higher education. It is a global econ-
omy—the sum of U.S. imports and ex-
ports, but from a percent of gross do-
nomestic product in 1970 to 25 percent in 1997. This emerging economy is driven by innovation in every arena from tra-
ditional manufacturing to health care, and even farming and fishing.

The new economy is powerful and ex-
citing, but the digital divide is real and
cannot afford to be ignored. Let me de-
scribe to you what this divide looks like.

The Digital Divide:
61.6% of those with college degrees
now use the Internet, while only 6.6% of
those with an elementary school
education or less use the Internet.

At the highest incomes ($75,000+), the
White/Black divide for computer own-
ership decreased by 76.2% between 1994
and 1997.

Whites are more likely to have ac-
cess to the Internet from home, than
Blacks or Hispanics have from any loca-
tion.

Blacks and Hispanic households are
twofifths as likely to have home Inter-
net access as White households.

Forty-four million American adults,
roughly 22 percent, do not have the
reading and writing skills necessary for
functioning in everyday life. And an es-
imated 87 percent of documents on the
Internet are in English. Yet at least 32
million Americans speak a language
other than English and they are—again
and again—left behind on the Internet.

Those with a college degree or higher
are over eight times more likely to
have a computer at home than the
least educated and nearly sixteen times
more likely to have home Internet ac-
cess.

The “digital divide” for Internet use
between those at the highest and low-
est education levels widened by 25% from 1997 to 1998.

Those with college degrees or higher
are ten times more likely to have
Internet access at work as persons with
only some high school education.

Mr. President technology is changing
our world. Technology is changing our
lives, how we work, and how we learn.
But this is not just a new economy, it
is our economy. And ours is not a
newly divided society. Mr. President,
this country has always been a society
of haves and have nots, and so although
we must respond to the unique chal-
lenge presented by the changing econ-
omy and the changing world of work,
we must also understand that bridging
the digital divide is about more than
just computers and the Internet. In
order to meet the challenge of bridging
the digital divide we must assist the
have nots with basic necessities, like a
good public education system, a safe
and clean place to live, and adequate
health care. We must recognize what I
hear from business leaders, teachers,
students, parents—everyone—the big-
gest technology issue in the United
States today is education. And we need
to make that connection.

Original articles talked about
technology and education—the earlier
days of our awareness that there was a
growing digital divide—we were fo-
cused on wiring schools and outfitting
them with equipment. Now, thanks in
large part to the success of the E-Rate
program, which we worked hard on in
the Commerce Committee and which we
pushed through to passage, new tech-
ology and education is about so much
more. In just a few years most of
our schools have gotten on-line. And
now the focus is on training teachers
to effectively use the technology, to in-
tegrate technology into the classroom,
and to improve parental involvement
through technology.

What we can do and what we must do
Mr. President, is work to harness tech-
nology to grow our economy and en-
large the winner’s circle. What we can
do and what we must do is work to
communicate this single reality: to
keep the economic growth moving
ahead we need to ensure that there is a
workforce and a generation of young people capable of
working with the best technology and the very best ideas to raise living
standards and expand the economy—
and that is why we must close the dig-
tital divide.

The digital divide goes far beyond
technology to encompass basic human
needs. Mr. President, if we can ensure
that there is a computer in every class-
room—for every student—the tech-
nology will not be effectively used,
learning will continue to be challenged
if the child does not have a safe and se-
cure home to go to at the end of the
day. If a child attends a school that is
falling apart, does it matter how much
money is spent on a classroom and
whether or not the school is wired? If
a child lives in a dangerous and violent
community—a reality for far too many
of this nation’s young people—the fear
of bullets and gangs is certain to tri-
umph over the desire to conquer new
technology will not be effectively used,

Mr. President, these are the issues of
the digital divide: adequate and afford-
able housing, safe and secure school
buildings, adequate health care, qual-
ified teachers, an increased minimum
wage, strong communities, and afford-
able day care. We must understand
that in order to seize upon this bril-
liant moment of technological advance
and move our entire nation forward, we
must address these basic needs. We
must shore up the foundation. Mr.
President and provide all our citizens
with opportunities as we march forward
in the digital age.

