

These measures would be truly planting a tree to honor the Earth.

It is bipartisan. I really can't imagine why we are not considering this bill. We agreed to 2 hours on this side. I hope the majority will allow us to take the bill up immediately. It is good environmental legislation. It speaks for what Earth Day is all about.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Nevada for his inspirational work this morning. There is no one who cares more about the quality of the environment than Senator HARRY REID. I join with him in calling for taking up a brownfields bill. It would be good for my State and for all States in this Union. I very much appreciate his leadership on that critical subject.

QUALITY EDUCATION

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise this morning to address what I believe to be most important issue facing our country today; that is, improving the quality of education received by every child across this country. It will affect not only our future prosperity but the kind of Nation in which we live and the vibrancy of our very democracy.

I thank all colleagues who helped bring us to this historic point, starting with my friend and colleague, Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, with whom I have enjoyed working on this issue for the last several years; our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Senator GREGG, Senator FRIST, Senator JEFFORDS, and others; and the Democratic members on the HELP Committee, Senator DODD and others, but principally Senator KENNEDY.

I want to say a special word about Senator KENNEDY this morning. His dedication to improving the quality of America's educational system is truly remarkable. He has proven himself to be not only principled but pragmatic. He fights for what he believes in, but he is not willing to sacrifice real progress for America's schoolchildren for the older ideological ideas. Without his hard work and dedication, we would not be where we are today.

I thank all of these leaders for bringing us to where we are. It has been a long road for me personally and a long road for many of us in this Chamber.

My thoughts go back to 1989, my first year as Governor, when President Bush called us to a national summit in the city of Charlottesville.

For only the third time in our Nation's history, all 50 Governors had gathered together to focus on a single subject. The first time was Teddy Roosevelt's focus on the issue of the environment. In this case, it was President Bush's first focus on the subject of education. We came out of that summit

dedicated to the standards and accountability movement, and we established the National Education Goals Panel, of which I was an initial member. I had the privilege of serving, in later years, as chairman.

From there I went on and had the privilege of serving as the chairman of the Education Commission of the States, a collection of State and local officials who work to improve the quality of our schools at the State and local levels.

Finally, I had the privilege of serving on the National Assessment of Educational Progress Board, the NAEP Board, trying to devise the very best assessments for our children, authentic assessments, that tell us more than if they can memorize rote knowledge, but instead whether they can think and reason and express themselves intelligently.

It has also been a long road for this Senate. I, again, thank Senator LIEBERMAN and my colleagues at the Progressive Policy Institute, who helped fashion the principles that lie at the heart of the bill we will soon take up. We stand on the precipice of historic progress saying that the status quo that leaves too many of our children behind is no longer good enough. The consequences of failure today are greater than ever before. We must do better. I believe we can.

During the campaign last year, I was very pleased when President Bush adopted many of the principles that lay at the heart of our bill. That was an important step in the right direction. I give him credit for that. I am proud that the thinking in my own caucus has evolved on many of these critical issues. So there has been a convergence of thought, and now a consensus exists on the part of most of us of what needs to be done to improve the quality of our local schools. The principles and the values are the same, even if occasionally we have differences of opinion about how to embrace those principles and give them full meaning in the context of education today.

We stand on the threshold of great progress, the most significant educational progress in a generation. Accountability lies at the heart of our agenda. We redefine the definition of "success." No longer will we define success for America's schoolchildren merely in terms of how much we spend, but instead we will define success in terms of how much our children learn.

There will be high academic standards and assessments to determine how every child is doing toward meeting those standards. Everyone in the process will be held responsible for making progress—every school, every school district, every State—each and every year.

For the first time, there will be real consequences—real consequences—for academic failure. In relation to some of

the new money dedicated to new administrative funding, if progress is not made, it will be reduced, because it only makes sense that if the funding is not achieving the progress for which it was intended, it should be redirected into ways which will achieve real progress.

For the first time, America's parents will be given an important choice. If your local school is not doing well enough for several successive years, you will be allowed to send your child to a better performing public school. You will begin to have an option of receiving supplemental services, additional instruction on top of that provided in your local school, to give your child the reading, writing, and scientific knowledge that your child will need to be successful in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

We inject competition—true competition—into the system, embracing market forces for the innovation and additional accountability they can bring. We seek to achieve the best of both worlds, with charter schools, magnet schools, robust public school choice, but not withdrawing the important resources necessary to making our public schools flourish.

We avoid the false choices of those who say that the only way to improve the quality of education is to abandon our public schools, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, those who say the status quo is good enough and that the answer to the challenges facing America's schools is simply to add more money.

We embrace the notion of additional flexibility for our local schools and States. We cut through the redtape that too often has bogged us down at the Federal level. We only ask in return that our local schools and school districts give us additional progress for the flexibility that we provide.

We invest in professional development. Every study I have ever seen—I know the Presiding Officer has labored in these vineyards as a Governor, as did I—every study I have ever seen indicates the two most important variables in determining a child's academic success is, first, whether a parent is involved or engaged in that child's educational activities, making it a priority at the home; and, secondly, whether there is a well-prepared and highly motivated classroom professional teacher in that classroom, helping to provide the individual instruction every one of our children needs and every one of our children deserves.

These are the principles that lie at the heart of our bill: increased accountability for everyone; more competition in parental choice within the context of public education; more flexibility for our States and local school districts; and investing in professional development, to ensure that every classroom has a motivated, highly

trained teacher that every child deserves.

