needs of working parents. We need to take action in order to make a difference in the lives of our children before they're put at risk, and this bipartisan approach is certainly a step in the right direction, I believe a step the Senate must take. We need to accept the truth, Mr. President, that we can do a lot more to help our kids grow up healthy with promising futures in an early childhood development center, in a classroom, and in a doctor's office than we can in a courtroom or in a jail cell.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, for his extraordinary leadership in this arena, as well as in the entire area of education.

I think my colleagues will agree that there is no more forceful, eloquent, or committed voice on the subject of children and of education in the country. I am grateful for his leadership on their particular issue.

I also join in thanking the Senator from Alaska for his passionate and very firsthand commitment to this subject. He comes to this from a place of real understanding. And I hope his

colleagues on his side of the aisle will recognize that this is not partisan. This is something that has the capacity to bring both sides together to the advantage of the children of America.

I also thank my colleague, Senator BOND, who joined me several years ago in what was then a ground-breaking effort in the Senate to try to recognize the capacity of collaboratives in the local communities to be able to pick up much of this burden. For a long time, we spent an awful lot of energy in the Senate reinventing the wheel. I think what we did was try to say how we solve the problem without necessarily creating a new Federal bureaucracy and without creating additional administrative overhead. How do we play to the strengths of our mayors, of our local charitable organizations, which do such an extraordinary job, and which in so many cases are simply overburdened by the demand?

I think there is not one Member who is not aware of a Boys Club, Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA, Big Brother-Big Sister, or any number of faith-based entities, whether the Jewish community centers, the Catholic charities, the Baptist Outreach—there are dozens upon dozens of efforts—that successfully intervene in the lives of at-risk or troubled young people and who succeed in turning those lives around.

This should not be categorized as a government program with all of the pejoratives that go with the concept of government program. This is, in effect, the leveraging of those efforts at the local level that already work. The best guarantee that comes out of this amendment is that it appeals to the capacity of the local communities to choose which entities work and which entities don't. There is none of the rhetoric that somehow attacks so easily the notions that seek to do good and changes lives of people for the better, none of that rhetoric that suggests that Washington is dictating this or there is a new bureaucracy, or this is the long reach of the government at the Federal level trying to tell the local level what to do. None of that applies here.

This is a grant to local collaboratives with the Governors' input and the input of those local charitable entities. They know best what is working; they know best where that money can have the greatest return on the investment. They will, therefore, decide what to do.

Let me address for a quick moment the common sense of this. Senator STEVENS talked about the science and brain development. Indeed, we have learned a great deal about brain development. In fact, we are learning even more each day.

Just this year, new evidence about brain development has been made public which suggests that not only is the early childhood period so critical for a particular kind of discipline, but we

are now capable of learning about the brain's functioning at different stages of development through to the point of adulthood. A child in their early teens, for instance, may be particularly susceptible to language input and at a later stage of life to more analytical skills; at the earlier stage of life much more subject to the early socialization skills and the early recognition, cognitive skills such as recognizing shapes, forms, numbers.

The problem in America is—every single one of us knows this—certain communities don't have the tax base, don't have the income, and we will find parents have a greater struggle to provide for a safe, nonchaotic atmosphere within which their children can be brought up. Find a place where children get the proper kind of early input and it makes a difference in their capacity to go to school ready to learn. In an affluent community, almost by 2 to 1 we find many more children are in safe, competent, early childhood environments where they are well prepared to go to school.

The consequences of not preparing a child to go to school at the earliest stage ought to be obvious to everybody, but they are not. I have heard from countless first grade school-teachers who tell me in a class of 25 to 30 kids, they might have 5 to 10 kids who do not have the early cognitive skills their peers have, so the teacher is then reduced in their capacity to be able to provide the accelerated effort to the rest of the class because they are spending so much time trying to help people catch up. Moreover, it takes longer for the children to catch up.

There are a host of other disadvantages that come with the lack of that early childhood education that often play out later in life, sometimes in very dramatic ways, when they get in trouble with the law, when they become violent, and when we spend countless billions of dollars, literally billions of dollars, trying to remediate things that could have been avoided altogether in the first place.