I ask my colleagues to ponder this
for a moment: change is nothing new,
technology is nothing new, the chal-
gen is the same as it’s ever been. But
we can use these new technologies to
extend opportunity to more Americans
than ever before—or if we’re not care-
ful, we could allow technology to
heighten economic inequality and
sharpen social divisions. By the same
token, we can accelerate the most pow-
erful engine of growth and prosperity
the world has ever known—or allow
that engine to stall. As every econom-
ics textbook will tell you, new tech-
nologies will continue to drive eco-
omic growth—but only if they con-
tinue to spread to all sectors of our
economy and civic life. And that’s the
challenge that faces this Congress and
this nation.

Mr. President, we have a real oppor-
tunity here—and I urge my colleagues
that parents often lose jobs, pay
in our society that have always existed
and also to close the digital divide.

FAMILY OPPORTUNITY ACT OF
2000

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, recently my colleagues, Senators
GRASSLEY, KENNEDY, JEFFORDS, and
HARKIN introduced The Family Oppor-
tunity Act of 2000. I have proudly
signed on to this important piece of
legislation which will help hundreds of
thousands of American families who
have children with disabilities get ac-
cess to Medicaid as well as obtain
much needed support and information.

The Family Opportunity Act is mod-
eled after last year’s successful Work
Incentives Improvement Act, which
assures adults with disabilities can re-
turn to work and not risk losing their
health care coverage. This new Act
will make it possible for middle-income
parents who have a child with special health needs to keep
working, while having an option to buy
in to Medicaid coverage for their child.

In my own state of West Virginia,
over 50,000 children are known to have
a disability. I have heard personally
from many of these families, who re-
mind me about their daily struggles of
sacrificing time, energy, and finances
to provide the best environment for
their child. In the past, this has meant
that parents often lose jobs, pay
raises and overtime just to keep their
income low enough so that they can
qualify for services under Medicaid for
their children with special health care
needs.

Medicaid coverage is so crucial to the
care because many private plans do
not offer essential services such as oc-
cupational, physical and speech ther-
apy, mental health services, home and
community-based services, and durable
medical equipment such as walkers and
wheelchairs, which if uncovered, can be
financially devastating to a family.

Under the Family Opportunity Act,
families would be required to first take
employer-sponsored health care, if available. The option to buy in to Medicaid would be used as a supplement to existing private insurance or as stand-alone coverage if employer-based coverage were not an option.

In addition to creating Medicaid buy-in options for families, the Family Opportunity Act proposes the establishment of Family to Family Health Information Centers. These Centers, staffed by both parents and professionals, would be available to help families identify and access appropriate health care for their children with special needs, as well as answer questions on filling out the necessary paperwork to establish health care coverage.

The Family Opportunity Act promises to promote early intervention, ensures medically necessary services, offers support, and will help restore family stability. I applaud my colleagues for proposing this important legislation, but even more important, I give a standing ovation to the dedicated families who give so greatly of themselves in caring for their children.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, June 15, 2000, the Federal debt stood at $5,644,606,868,488.81 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-four billion, six hundred eighty-seven million, eight hundred eighty-eight dollars and eighty-one cents).

Last year, June 16, 1999, the Federal debt stood at $5,579,687,718,133.89 (Five trillion, five hundred seventy-nine billion, six hundred eighty-seven million, one hundred thirty-three million, eight hundred thirty-three thousand, eight hundred ninety dollars and ninety-nine cents).

Five years ago, June 16, 1995, the Federal debt stood at $5,499,066,981,281 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-four billion, six hundred seven million, six hundred eighteen thousand, one hundred thousand, six hundred eighteen thousand, one hundred dollars and eighty-eight cents).

Ten years ago, June 16, 1990, the Federal debt stood at $5,438,972,000,000 (Five trillion, four hundred thirty-eight billion, nine hundred seventy-two million dollars).

Sixteen years ago, June 16, 1984, the Federal debt stood at $3,121,688,000,000 (Three trillion, one hundred twenty-one billion, six hundred eighty-eight million dollars).

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORS FOR AN ARKANSAS STUDENT

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute and to recognize a fellow Arkansan, Blake Rutherford, for his accomplishments at Middlebury College.

Blake is a native of Little Rock, attended Little Rock Central High School, and will be graduating from Middlebury College with a degree in Political Science in August 2000. This fine young man is the first student ever chosen at Middlebury College to give the Student Commencement Address. I wholeheartedly congratulate him on his achievements. I ask that the text of his speech be included following my remarks.

