

overwhelmingly passed the ICC Termination Act. With all due respect to those Members of the House, I authorized the ICC Termination Act and can unequivocally say they are dead wrong. The Hollings amendment is nothing more than a technical correction. In the ICC legislation, the Senate never intended to strip Federal Express or any person of rights without the benefit of a hearing, debate, or even discussion. Now, fairness dictates we correct that inadvertent error. That is precisely what the Hollings amendment does. It is exactly why I supported it in conference. It is why I continue to strongly support it.

Today's debate should be about this truly historic piece of aviation legislation which reflects the outstanding work Congress does when it proceeds on a bipartisan basis. Unfortunately, I fear the debate regrettably will focus on the Hollings amendment which is contained in just 5 lines of a 189-page bill. All too often, Congress is criticized for losing sight of the big picture. Today, if this debate proceeds as I fear it may, the Senate will reinforce that perception.

Some members of the American public watching this debate from the gallery of a C-SPAN will understandably ask themselves "has the Senate lost sight of the goal of ensuring the safety and security of air travel in the United States?" Others will ask themselves "has the Senate forgotten the importance of safety-related repairs and other improvements of our Nation's airports?" And the family members of aviation disaster victims will correctly ask "why has the Senate failed to listen to our pleas to put in place measures to improve the treatment of families of future aviation disaster victims?"

And, Mr. President, each and every one of these questions will be perfectly valid. I would hate to be in the position of having to answer them.

We owe it to the American public to preempt these questions by resisting the invitation to lose sight of the bigger picture. Today, we are trying to pass a historic aviation safety and security bill. Let's move beyond 5 lines in a 189-page bill. Let's get the job done for the American public. I urge that the Senate immediately take up for consideration the conference report to accompany H.R. 3539.

Mr. President, earlier today I wrote the Vice President of the United States urging him to support swift and final passage of the conference report accompanying H.R. 3539. In that letter, I reminded the Vice President that two of the most important aviation security recommendations made by the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security—deployment of explosive detection devices at our Nation's airports and criminal background checks for baggage screeners—cannot be implemented without the statutory authorization to do so provided in this legislation. These impor-

tant recommendations to enhance the security of air travel in the United States cannot wait until we reconvene next year. We must pass those two provisions before we adjourn. We must pass this legislation before we adjourn. I ask unanimous consent to have that letter printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION
Washington, September 30, 1996.

Hon. ALBERT GORE, JR.,
Vice President of the United States,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. VICE PRESIDENT: As the Senate Majority Leader's designee to the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, I am writing to urge you to actively support final passage of the Conference Report accompanying H.R. 3539, the Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act of 1996. As you know, H.R. 3539 is a bipartisan, omnibus aviation safety and security bill. It is vitally important the Conference Report passes the Senate prior to adjournment.

Based on a meeting with your staff, I understand several of the Commission's recommendations require statutory authority to be undertaken. Without such authorization, I was told these recommendations to enhance our nation's aviation security cannot be implemented. Specifically, I am referring to statutory authority to deploy government purchased explosive detection devices in our nation's airports and to conduct criminal background checks on baggage screeners.

The Conference Report to H.R. 3539 responds to the Administration's request for statutory authority in these two areas. Section 305(b) authorizes the deployment of explosive detection devices and Section 304 permits criminal background checks on baggage screeners. In addition, the legislation embraces a number of other recommendations made by the Commission which enjoy bipartisan support such as comprehensive measures to improve the treatment of the families of aviation disaster victims.

Mr. Vice President, I hope you agree the Senate must approve the Conference Report accompanying H.R. 3539 before it adjourns. Otherwise, according to your staff, two of the most important recommendations of the Commission—interim deployment of government purchased explosive detection devices and criminal background checks for baggage screeners—cannot be implemented. We must not let that happen.

I look forward to working with you to ensure this critically important aviation safety and security legislation passes the Senate as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

LARRY PRESSLER,
Chairman.

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

OMNIBUS CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I earlier spoke about the problems with this

bill actually resulting in hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals actually being fired from their jobs.

