problem-solving skills were highest in students who received 2 years of the special program, next best in those who had 1 year, and worst in those who received the standard curriculum.

The findings of a nationwide survey on the attitudes of Americans toward the arts, conducted by Louis Harris and released this month, found that 9 in 10 Americans believed that when children get involved in the arts in school, they ''become more creative and imaginative,'' ''develop skills that make them feel more accomplished,'' and ''learn to communicate well.'' Over 8 in 10 Americans also feel that exposure to the arts ''helps young people develop discipline and perseverance'' and helps them ''to learn skills that can be useful in a job.'' The Pawtucket youngsters confirm these beliefs.

My second example stems from a 2-hour public forum organized as part of the 16th International Sculpture Conference in Providence last week. At this meeting, numerous civic, cultural, and business leaders came forward to show how the arts have served to stimulate the economic revival of downtown Providence. What is happening in Rhode Island is happening nationally. Nonprofit arts organizations create nearly $37 billion in economic activity in the United States every year, and support 1.3 million American jobs.

The arts are one of the best and the cheapest ways of improving the economy. The arts stimulate business development, spur urban renewal, attract new businesses, and improve the overall quality of life in our cities and towns. Roger Mandle at the Rhode Island School of Design has repeatedly demonstrated the importance of design to both the economy and greater ease in every day life. Existing and available cultural resources are frequently cited as one of the prime reasons businesses select to move to a community. The arts can literally turn a community or neighborhood around.

One of the best illustrations of the impact of the arts on the economy is tourism, and tourism is the fastest growing economic market in the United States today. In Providence, the Providence Performing Arts Center and Trinity Square Repertory Company have brought countless audiences to their theaters, with many people spending money on restaurants, shops, parking, and the like that would not do so otherwise without the presence of the arts. Recent discussions among the museums in the downtown area have led to the exciting concept of a Museum Mile connecting these cultural institutions through a collective effort in marketing, fundraising, parking, transportation. The result will attract visitors from all over the country to Providence. When the arts is good, more people are employed, and more taxable income generates more revenue for our State and local municipalities.

There are more artists per square mile living in Providence than in any other city in the United States, and this number is likely to increase with the passage of proposed State legislation that would provide State income and sales breaks to artists living or working in the central business district. One bill would exempt these artists from paying sales tax on plays, books, musical compositions, paintings and sculpture. A second bill would provide these artists with a personal tax exempt. The Rhode Island House Finance Committee has voted its approval. In praising the effort, Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr. states: ''These bills, while supporting our artists and arts, promote economic development and tourism and will create a more dynamic synergy among the Arts and Entertainment District, Capital Center and the Province Place mall.''

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to consider these examples from Rhode Island, to understand the far-reaching positive impact of the arts on both education and economy, and to join together in a bipartisan effort to appropriate $136 million for the National Endowment for the Arts as requested by administration. It is important that this agency is funded sufficiently to be able to continue its worthwhile and extremely effective endeavors to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

The recent Harris Poll referenced above shows that Federal support for the arts remains solid and strong. Surprisingly, Harris also found that a 61 percent majority of Americans—to 37 percent saying ''no''—would be willing to be taxed $5 more in order to pay for Federal financial support for the arts. Fully 86 percent of all American adults are exposed to the arts in the course of a year. These people believe the arts to be important and would sorely missed them if they were not there.

SENATE PAGES—SPRING CLASS OF 1996

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today the Senate bids farewell to a group of young men and women who have served as U.S. Senate pages for the spring semester.

These young people have been witnesses to vigorous debates on a number of issues of national significance—truly spirited debates. Just this past week, they watched as Senate Dole gave his final speech as a U.S. Senator.

We in the Senate appreciate all that they did to serve the needs of this body—and those needs were many. The Senate pages serve a very valuable and important role in the day-to-day workings of the Senate, and we very much thank them for their work.

As these young people return to their respective communities, it is my hope that they will take with them a better understanding of how this Government works, and understand the necessity of working together to achieve a common goal. Perhaps someday, one or more of them will return as Members of the U.S. Senate.

To the pages, on behalf of myself, the majority leader and all Members of the Senate, we wish you well, good luck in the years ahead, and we say thank you.