That is what this is all about. This is common sense. There are two former Governors who will speak on this. I know what the Senator from Ohio did because I followed what he did when he was a Governor. We used some of what he did, as well as some of what was done by Governor Hunt in North Carolina, as models for possibilities. There are Governors all across this country who currently support wonderful, homegrown, locally initiated, locally based efforts that save lives and change lives on an ongoing basis.

We need to augment the capacity of all of those entities to reach all of the children of America. If we did that, we could provide a tax cut in the end to the American people. For the dollar invested at the earliest stage, there is a

back-end savings of anywhere from \$6 to \$7 per child, and sometimes much greater percentages in terms of the costs of the social structure that we put in place to either mitigate, and sometimes simply to isolate, people from society as a consequence of those early deprivations.

This is not “goo-goo” social work. This is not do-goodism. It doesn't fit into any kind of ideological label. This is something that has worked all across the country.

I close by pointing to one very successful initiative that I visited several years ago which became part of the basis of the collaboration in which Senator BOND and I engaged.

In Allegheny County, PA, there is a thing called the Early Childhood Initiative. This program helps low-income children from birth to age 5 to become successful, productive adults by enrolling them in high-quality, neighborhood-based early care and education programs ranging from Head Start to center-based child care, to home-based child care, to school readiness programs. It draws on all of the corporate community. The corporate community matches funds. The corporations become involved with the charitable entities. The public sector becomes involved. They join together to guarantee there are regular review programs ensuring quality programming and cost effectiveness.

We are now talking about 19,000 preschool age children from low-income families, 10,000 of which were not enrolled in any children's care or education program prior to the childhood education initiative being put in place.

May I add, this has been done to date with a small amalgamation of Federal money, principally with corporate and local match and State money.

This can be done. For a minimal amount of Federal dollars, you can leverage an extraordinary outpouring of local match, of corporate private sector involvement, all of which builds communities, all of which in the end would make this country stronger and significantly augment the capacity of our teachers, who are increasingly overburdened, to be able to teach our children adequately.

I really hope this will be one amendment that does not fall victim to partisanship or to predisposition. I think we ought to be able to come to common agreement and common ground on this. I really commend it to my colleagues on that basis.

I thank my colleagues for their forbearance.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues, Senators STEVENS, KENNEDY and JEFFORDS and others in support of this amendment.

As we enter the new millenium, we have before us a unique opportunity to enact legislation that will give every child the chance for the right start in life.

Recent research on the brain has clearly demonstrated that the years from birth to school enrollment are a hotbed of neurological activity—an unparalleled opportunity for children to acquire the foundation for learning.

While this seems to be common sense—and something that parents have always know intuitively—in fact, it is only recently that parents' intuition has been backed by evidence.

Until only 15 years ago, scientists still assumed that at birth a baby's potential for learning was pretty firmly in place. We now know that to be untrue.

Now we know that just in the first few months of life, the connections between neurons, or synapses, in a child's brain will increase 20-fold, to more than 1,000 trillion—more than all the stars in the Milky Way.

In those months and years, the brain's circuitry is wired. With attention and stimulation from parents and other caregivers, we begin to see the permanent pathways for learning and caring forming in a child's brain.

The downside to the plasticity of the brain is that it can be as easily shaped by negative experiences as positive experiences. Fear and neglect are just as readily wired into the brain as caring and learning.

Scientists have also found that the brain's flexibility in those early years is not absolute. Some skills can only be acquired during defined windows of opportunity. Abilities, like sight and speech, that are not wired into place within a certain critical period may be unattainable—a “use it or lose it” phenomenon.

We see this phenomenon played out in the classroom. Kindergarten teachers across the country tell us that as many as one in three children begins the first day of school unprepared to learn. Because they have never been read to, basic literacy skills have not taken hold. Because they were never screened for health problems, they have undiagnosed hearing or vision impairments.

If we accept the science of brain development, it's clear that is where our investments should be.