But now, my friends, we come to the critical moment. Now we face the acid test which will determine whether our actions will truly live up to our words. We are all for reform. We are all for accountability. But will we do what it takes in a practical sense to make reform and accountability work? I believe we must. We are all for holding everyone else responsible—the classroom teachers, school principals, district superintendents, Governors; everyone else in this process—but will we hold ourselves, this institution, accountable? Will we hold this President and this administration accountable to doing what it takes to give meaning to the words that we speak? I believe we must.

Last week I visited schools across my State, in Evansville, in South Bend, in Fort Wayne, in Indianapolis, in Floyd County. I saw the difference the Title I dollars are making in the lives of our children and in the quality of instruction taking place in our classrooms. It was a wonderful thing to behold. I compliment those teachers and principals and school superintendents who are using those dollars to give those children hope and educational opportunity.

But as I visited those schools and saw what was working and making a difference, I was also saddened to remember that 6.8 million children—6.8 million of our young people—who are qualified to receive that assistance are instead receiving none. What about them? Will they be left behind? If we do not rise to this challenge, I am afraid they will.

President Bush, during the campaign last year, pledged to leave no child behind. I commend him for that pledge. Now it is up to us and to him to redeem it. And so we must. We will enact a system of standards adopted by the States, assessments to determine how each and every one of our children are doing. We will insist upon results.

But what do we do with the results of those assessments when they tell us so many of our children need to do better? Do we simply pat them on the head, wish them good luck, and say: Now you are on your own? Of course we must do better than that.

Throwing dollars at our schools without accountability is a waste; but accountability without the means to truly improve the quality of instruction our children are receiving is nothing but a cruel hoax.

I call upon my colleagues in this Chamber and our new President to join with us, to join with us in a historic effort of improving the quality of instruction for our children who need it most, to join with us in embracing reform, but also what it means in a tangible, practical dollars-and-cents way of making reform work.

Our actions in this great Chamber must be more than a facade of reform.

The bill that we enact and that the President signs must offer more than an illusion of progress. We must not individually or collectively participate in perpetuating a hoax upon America's schoolchildren. It is important for me to acknowledge that from time to time on this side of the aisle there has been a diversity of thought on this subject. But when it comes to the commitment of resources to make the reform work, to make progress become a reality, we stand united and determined.

This debate is not about accountability versus spending. We are all for accountability. We are all for reform. This debate is a question of priorities and whether we will do what the American people have been asking of us for so very long now; and that is, to make the quality of our children's education our No. 1 priority. I believe we must.

The President's tax package this next year calls for devoting \$68 billion to the cause of tax relief.

That is a cause which I embrace, as do many of my colleagues. We believe some tax relief for the hard-working taxpayers of America is in order for a variety of reasons, but it is not our only priority.

The President's proposal, as it currently stands, calls for investing \$2.6 billion in improving the quality of education, 25 times more for reducing taxes than investing in the quality of our children's education. I support tax cuts. I support tax relief, but it is not 25 times more important than our children's education. We can and should have both. We should not be forced to make this unnecessary choice between two alternatives, both of which can be accommodated if the administration will be more forthcoming with resources.

In conclusion, this debate is about education reform, and it is about the resources to make education reform work. More important than that, it is about the credibility of this institution and those of us who are privileged to comprise it. Will we do more than read the polls and put together a construct to satisfy our constituents, to make them believe we are doing something about improving the quality of education for our children, when, in fact, we are not; or will we make the difficult decision and allocate the resources that are necessary to live up to the challenge we face, to fulfill the expectations they have a right to expect of us? I believe we should.

I call upon the Members of the Senate and the administration and this President to join with us to redeem the pledge he made in the campaign, the pledge that all of us embrace of leaving no child behind and to devote the resources to our schools to make accountability, reform, and progress be more than empty words but a reality in the daily lives of our schools.

I am privileged to be in the Chamber with my colleague from California with

whom I have worked on this issue and so many others. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENSIGN). The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I begin by thanking the junior Senator from Indiana for those remarks. He stands in the leadership of this body in terms of his views on education. I, for one, am very appreciative of them.

ENERGY CRISIS IN CALIFORNIA

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I will use my time in morning business to update the Senate on the status of the electricity crisis in California.

April is typically the best time of year for California when it comes to meeting its energy needs. Winter has ended in northern California, and the southern part of the State has not yet begun to get hot. Thus, the demand for energy is low throughout the State, and California has always had more than enough power to meet its needs. As a result, electricity is usually very cheap. So this is as good a time as any to provide an update of where the State is and to see how this year is different from all other years. The last ten months provide a gloomy picture of what may well happen this summer.

The average cost of electricity for California this month has been about \$300 a megawatt hour. This is more than 10 times higher than the average for last April, right before the crisis began. The average price for electricity in the States of Washington and Oregon is even higher, and the price for electricity bought in the futures market for this summer is now averaging more than \$750 a single megawatt hour.

The State Department of Water Resources, which since January has been purchasing all of California's power needs, has now spent \$5.2 billion purchasing power just in the first months of this year. It is spending at a rate of \$73 million a day. This is having a serious financial impact on the State's credit standing. Yesterday's Standard & Poor's downgraded the State's credit rating two notches from AA to A-plus.

It is important to point out that the money the State is spending to buy electricity is gone. It does not buy a textbook or a computer for a school. It won't repair a bridge or road. It will not build a highway. It doesn't go for law enforcement. It is money that simply disappears. As a result, the State could well be out of money.

At the same time, the Northwest is experiencing what may well be its driest year on record. Consequently, California will not be able to rely on the 7,000 to 8,000 megawatts of power it typically imports from the Northwest in the summer—usually enough for 7 to 8 million homes. There will not be enough power in the Northwest to even meet its own energy needs this summer.