

the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SPECTER (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. JEFFORDS, and Mr. CHAFEE):

S. 216. A bill to establish a Commission for the comprehensive study of voting procedures in Federal, State, and local elections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DODD, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 217. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a uniform dollar limitation for all types of transportation fringe benefits excludable from gross income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. AL-LARD, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BURNS, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BREAUX, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. WARNER, Mr. REID, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 218. A bill to establish an Election Administration Commission to study Federal, State, and local voting procedures and election administration and provide grants to modernize voting procedures and election administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. DODD (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HOLLINGS, and Mr. HAGEL):

S. 219. A bill to suspend for two years the certification procedures under section 490(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 in order to foster greater multilateral cooperation in international counternarcotics programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. HATCH):

S. 220. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 221. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Energy to make loans through a revolving loan fund for States to construct electricity generation facilities for use in electricity supply emergencies; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. Res. 15. A resolution congratulating the Baltimore Ravens for winning the Super Bowl XXXV; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. INOUE:

S. Con. Res. 5. A concurrent resolution commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the United States Army Nurse Corps; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TORRICELLI (for himself and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. Con. Res. 6. A concurrent resolution expressing the sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck India on January 26, 2001, and support for ongoing aid efforts; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KYL, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 203. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an above-the-line deduction for qualified professional development expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers and to allow a credit against income tax to elementary and secondary school teachers who provide classroom materials; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today with my friend and colleague from Arizona, Senator KYL, to introduce the Teacher Support Act of 2001. We are very pleased to be joined by our good friend and colleague, Senator LANDRIEU, in proposing this legislation.

Senator KYL and I crafted this bill to help our teachers when they pursue professional development or pay for supplies for their classrooms.

Our legislation has two major provisions.

First, it will allow teachers and teacher aides to take an above-the-line deduction for their professional development expenses. Thus, educators who don't itemize their deductions will still be able to benefit from tax-favored treatment for their professional development.

Second, the legislation will grant educators a tax credit of up to \$100 for books, supplies, and other materials that they purchase for their classrooms. According to a study by the National Education Association, the average public school teacher spends more than \$400 annually on classroom supplies. This sacrifice, I think, is typical of the dedication of many of our schoolteachers toward their students.

While our legislation provides some financial assistance to educators, its ultimate beneficiaries will be their students. Other than involved parents, a well-qualified teacher is the most important prerequisite for students' success. Educational researchers have demonstrated over and over again the close relationship between qualified educators and successful students. Moreover, educators themselves understand how important professional development is to maintaining and extending their level of competence.

Mr. President, when I meet with teachers from my State of Maine, they repeatedly tell me of their need for more professional development and the scarcity of financial support for this worthy pursuit. As President Bush has put it, "Teachers sometimes lead with their hearts and pay with their wallets."

The willingness of Maine's teachers to fund their own professional development activities has deeply impressed me. For example, an English teacher, who serves on my education advisory committee, told me of spending her

own money to attend a curriculum conference. She then came back and shared her new knowledge with all of the teachers in her department at Bangor High School. She is typical of the many educators who generously reach into their own pockets to pay for professional development and to purchase materials to enhance their teaching.

Let me explain how our legislation works in terms of real dollars. In my home State, the average yearly starting salary of a public school teacher is about \$23,300. Under the current law, even a teacher who is earning this modest salary cannot deduct the first \$466 in professional development expenses that he or she paid for out-of-pocket. That is because of the requirement in the current law that sets a floor of 2 percent that has to be reached before the cost of the course or other professional development is deductible. Moreover, under current law, professional development expenses above \$466 can be deducted only if the teacher itemizes his or her deductions. Only about one-third of our Nation's schoolteachers do itemize their tax deductions.

Our legislation would enable all educators, regardless of whether or not they itemize deductions, to receive tax relief for professional development expenses.

I greatly admire the many educators who have voluntarily financed additional education to improve their skills so that they may better serve their students. I admire those teachers who purchase books, supplies, equipment, and other materials for their students in order to enhance their teaching.

I hope this change in our Tax Code will encourage educators to continue their formal course work in the subject matter they teach and to attend conferences to give them new ideas for presenting course work in a challenging manner. This bill will reimburse educators for a small part of what they invest in our children's future. This money would be well spent. Investing in education helps us to build one of the most important assets for our country's future—a well educated population. We need to ensure that our public schools have the very best educators possible in order to bring out the very best in our students.

Last year, Senator KYL and I offered a similar version of this legislation as an amendment to the Affordable Education Act of 2000. Our amendment enjoyed overwhelming support and passed the Senate by a vote of 98-0. Unfortunately, the underlying bill was not taken up by the House of Representatives.

This year, we are very pleased that President Bush has made the classroom supplies portion of our bill part of his education platform, and that our legislation has received the support of the