The data is in and the facts are undisputable:

The experiences a child has in the years from birth to age 6 set the stage for that child's later academic success.

Investing in early learning saves us money in the long run.

It is very simple—if children enter kindergarten and first grade unprepared, they may never catch up. As a society, we pay dearly for that lack of readiness. We pay in the lost potential of that child. We pay in terms of higher special education costs. And we pay in terms of increased juvenile justice costs.

There is no more fitting place for this amendment to be considered than

here as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—a very appropriate place to formally recognize the fact that learning starts at birth.

This amendment has two main objectives: To provide parents and others who care for children with the skills and resources to support children's development and to engage communities in providing early learning opportunities for all children.

Because parents are children's first and best teachers, this legislation would support their efforts to create healthy and stimulating environments for their children.

But, knowing that more than 60 percent of children younger than age six—regardless of whether their mothers work—are in some form of non-parental care, this legislation would also support the efforts of child care centers and home-based child care providers to offer positive early learning experiences.

Importantly, the delivery system for all of these investments is the community. Under this legislation, local councils of parents, teachers and child care providers will assess the community's needs and determine how to allocate resources.

In addition to using funds to support parents and other caregivers, funds could be used:

To increase access to existing programs by expanding the days or times that children are served or by making services available to children in low-income families.

To enhance early childhood literacy.

To link early learning providers to one another and to health services.

To improve quality of existing early learning programs through recruitment, retention, and professional development incentives, and

To increase early learning opportunities for children with special needs.

If this model sounds familiar to you, it should. The strategy of investing in early learning has been embraced in some form by over 42 governors.

In the laboratory of the states, governors, business leaders, parents, and kindergarten teachers have decided that they are convinced enough by the science and the facts to forge ahead.

In Connecticut, we are entering our third year of a wildly popular school readiness initiative. As a result of this initiative, 41 cities and towns are now providing high quality preschool experiences to over 6,000 children.

The results of this initiative in terms of improvements in school readiness and reductions in special education costs have been so significant that the Governor and legislature have almost doubled funding in three years to \$72 million.

Interestingly, perhaps the strongest backer of this initiative has been the business community. The people who like to crunch numbers, to see things in terms of costs and benefits looked at the facts and decided that early learning was a wise investment. That says a lot.

States are doing their part. Many businesses are doing their part. The federal government must do its part.

As we enter the 21st century, let's get our priorities straight.

We cannot and should not let this opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of children and families across America pass us by.

Our children are priceless—we shouldn't "nickel and dime" them when it comes to providing the best possible start in life.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank Senator KERRY for the work he and I have done over the years on early childhood education. This amendment by Senators STEVENS and JEFFORDS and others builds on that because we know that early in a child's development is the best time to begin the process of assuring that child is well educated, well prepared—the very earliest stages in life. This amendment recognizes if we do everything possible for our Nation's children in their overall education, we should begin at the earliest years.

While most of the debate on this bill will be about elementary and secondary education—the years of what we might call formal schooling—the education and mental development of a child begins long before that child enters kindergarten. In fact, the education and development of a child begins practically at birth and continues at an extremely rapid pace through the first several years of life.

This amendment recognizes this basic fact—that a child's education and mental development begins very early in life. Through this amendment, we are seeking to support families with the youngest children to find the early childhood education care programs that can help those families and parents provide the supportive, stimulating environment we all know their children need.

This amendment recognizes that if we want to do everything possible for our nation's children and their overall education, we need to focus on the earliest years as well as the years of formal schooling. We can do this—and this amendment proposes to do this—by supporting and expanding the successful early childhood programs and initiatives that are working right now on the local level. These programs help parents to stimulate and educate their young children in an effort to make sure every child enters kindergarten fully ready to learn.

I am pleased to say that this amendment is based on the basic ideas and principles I set forth in legislation that was first introduced several years ago with my good friend from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY.

Research shows that the first years of life are an absolutely crucial developmental period for each child with a significant bearing on future prospects. During this time, infant brain development occurs very rapidly, and the sensations and experiences of this time go a long way toward shaping that baby's mind in a way that has long-lasting effects on all aspects of the child's life.