I would like to turn to some good news this time about the bill about the District of Columbia. It includes important provisions for the District of Columbia. In addition to provisions on school facilities, the conference agreement improves the ability of public charter schools to operate in the city.

The condition of school facilities in the District of Columbia has reached a crisis stage. Those who live here know that. It has been front-page news in the papers for weeks.

As of Friday, four public schools still remained closed due to fire code violations, displacing almost 2,000 students. A breakdown in oversight and accountability has occurred at the expense of the children in this city.

Strong and immediate action must be taken to reverse this situation. This bill does it. Children in the District of Columbia must be able to attend public schools that are safe and free of facility deficiencies that lead to their closure. The General Services Administration estimates the cost of repairs at \$88.6 million for severe facility deficiencies in fiscal year 1997. The total deficiencies are about \$2 billion.

As estimated, \$40.7 million will be available from existing appropriations and borrowing. Additional resources are needed to prevent unsafe conditions and school closures. But these resources cannot be provided to a school system which has demonstrated an inability to effectively manage its resources.

I have, therefore, sought inclusion of a provision in the omnibus bill to provide resources to combat facility deficiencies while placing responsibility for the expenditure of funds with the DC Financial Control Board, not the school system. In addition, the General Services Administration will provide program management services for the repairs and capital improvements.

The provision makes available an estimated \$52.7 million to the control board to carry out a program of facility repairs and capital improvements. The bill makes these funds by reallocating \$40.7 million to the Authority from operations funds appropriated, and capital financing authority provided, in previous appropriations acts.

The provision also makes available an estimated \$12 million from the privatization of both the Student Loan Marketing Association, fondly known as Sallie Mae, and the College Construction Loan Insurance Association, commonly known as Connie Lee, as the Senator from Connecticut, who is on the floor, is well aware. We acted at his request.

The availability of these resources means that immediate action will be taken to repair facility deficiencies in DC schools. In addition, the Congress will closely monitor the progress of facility repairs and will consider providing additional funds in a supplemental

appropriation during the spring of fiscal year 1997. This comes from my consultation with the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. In the interim, the control board will be able to reprogram funds for facility repairs, if necessary.

Mr. President, I appreciate the concern that some of my colleagues, no doubt, have about any increase in Federal assistance for the District of Columbia, given its dismal track record in managing resources. However, I remind my colleagues that we have previously taken strong action to prevent future mismanagement by establishing the control board and the chief financial officer.

The additional funds provided for improving school facilities, as well as previous funds provided, will be fully managed by the control board, not the school system nor the District of Columbia government. Moreover, I must also point out that we have an obligation to the well-being of the children in the Nation's Capital. We have accepted that responsibility. This obligation includes the condition of the schools they attend.

I thank Chairman HATFIELD for including a provision for the District of Columbia in the conference agreement, given that the regular appropriations bill for the District has already been signed into law. He recognizes, as I do, and as Chairman LIVINGSTON does, the obligation of the Congress to the children of the Nation's Capital. We have a joinder on that understanding and have acted quickly and decisively to make sure what happened this year does not happen next year. I would also like to thank the ranking minority member on the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, Senator KOHL, for working with me to include this provision.

This is only a start. There is much more we need to do for the kids in this city. As long as I am in the Senate, I assure you I am going to do everything I can to make this a city we can be proud of, especially with respect to education.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DODD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, several weeks ago, during the consideration of the welfare reform bill, I came to the floor and expressed my views on that legislation. At the time, I characterized the bill as an unconscionable retreat from our Nation's more than 60-year commitment to America's poorest children.

Unfortunately, I still believe that to be the case today. In the past 60 years, while we have disagreed and quarreled in this country on some issues, all Americans, regardless of party or ideology, understood that it was in our national interest to protect the most innocent and defenseless of our people—

the 9 million children who collect Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Whether you are from Connecticut, California, Maine or Mississippi, if all else fails, your National Government would not rip the safety net from underneath a poor child's feet.