I ask unanimous consent that a list of the names of the pages of the spring class of 1996 be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE PAGES—SPRING CLASS OF 1996

Tracy R. Clark, Vermont.
Christie M. Curtis, New Jersey.
Janelle D'Ambrosio, New York.
Ford P. Dvidson, Washington State.
Abigail David, Virginia.
Carl Kean, Arkansas.
Autumn Fredericks, Mississippi.
Elisabeth Hagadorn, Michigan.
Richard Hutchinson, South Dakota.
Thad Larson, South Dakota.
Brooke Lawyer, Mississippi.
J. Wesley McCleave, Alabama.
Evan Meyer, Indiana.
Elizabeth Reaves, Vermont.
Joshuah Roberts, Arkansas.
Dorothy Robinson, Delaware.
Heidi Sann, Massachusetts.
Devin Sullivan, Montana.
Alyssa Thornburg, Pennsylvania.
Jennifer Wilking, Wyoming.

LAKOTA FUND GROUND BREAKING

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to talk briefly about the tireless efforts being undertaken by a local nonprofit organization in South Dakota to improve the severe economic conditions on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Over the years, numerous national press articles have documented the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as one of the most impoverished areas in the country. The arid nature of the land lends little to farming and ranching. Banks, department stores, paved roads, and even safe drinking water are not to be taken for granted. Even amidst the stark majesty of its landscape, the vibrant tourism industry of western South Dakota remains a whisper of promise. Quite simply, on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the basic economic infrastructure that we all take for granted, struggles to exist.

Ten years ago, a group of Pine Ridge residents, dedicated to improving their local economy, created a peer lending program called the Lakota Fund. After forming partnerships with private foundations and Federal agencies for seed money, this unique program began processing loans for economic enterprise on the reservation. It mandated enrollment in financial and business training courses and required groups of loan recipients to cosign for each others' loans. This unique lending approach, emphasizing trust over credit, created a strong sense of teamwork in the area that has enabled many budding entrepreneurs to realize their dreams.

Before participating in the program, one young woman was unable to fulfill her dream of buying a house for her family. However, after successfully starting her own business and repaying her loan to the Lakota Fund, she was able to purchase a home, thanks to the establishment of a good credit record.

There are many more individual success stories, but the true success of the Lakota Fund has transcended the accomplishments of any one individual. It has affected the entire community.

Over the years, the Lakota Fund has loaned nearly $1 million to over 250 small business men and women. Of these loans, less than 10 percent have failed.

When the Lakota Fund began 10 years ago, the town of Kyle had only one grocery store and one convenience store. Today, with the Lakota Fund's help, Kyle is home to a cafe, two video rental stores, a flower shop, a tire repair shop, and a multitude of other businesses. These ongoing success stories are testament to the vision of the Lakota Fund's creators and staff. They knew that as each new business would bring new jobs, so would each new job sustain and improve the hope for financial independence.

I have learned a great deal from the Lakota Fund's success. It has strengthened my belief that economies are built through partnerships. It has proven that Federal agencies such as the Economic Development Administration and the Small Business Administration can work together with community leaders to provide the financial support needed to make sound investments in local economies. And it has clearly demonstrated the important roles that exist for private foundations in supporting new business ventures.

But most importantly, these efforts are shining examples that successful change can begin at the local level, that good things can be done when people work together, and that dreams can be reached where hope is allowed to grow.

Mr. President, on June 20 of this year, the Lakota Fund will celebrate the ribbon cutting of their new foundation headquarters. This building, which was constructed through financial partnerships with the Economic Development Administration, Norwest Bank, and other notable private organizations, will house the offices of the Lakota Fund and will provide retail space for existing clients as well as training facilities for new loan applicants.

This day will also celebrate the opening of the Tribal Business Information Center, a joint Small Business Administration venture that will work with the Lakota Fund to assist in the further development of the local economy.

I would like to recognize the efforts of the Lakota Fund's staff for the hard work and commitment that was necessary to see these two projects through to fruition. In particular, I would like to personally honor the hard work and dedication of Elsie Meeks. As the former executive director of the Lakota Fund, Elsie has long been an impassioned voice for economic development in the Pine Ridge community. Her foresight and determination have made the Lakota Fund a national example of how trust among people can affect positive economic change.