And parents and family are really the key to this development. Early, positive interaction with parents, grandparents, aunts, uncle, and other adults plays a critical role.

Really we shouldn't be surprised that parents have known instinctively for generations some of these basic truths that science is just now figuring out. Most parents just know that babies need to be hugged, caressed, and spoken to.

Of course, the types of interaction that can most enhance a child's development change as the baby's body and mind grow. The best types of positive interaction—which are so instinctual to us for the youngest babies—may not be quite so obvious for two- and three-year-olds. Raising a child is perhaps the most important thing any of us will do, but it is also one of the most complicated.

And parents today also face a variety of stresses and problems that were unheard of a generation ago. In many families, both parents work. Whether by choice or by necessity, many parents may not be able to read mountains of books and articles about parenting and child development to keep perfectly up-to-date on what types of experiences are most appropriate for their child at his or her particular stage of development. They also must try to find good child care and good environments where their children can be stimulated and educated while they work. Simply put, most parents can probably use a little help to figure out how best to help a child's mind and imagination to grow as much as possible.

Many communities across the country have developed successful early childhood development programs to meet these needs. Most of the programs work with parents to help them understand their child's development and to discuss ways to help further develop the little baby's potential. Others simply provide basic child care and an exciting learning environment for children of parents who both have to work.

In a report released in 1998, the prestigious RAND Corporation reviewed early childhood programs like these and found that they provide children, particularly high-risk children, with both short- and long-run benefits. These benefits include enhanced development of both the mind and the child's ability to interact with others. They include improvement in educational outcomes. And they include a

long-term increase in self-sufficiency through finding jobs and staying off government programs and staying out of the criminal justice system.

Of course, it's no mystery to people from my home state of Missouri that this type of program can be successful. Missouri is the "Show Me" state, and we have been shown first-hand the benefit of a top-notch early childhood program. In Missouri, we are both proud and lucky to be the home of Parents as Teachers. This tremendous organization is an early childhood parent education program designed to empower the parents to give their young child the best possible start in life. It provides education for the parent on a volunteer basis. Over 150,000 Missouri families are participating in it, with 200,000 children benefiting from it. It combines visits by the parent/educator in the home to see the progress of the child. It provides ideas and information to the parent to stimulate that child's learning curiosity. It brings parents and children together in group sessions to discuss common problems.

This program has been shown, by independent tests, to improve significantly the learning capacity of children when they reach formal schooling years. In addition, it hooks the parents into their child's education for the future years. I personally, from my visits to over 100 of these sites around my State, can tell you it is clear to the teachers, to the administrators, to the school board members, children who have been in Parents as Teachers have an excellent start and they are above and ahead of the other children who have not been so lucky.

This program is available through every school district in our State. I have talked to mothers coming off welfare who say it is the most important thing for their children. I have talked to farm families who are struggling to make a living off the farm, who say it is the best thing that can happen to their children. I have talked to economically successful suburban families; mom and dad both have good jobs, not enough time, but Parents as Teachers gives them the direction and the tools so they can be the best first teachers of their children.

That is why it is called Parents as Teachers.

With additional resources, programs such as Parents as Teachers could be expanded and enhanced to improve the opportunities for many more infants and young children. And we have found that all children can benefit from these programs. Economically successful, two-income families can benefit from early childhood programs just as much as a single-parent family with a mother seeking work opportunities.

This amendment will support families by building on local initiatives like Parents as Teachers that have already been proven successful in working with

families as they raise their infants and toddlers. The bill will help improve and expand these successful programs, of which there are numerous other examples, such as programs sponsored by the United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as state initiatives such as "Success by Six" in Massachusetts and Vermont and the "Early Childhood Initiative" in Pennsylvania.

The amendment will provide Federal funds to states to begin or expand local initiatives to provide early childhood education, parent education, and family support. Best of all, we propose to do this with no Federal mandates, and few Federal guidelines.