With the passage of the welfare reform bill, I believe we have abandoned that 60-year-old commitment. While the welfare reform legislation may have been, in my view, a retreat, it is by no means a surrender. A surrender would indicate that we are throwing up our arms because the struggle is over. A retreat, on the other hand, means it is a temporary setback, not the end of the battle. Unfortunately, the battle is not going to be fought in the remaining hours of the 104th Congress. But I pledge to my colleagues here that one of my first priorities in the 105th Congress will be to propose legislation that will correct what I consider to be major flaws in the welfare reform bill.

Already I have instructed the General Accounting Office to begin assessing the effect of the welfare reform bill so that Congress can closely monitor its impact on America's welfare system and particularly on our Nation's children.

While I disagree with many aspects of the welfare reform legislation, its passage brings us to a new point, I believe, in how we deal with poverty and social issues in this country. We are now waging this battle on a new front and with a new set of parameters. The blame game on welfare is over. The time has come to move beyond divisive rhetoric and to find innovative ways to make this welfare legislation work for America's poorest children. Simply passing the problem on to the States and our local communities—as if they have all the answers and all of the resources to grapple with this problem—is not a solution. It is, as President Clinton has often stated, only the beginning. There is still significant work to be done.

First and foremost, Mr. President, we must redouble our efforts to create good-paying jobs for welfare recipients striving to end the cycle of poverty and dependency. The bill that this Senate and this Congress passed, while professing to move people from welfare to work—a concept that I wholeheartedly endorse—failed to provide the funds needed to reach that goal. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill is \$12 billion short of funds needed to meet the bill's stringent requirements.

Consider, for example, that if today every new job in New York City was to be filled by a current welfare recipient, it would take 21 years for all these people to be absorbed into the city's economy. Does any Member of this body really think that millions of jobs offering good wages with health benefits are suddenly going to appear out of thin air? Absolutely not, particularly if we fail to focus on job creation and providing greater funds for assistance, train-

ing, and education, that give welfare recipients, in our cities and our States, the chance to achieve the self-sufficiency this bill calls for.

As important as job creation is, Mr. President, to the success of welfare reform, it will mean nothing if we do not allocate significant resources to child care. While I was pleased to see that more funds were provided for child care in the legislation than was originally proposed, more is needed on this front.

If this bill is to be successful in permanently getting people off welfare, as well as helping those already in the job market, working parents must be sure that their children will be well taken care of. The Congressional Budget Office again estimates that there is close to a \$1.4 billion shortfall in the child care funds for the working poor and people in transition from welfare to work. This discrepancy has to be addressed in the next Congress if this legislation is going to succeed. So, too, must the provision allowing mothers with children between the ages of 6 and 10 to be sanctioned and potentially lose benefits if they cannot find or afford child care.

Remember, we tried to strike that provision, but we lost. And so today, if you have children between the ages of 6 and 10, and you are out trying to find work, the fact that you cannot find child care and cannot marshal the adequate resources could cause you to lose all your benefits. Again, I do not understand the wisdom of that. What happens to 6- and 7- and 8- and 9-year-olds and 10-year-olds in this situation? If their mothers cannot find child care, who is to take care of them? What happens to these children? And yet, that is not provided for in the legislation. My hope would be that this is one of the provisions we would try and correct in the next Congress.

At the absolute least, we, as a nation, should be able to guarantee to children under the age of 10 that they will not be left home alone, to fend for themselves while their parents are out trying to make the difficult adjustment from welfare to work. However, it seems that when it comes to the discussion of welfare reform in this Chamber, there seems to be a constant fundamental disconnect between rhetoric and reality. The fact is, we simply cannot ask welfare recipients, struggling to get by, struggling to make ends meet, struggling to raise a family, to keep a job if Congress does not provide adequate child care.

Of course, the issue of child care rubs both ways, for both working parents and, of course, their young children. Obviously, child care is about more than just helping working parents. It is about ensuring that our Nation's poor children will not be neglected.

When we debated the welfare reform bill, we came just short of the necessary votes of providing vouchers for children whose families reach the 5-year limit. To my colleague's credit, from the State of Louisiana, Senator