Still, I would be remiss if I did not emphasize that much more work needs to be done. The success of the Lakota Fund and the creation of the Tribal Business Information Center are but two small steps on a much longer journey to sustained economic growth on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Under the local guidance of organizations such as the Lakota Fund, I am confident we can continue to maximize our resources and forge stronger relationships between the public and private sector. And, with responsible leadership in Congress, we can reward the priorities of economic growth by emphasizing Federal programs that promote partnership and local control.

FISCAL YEAR 1997 GOP BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I rise today to briefly discuss my opposition to the fiscal year 1997 budget resolution.

In voting against the balance budget amendment last week, I stated that I did not believe Congress needed a mechanism in the Constitution to balance the budget and that I believed Congress had the will to reach a balanced budget on its own. If nothing else, I can say that at least my colleagues across the aisle proved me right on that point.

However, I voted against this budget proposal because I am in considerable disagreement with the way they propose we achieve budgetary balance.

Their budget resolution, passed yesterday on a party-line vote, calls for discretionary spending cuts to programs vital to our Nation's future—like education and research—while offering a tax cut that forces larger and deeper cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. But more important, Mr. President, this budget does nothing—nothing—to fundamentally reform our entitlement programs which continue to consume a bigger portion of the Federal budget each year. I also point out that this resolution raises the deficit for the first time since the Clinton administration took office.

Mr. President, I support the goal of a balanced budget and have fought, am fighting and will continue to fight to achieve it. Recently my colleagues and I—Senators SIMPSON, BROWN, NUNN, and ROBB—proposed a provision that would have reformed long-term entitlements. Mind you, we did not tinker around the edges, but instead took on some serious budgetary dilemmas without using gimmickry or short-term measures as a solution.

For our efforts we received 36 bipartisan votes—unprecedented support for this type of long-term entitlement reform. Our proposed changes to current laws would have caused taxpayers very little concern in the short-term as these changes would be phased in and have no effect on anyone over the age of 50 and would save the Nation billions of dollars in the long term. As well, the Senate recently voted on the centrist budget plan, which addressed a number of budgetary problems including long-term entitlement reform, and provided a balanced budget in seven years. This plan garnered 46 bipartisan votes—22 Democrats and 24 Republicans.

I only wish my colleagues on the other side of the aisle chose a similar path.

A balanced budget by 2002, which this resolution offers, is still of little solace because it ignores the most important fiscal challenge we face: the rapid growth in entitlement spending over the next 30 years.

I cannot stress enough the year on which we ought to be focused is not 2002, but 2008, when the baby boomer generation begins to reach eligibility age for retirement. This will place a severe strain on the Federal budget. Our biggest fiscal challenge is demographic, not political, and the budget before us does not address it.

Unfortunately, and conveniently, this demographic challenge is kept from our view by a budgeting process that discourages long-term planning. A six-year span is completely inadequate when the most difficult budget decisions we need to make deal with problems we will face 20, 25, and 30 years down the road, when the aging of our population propels entitlement spending out of control. The most important recommendation of the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform was that we begin to look at the impact of budgets over 30 years rather than just 5 or 7. The reason is that our country looks very different, and our current budgets look very different, viewed over that span.

We can see the trend even in the short term. Entitlement programs—which included Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Federal retirement—will consume 66 percent of the budget this year. By 2002, it will be 73 percent. By 2005, the number is 78 percent. Those numbers are straight from CBO, and if we project further, Mr. President, we see that by 2021, mandatory spending and interest on the national debt will consume every dollar we collect in taxes. By 2013, we will be forced to begin dipping into the surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund to cover benefit payments, a practice that will go on for not more than 16 years before the trust fund goes into the red.

These trends have to do with the simple fact that our population is getting older while our work force gets smaller. My generation did not have as many children as our parents expected, and, as a consequence, the system under which each generation of workers supports the preceding generation of retirees simply will not hold up.

Indeed, Mr. President, long-term entitlement reform coupled with a reasonable reduction in spending would alone reduce interest rates and bring balance to the budget.