Many of our society's problems, such as the high school dropout rate, drug and tobacco use, and juvenile crime can be traced in part to inadequate child care and early childhood development opportunities. Increasingly, research is showing us that a child's social and intellectual development as well as a child's likelihood to become involved in these types of difficulties is deeply rooted in the early interaction and nurturing a child receives in his or her early years.

Ultimately, it is important to remember that the likelihood of a child growing up in a healthy, nurturing environment is the primary responsibility of his or her parents and family. Government cannot and should not become a substitute for parents and families, but we can help them become stronger by equipping them with the resources to meet the everyday challenges of parenting.

I believe this amendment can accomplish this and dramatically improve the life and education of millions of the youngest Americans.

I invite any of my colleagues, or anyone else who wants to know more about this program, to let me know because we have seen this program copied in other States, in other countries. It really can make a difference for children. I believe the support this amendment will provide for early childhood education is one of the best things we can do to assure the highest quality educational achievement for all of our children.

The screening for young children that goes along with it helps avoid problems and more than pays for the cost of the education programs. I believe this amendment, if we adopt it, can be a tremendous boost for children of all walks of life throughout our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I have been very impressed with the words of my colleagues, the two Senators from Massachusetts, the Senator from Alaska, the Senator from Vermont, and now the Senator from Missouri.

One of the things I decided on doing when I came to the Senate was to bring my passion for early childhood development to the Senate and to encourage my colleagues to give a much higher priority to children age prenatal to 3 than we have been giving in this country. Early childhood development, especially covering children age prenatal to 3, is fundamental if this Nation is to achieve the first of our eight national education goals, and that is, "all children in America will start school ready to learn."

There are great programs for children, such as Head Start, which Congress has supported for 35 years. I am proud that when I was Governor of Ohio, we increased spending for Head Start by 1,000 percent. So in our State today, every eligible child whose parent wants them in a Head Start Program has a slot for that child. Even though Head Start has made a tremendous impact on our children, we must recognize that the program is designed for 3- and 4-year-olds. The period in a child's life in which we have not invested enough in this country, and the period on which we need to start concentrating, is the period in a child's life from prenatal to age 3. It is the time in a child's life that has the most impact on their overall development.

Thanks to decades of research on brain chemistry, and through the utilization of sophisticated new technology, neuroscientists are now telling us that within the first 3 months in the womb, children start to develop the 100 billion neurons they will need as adults. By the time they reach the age of 3, children have all the necessary connections—what we call synapses—between brain cells that cause the brain to function properly.

What I am saying is almost frightening. If we do not create an appropriate environment for our children prenatal to age 3, they physically do not develop these synapses in their brains, and they are incapable of using what God has given them in the most efficient way possible.

In terms of priorities, the experiences that fill a child's first days, months, and years have a critical and decisive impact on the development of the brain and on the nature and extent of their adult capacities—in other words, who they are going to become. The window of opportunity can be impacted by things that are within our control.

We found, for example, children who lack proper nutrition, health care, and nurturing during their first years tend also to lack adequate social, motor, and language skills needed to perform well in school. That is why all young children, parents, and care givers of those children should have access to information and support services appropriate for promoting healthy early childhood development in the first years of life, including child care, early

intervention services, parenting education, health care, and other child development services.

This new revelation requires that States streamline and coordinate healthy early childhood development systems. It also necessitates that the Federal Government reorder its education priorities to reflect the importance of a child's learning and growing experiences from prenatal to age 3.

This amendment responds to the obvious shortcomings of the Federal Government's partnership with State governments and encourages States to coordinate and galvanize all public and private assets on the State and local level.

The amendment authorizes the expenditure of some \$3.2 billion over the next 3 years to make grants available to our States, and subsequently to the counties, in order to provide or improve early learning services for young children.

I want to underscore, this is not a new entitlement. I want to emphasize, what we are trying to do is prioritize money we are already spending for education and put more of it into early development programs where it is going to make the biggest difference for our children.

In order to receive this money, it does one other thing I think is very important. In too many communities in the United States, local social service, public, and private agencies do not cooperate and combine their resources. They do not collaborate enough to deliver services to children in their community. This amendment will require that:

A State shall designate a lead State agency . . . to administer and monitor the grant and ensure State-level coordination of early learning programs.

