

I have been really disappointed and surprised with this administration's attention to the energy crisis. I have written to the President three times now asking to meet with him and explain the situation. So far, he has not yet agreed to meet with me.

The Vice President and the Energy Secretary through this Presidential Task Force are talking about how the Federal Government is going to help. However, adding 1,600 new power plants over the next 20 years is not the answer we need. Nobody questions that we need more supply in the long term. But we have a situation where prices have been spiking for almost a year in California and about 6 months in other parts of the Northwest, where the Northwest is experiencing the driest hydro year on record. This is where we need the help.

This is where the Federal Government has a duty to help. California and the Northwest badly need a period of stability and reliability, and this is where the Federal Government can help. I argue that this is where the Federal Government has a duty to step in and protect consumers from being gouged. As I said, California is adding 20,000 new megawatts itself which is the equivalent of forty new average-sized plants, without any Federal prompting.

Lastly, I am also quite surprised that the Vice President, in his remarks yesterday, essentially said that wind, solar, geothermal and other renewable energy sources are still too far into the future and the future is all fossil fuels.

Even if that were true, the truth of the matter is that nuclear power, for instance, takes years and years to cite and there is nothing this administration can do to help with the supply we need this summer and next summer.

I, again, urge my colleagues to support Senator GORDON SMITH and I and force FERC to take action and address the problem. The alternative may be an economic disaster for the entire country this summer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 today Senator THOMAS be recognized for up to 1 hour allotted post cloture and, following that time, Senator WELLSTONE be recognized for his hour post cloture.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, acting in my capacity as a Senator from Oklahoma, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I have been listening to the debate on education reform for the last few days. I think it is interesting we are talking about two different things. I hear Senator WELLSTONE and Senator KENNEDY talk about money. Everything is about money. We are absolutely convinced if we don't have reform of our public education system, throwing the rest of the Federal budget at it will not work. We will not see improvements if we don't reform the underlying system.

Our public education system is failing. It is failing because there is such a variation of standards. Some of our public schools are terrific, but they are not all terrific. Some are even abysmal. That is not the standard of quality for public education we should stand for in this country. We are trying to reform the system so there will be a standard under which any child in this country who is educated in our public schools will be a child who can reach his or her full potential so that no child will be left behind. We are trying to set a minimum standard that every child must meet or, if the child doesn't, that we will give that child help.

We have seen the high school dropout rates. They are alarming in some areas of our country. What is interesting, when we go to the root of the problem and we talk to these young people who have dropped out of high school in despair, there is a basic reason. The basic reason is they can't read.

Why not go down to the third grade and catch these young people who are having problems reading and give them a chance to have the full ability to absorb the education they are receiving? If we shuffle them from one grade to the next grade to the next grade, a social promotion, and they still can't read in the 10th grade, who is surprised that the children are frustrated? They are sitting in classes, trying to learn algebra, math, science, history, and geography, and they don't have third grade reading skills. Of course they are going to be frustrated.

What we are proposing is an accountability, a standard, that says every

child will be tested in the third grade. If that child isn't reading at grade level in the third grade, we are going to hold them back. We are going to give them tutors. We are going to give them the tools they need to be able to participate in their education and in this country the future.

That is what reform is. Reform is not just throwing more money at the problem. Reform is getting parents involved, in getting teachers, in getting principals involved, in letting the local school districts make the decisions about what will be the best for the individual children in that district. That is what reform is. It is not throwing money at it and having regulations coming out of Washington, DC.

We are trying to set a standard by which every child in this country will be able to read at grade level in the third grade. I think we are going to see the test scores soar across our country if we can get over the hurdle of talking just about money and start talking about reform.

Reform includes accountability. A lot of people wring their hands and talk about tests: We don't want tests; we don't want too many artificial tests; we don't want teachers teaching to the tests. If we are testing for the basic skills, why wouldn't we teach to the test and improve what the children are learning? If we teach to the test and the test is fundamental reading, fundamental math, fundamental science, fundamental history, then we need to have a standard by which to judge what is happening in our schools.

Another reform is reporting, making sure that parents have the tools and the information to make the best decisions for their children. In fact, if a parent doesn't know how the school is doing and how the children in the school are doing, how can they know their children are getting the best opportunity that is available?

In my State, we have a report card. It is called the Just For Kids Program. The test scores of every elementary and junior high school—and we are going now through the high schools—in Texas will have a report card that shows the test scores and how the test scores have grown in that particular school. If that school is compared to other schools in the same socioeconomic, demographic area and that school does not compare well, the parents then have the information and the parents will be able to say to the principal, wait a minute, why is this school not performing? We want to give parents the ability to question. We think by questioning, we can see improvements.

We are talking about reform, not money. We are talking about doing things a different way. We are talking about reading at grade level in the third grade so in the eighth grade the child will have the chance to learn the