BLAKE RUTHERFORD'S COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

Today, we are fortunate to experience one of the great accomplishments in life. Like thousands throughout America, we are gathered at the beginning of a new millennium, a unique time in our nation and in our world. But unlike thousands we have come together in a very special place—nestled between the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains—a place where we worked hard, played hard, made lifelong friends, and have spent some of the best years of our lives. Paraphrasing the legendary Bob Hope, Middlebury: Thanks for the memories.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Class of 2000—individually and collectively—for your achievements. I also want to thank those, from the administration, faculty, and staff for providing us the very best. And I especially want to thank our parents and families for paying for it.

At our centennial celebration one hundred years ago, the Middlebury Register characterized it as the "day of days for the under-graduate." Today, a century later, is most certainly our day of days and one that we will celebrate and remember forever with great pride, for as Emerson noted, "The reward of a thing well done, is to have done it."

Middlebury College began in 1800 under the direction of President Jeremiah Atwater, a small building with only seven students. As we see almost 200 hundred years later, more than 2000 students larger, under the direction of President John McCardell, much has changed.

Built for only $3,000, Painter Hall, constructed between 1814 and 1816, is currently the oldest building on campus. Although it stands the same today, the environment and the atmosphere around it do not.

Admittance into Middlebury in 1815 used to consist of a formal examination in Latin, Greek and arithmetic. Remember back four years ago, I could only wish the process was as simple.

But today, thanks to the efforts of many, Middlebury is blessed with a stronger, more diverse student body than it has ever had. We have seen the number of applicants to Middlebury grow steadily over the past four years.

Middlebury's reputation grow and spread all over the United States and to dozens of countries across the world.

Our accomplishment and our experiences have taught us a lot about ourselves and about Middlebury College. As we strive to be a more diverse environment, we find ourselves struggling to come to terms with many difficult questions and issues. In answering these, let us turn to the lessons taught to us by three prominent Middlebury graduates.

Roswell Field graduated from Middlebury College in 1822. Upon his departure from the College he is most famous for arguing to the Supreme Court on behalf of a slave named Dred Scott. Although the Court did not rule in his favor, his case taught the country about the concept of the right to equality and justice and should not be permitted against any group, at any level.

Alexander Twilight received his Middlebury diploma in 1823, and in turn became one of the first African-Americans to receive a college degree. Today, several minority students will walk across this stage as members of the class of 2000. No doubt, Mr. Twilight would be encouraged.

Ron Brown graduated from Middlebury in 1962. Upon his arrival here, which at the time was an all white, one campus fraternity objected, saying they only permitted "White, Christian" members. Brown and other members of his fraternity chose to fight. In time our local chapter was expelled, but because of his efforts, Middlebury, more importantly, made it college policy that no exclusionary chapters would exist on campus.

Ron Brown had an exemplary professional career serving as Secretary of Commerce until his death in a tragic plane crash in 1996. Jesse Jackson once said of him, "He led by a bright, unselfish, and uncompromising... I hope we all can remember that lesson here today. A lesson, no doubt, Ron Brown learned at Middlebury College.

We come a long way since these individuals were here, but we still have a long way to go.

I am a son of the South. I came a far distance to go to school here. Access to Middlebury was my own impossible dream.

I graduated from Little Rock Central High School where 43 years ago nine African-American students were denied admittance prompting a constitutional crisis our nation had not seen since the Civil War.

While much progress has been made, today in the Mississippi Delta region of our own country—just a couple of hours from my home—there is poverty at its very worst.

Several years ago the late Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois was speaking at a ceremony at the Gettysburg Battlefield where he said, "Men died here and men are sleeping here who fought under a July sun that the nation might endure: united, free, tolerant, and devoted to equality. The task was unfinished. It is never quite finished."

He was right. It is never quite finished. With our Middlebury generation we're now going to embark on a world full of many wonderful opportunities and also of many grave problems. If we can remember two important lessons, our lives and certainly our world will be a much better place. First, the future can always be better than the present. And second, we have a responsibility to ensure that that is the case. It is a responsibility we have to ourselves, to our communities, to Middlebury and most importantly to those who are not as fortunate to be here, among us, today.

This afternoon we leave Middlebury with a greater knowledge of various academic fields, the world and ourselves. We also leave Middlebury young and energetic, bound closer to one another more than we probably ever will be through our friendships, our relationships, and our experiences. And with that, we now have the opportunity to help and serve others.

Robert Kennedy said, "This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temporary supremacy of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite of adventure over the love of ease."

Today, we make history as the first graduating class of Middlebury's third century. It is an accomplishment that I'm sure makes