For their part, localities must also follow guidelines to be eligible to receive funds. Again, from the bill, "a locality shall establish or designate a local council, which shall be composed of—representatives of local agencies directly affected by early learning programs; parents; other individuals concerned with early learning issues in the locality, such as individuals providing child care resource and referral services, early learning opportunities, child care, education and health services; and other key community leaders." This could also include faith-based community organizations.

We are saying that unless a State gets its act together and gets its agencies that deal with families and children into a lead state agency in order to coordinate activities, and unless local communities come together in collaboratives, the money will not flow to those collaboratives.

In a way, it is an inducement for local private-public agencies to get together to talk about how they can look at the early period in a child's life and

make a difference and galvanize all the resources in the community.

It will help eliminate some of the turf problems throughout this country where agencies do their own thing without working with other agencies.

It will encourage agencies to understand they have a symbiotic relationship with each other, and by working together, they can make a difference on behalf of the children in their respective communities.

In Ohio, we established the Ohio Family and Children First Initiative which was driven by locally based providers and not bureaucrats. The initiative developed a plan to meet the health, education, and social service needs of disadvantaged children and families and develop an action plan to meet those needs by eliminating barriers, coordinating programs, and targeting dollars.

We started out in Ohio with only 9 programs in 13 of our 88 counties. We put out an RFP and said those counties that get their act together can participate in the program. It was such a success that today all 88 counties that have these collaboratives that are making a difference in the lives of our children.

In my own county, we have a wonderful example of what can happen when agencies work together. The Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative has undertaken a 3-year \$40 million pilot program to promote and improve effective parenting, healthy children, and quality child care in order to assure the well-being of all children in the county from birth through age 5.

Under this collaborative partnership, which began last July, \$30 million comes from a combination of local, State, and Federal sources, and \$8.5 million has thus far been committed by 18 local foundations. In other words, this is a program where we are combining local, State, and Federal resources and private resources to make an impact on these youngsters.

One of the more innovative aspects of this initiative is that it guarantees a visit by a registered nurse, if requested, to every first-time and teen mother in the county. These nurses help identify health and social service needs of both moms and babies, and link families with services that underscore and highlight the importance of a child's first 3 years.

I will never forget when I was Governor, for my 1998 State of the State Address, I invited people who were benefiting from some of the programs we instituted. One of the individuals I invited was a woman from one of our rural counties.

I asked her before the State of the State Address: What did this program do for you? This may sound elementary, but she said: I had my baby, I came home, I put the baby in the crib, and I watched television. When the

nurse came out, she said that I should hold my baby, I should sing to my baby, I should read to my baby. She taught me how to use Ziploc bags to make picture books so that I could look at those pictures with my baby. I was told the more I stimulated and spent time with that baby, the more that baby would develop the brain power that God had given her.

Another program we put in place was Help Me Grow, which gives new mothers in Ohio a wellness guide, an informational video, and access to a telephone helpline so that, right from the beginning, new mothers can get the information they need and know where they can turn for help.

Again, it is a private sector initiative that came about as a result of the Family and Children First Initiative. In other words, a woman has a baby at the hospital. She gets a 30-minute video which tells her how to be a better mother. A nurse spends time with her. It is a "how to do it" initiative.

This may be hard to believe, but women all over this country are having babies and need help in what to do when that child is born. This program is going to help make that possible.

The amendment from the Senator from Alaska and the Senator from Vermont will expand the collaborative effort nationwide. This amendment conditions the Federal dollars that localities receive through the lead State agency on the ability of communities to come together and establish collaborative efforts. That means, as I said, putting aside the "turf battles" and galvanizing the resources.

I want to emphasize how important this is. These Federal dollars will be what I refer to as "the yeast that raises the dough." In other words, these funds will act as seed money generating additional local and State resources, and better use of Federal resources, as well as private sector and foundation funds, all to help our children. I know this program is going to work because of the way it has worked in the State of Ohio. Early childhood has been a passion of mine since my four children were enrolled in a storefront Montessori school when they were just out of diapers.

On the Federal level, the Governors understand how important this program is. In 1998, some 42 Governors chose to highlight early childhood development as a major portion of their State agendas. With this amendment, we will make the Federal Government become a more effective partner with State governments. It will kick start the local and State agencies to better coordinate and collaborate so we can maximize all the resources that are available in the community.

More important, this will give us the opportunity to take the God-given qualities of our most important resource in this country—our children—

and provide them the environment they need to fully develop during their most crucial period in life.

Finally—and again I underscore for my colleagues—this is not a new entitlement. It is my hope that my colleagues on the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee will reprioritize some of the funds we currently spend on education and other health and social services toward early childhood development.

To track what happens with these Federal funds, the amendment requires that States report back on what they have been able to accomplish, ensuring there is accountability for these resources.

This amendment is about our children's future. It is about our country's future. I hope my colleagues will support this amendment on a bipartisan basis. Of all of the things we can do for children in this country, the most important thing we can do is impact on them during this most important period in their life, and what we do during this period in a child's life, in my opinion, is going to be the best investment we can make in our children. All the research shows that for every dollar we invest during a child's earliest years, we save \$4 and \$5 later on in their lives.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, yesterday Senator KENNEDY asked me about the source of one of the statistics I quote during the debate on S. 2. I am pleased to provide the Senator from Massachusetts with the source for my statistics.

During the 105th Congress, the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation of the Committee on Education and the Workforce prepared an excellent report, entitled, "Education at a Crossroads: What Works and What's Wasted in Education Today." I am pleased to share an excerpt from it with my colleagues. This report concludes that:

One of the main problems with delivering federal education aid to states and communities through such a vast array of programs is the added cost of paperwork and personnel necessary to apply for an keep track of the operations of each of these programs. Many of the costs are hidden in the burdens placed on teachers and administrators in time and money to complete federal forms for this multitude of overlapping federal programs.

In 1996, Governor Voinovich of Ohio noted that local schools in his state had to submit as many as 170 federal reports totaling more than 700 pages during a single year. This report also noted that more than 50 percent of the paperwork required by a local school in Ohio is a result of federal programs—this despite the fact that the federal government accounts for only 6 percent of Ohio's educational spending.

The Subcommittee has attempted to quantify the number of pages required by recipients of federal funds in order to qualify for assistance. Without fully accounting for all the attachments and supplemental submissions required with each application, the Subcommittee counted more than 20,000 pages of applications.

So how much time is spent completing this paperwork? In the recently released strategic plan of the Department of Education, the administration highlights the success of the Department in reducing paperwork burdens by an estimated 10 percent—which according to their own estimates accounts for 5.4 million man hours in FY 97. If this statistic is accurate, it would mean that the Department of Education is still requiring nearly 50 million hours worth of paperwork each year—or the equivalent of 25,000 employees working full-time. [page 15]

Mr. President, this paper chase, as I suggested yesterday, has our nation's teachers and administrators spinning their wheels on the requirements of a federal education bureaucracy instead of concentrating on teaching and meeting the needs of students. Our educational system has been taken over by a federally driven emphasis on form rather than substance.

While I commend Secretary Riley's 10 percent reduction effort, we need to go much further in order to put our education emphasis where it needs to be—in classrooms, not on process requirements. I am committed to helping reduce the amount of paperwork teachers and administrators must fill out. S. 2 goes a long way to easing this burden.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, this is the ninth reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Regrettably, the reauthorization, as reported by Committee, is not in my view in the best interest of our Nation's children. Established as part of President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty, the original bill offered Federal support, for the first time, to schools in low-income communities. It underscored the importance of ensuring that all American children have access to quality education.

As the time has come to again reauthorize this important legislation that provides opportunity and hope to so many citizens, the negotiations have taken a drastically partisan turn. Members of the Majority have argued that, because states have paramount responsibilities for education, the role of the Federal Government should be diminished. However, that argument ignores our Nation's interest in ensuring an educated citizenry which is vital to the strength of our country, the continued health of our economy, and our ability to compete internationally.

On previous occasions, we have worked together to provide the Federal Government's 7 percent share of elementary and secondary education funding to the citizens of our country. We came together, despite our differences, to provide for the less fortunate in society. We came together to make progress on strengthening and improving public schools in every community,

while ensuring that the Federal Government retained its mission of targeting the neediest communities.

The Congress and the President showed leadership in the last reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and with the passage of the GOALS 2000 legislation, which established a new benchmark in setting higher standards and moving our educational system in a new direction. Now, after years of tested programs and studies, the Majority wants to go back to the days of block grant funding to states and remove the Federal Government's ability to ensure that we have a targeted and responsible use of our citizens' tax dollars.

At a time when the Nation is enjoying remarkable economic prosperity, we should be working to increase the Federal investment in education to help states, communities, and schools meet the demands of higher standards of achievement, and address the challenges of diversity, poverty, and the lack of technology advancements in some communities. We need to do all we can to target resources to the neediest communities so that the most disadvantaged students get a good education.

During the last two years, we have been able to come together as a Congress and support the President's proposal to provide more teachers to the classrooms to lower class sizes. Over \$2.5 billion has been provided for the purpose of recruiting, hiring, and training teachers. Now the Majority would have us retreat from this critical effort to provide more qualified teachers and reduced class sizes. And it is well settled that smaller class sizes enhances student achievement. Smaller classes enable teachers to provide greater individual attention and assistance to students in need. Smaller classes enable teachers to spend more time on instruction, and less time on discipline and behavior problems. In smaller classes, teachers cover material more effectively, and are able to work with parents more effectively to enhance their children's education.

Mr. President, the Majority's centerpiece for this legislation, the so-called "Straight A's program", whether in the 50-state or the 15-state form—abandons our commitment to help the Nation's most disadvantaged children receive a good education through proven and effective programs. The bill before us would give states a blank check for over \$12 billion—and then turns its back on holding states accountable for results.

In addition, the Majority undermines the cornerstone of our education reform by making Title I funds "portable." Portability dilutes the impact that Title I funding has on individual public schools that serve all children. Supporters go to great lengths to avoid admitting that this funding could be

used for private, religious, or for-profit services in the form of vouchers, but indeed, this is the case. Vouchers threaten to drain public schools of greatly needed public tax dollars and send the message that when public schools, which educate 90 percent of American children, do not work, they should be abandoned rather than fixed.

As we confront a world that is increasingly complex both technologically and economically, it is critical that we continue to meet the educational needs of our Nation's young people. It is in my view imperative that we maintain strong Federal support to ensure the successful continuation of education programs serving our country's young people. The legislation as submitted by the Majority diminishes the Federal role and does not provide accountability for education standards. This is an unfortunate departure from years of bipartisan support and movement towards higher achievement for all of our young people.

Mr. President, I have a longstanding and deep commitment to the goal of ensuring a quality education for all citizens. The bill before us would retreat from that goal by sharply reducing the Federal role in education—a role, that while narrow in scope, is critical to ensuring reform in our schools and real improvements in student performance, particularly among our neediest students and in our neediest communities.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, the Senate's consideration of elementary and secondary education policy offers us an opportunity to begin to institute some fundamental reforms of American public education.

I fervently hope that the Senate does just that. I hope we will send to the President promptly a bill that brings about real change.

In the past week, we have debated several approaches and today we will debate another.

First, let me say that federal education funding is only 6 percent of total spending for elementary and secondary education. So in terms of dollars, the federal role is small. Public education spending and policy are largely set by local and state governments and that is the way it should be.

Nevertheless, federal dollars can and should leverage other dollars and in writing legislation to revamp federal education policy, we have the opportunity to stimulate some real reforms.

Why do we need reform? The numbers tell us a sad story.

American students lag behind their international counterparts in many ways. American twelfth grade math students are outperformed by students from 21 other countries, scoring higher than students from only two countries, Cyprus and South Africa.

Three-quarters of our school children cannot compose a well-organized, coherent essay.