

run. We ordered TV stations to read an apology concerning their inaccurate and unfair broadcasting. We wrote the message for them and required they read it every day for 5 days.

Gen. Wesley Clark is now a new TV executive in determining what goes on television and what does not.

The Washington Times reported United States troops have become the butt of jokes in Bosnia because of pregnancies. It seems the pregnancy rate among our female soldiers is between 7.5 to 8.5 percent. The Bosnia media joked that the peacekeepers are breeding like rabbits while turning a blind eye to war criminals on the lam.

In a country where any benevolent leader is very scarce, we have chosen up sides, we have picked our candidates, supporting the cause of one candidate over another. I might add, that candidate has lost support as a result.

Elections were conducted, but to cast ballots, many citizens had to be bussed back to their homes, which they now cannot live in or may never occupy, and then bussed out.

NATO forces, which include U.S. troops, have been cast into the role of cops on the beat, chasing war crimes suspects. Just to arrest Mr. Karadzic, we are told, try him for war crimes and our problems will be solved. But as the New York Times recently pointed out: "[Mr.] Karadzic reflects widely held views in Serbian society." If you bring him to trial in The Hague, somebody else will take his place.

Do these events reflect a sound and defensible Bosnian policy that is in our national interest? Or do they sound an ominous alarm as America is dragged down into a Byzantine nightmare straight out of a Kafka novel?

Ask the basic question, "Who's in charge and where are we heading?" and to date there has been silence from the administration. But that silence speaks volumes, Mr. President, about the lack of direction and focus of our Bosnian policy.

If the provisions of the defense appropriations bill do nothing else, they should force a major reexamination of our Bosnian involvement from top to bottom.

As Chairman STEVENS, the distinguished chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, will tell you, our involvement in Bosnia has come at a large price. There are approximately 9,000 American troops in Bosnia. That is closer to 15,000 today. That is nearly one-third of the NATO troops involved.

Dollar costs are escalating. From 1992 until 1995, the United States spent about \$2.2 billion on various peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. From 1996 through 1998, costs are estimated to be \$7.8 billion. That figure, too, is escalating.

In justifying our policy in Bosnia, the administration must include a plan to fund the costs. Do they intend to take these rising costs out of the current defense budget, money we need for

modernization, procurement, quality of life for the armed services to protect our vital national security interests? Or is the administration prepared to come clean and ask for the money up front?

Finally, I offer these thoughts, Mr. President. All of us in this body desperately want lasting peace in Bosnia. I know it is easy to criticize, but we want the killing to stop. We all want that. We want stability in that part of the world. We do not want a Palestine in the middle of Central Europe. Permanent peace, permanent stability, but wishing—wishing—it does not make it so.

Richard Grenier, writing for the Washington Times, put it this way:

... generally speaking, Serbs didn't love Croats, Croats didn't love Serbs, nor did either of them love Muslims. Reciprocally, Muslims loved neither Croats or Serbs.

What happened to the lessons we're supposed to have learned in Beirut and Somalia? What happened to our swearing off of mission creep? In Beirut we were intervening in Lebanese domestic affairs, which led to the death of 241 U.S. Marines. Our mission in Somalia, originally purely humanitarian, expanded like a balloon as we thought, given our great talent, we could build a new Somali nation. [We all saw] what happened.

But here we go again in Bosnia. Once again our goal was at first laudably humanitarian: to stop the killing.

We have done that, thank goodness.

But it expanded as we thought how wonderful it would be if we could build a beautiful, tolerant, multi-ethnic Bosnia, on the model of American multiculturalism. . .

Gen. John Sheehan, a Marine general, just stated in the press—and a remarkable candidate interviewed just this past week—we can stay in Bosnia for 500 years and we would not solve the problem. It is a cultural war. It is an ethnic war.

The Bosnian situation is complex. And it is shrouded by centuries of conflict that only a few understand. They have had peace and stability and order and discipline only a few times in their history—the latest being with an iron fist by Marshal Tito.

Is that what NATO is going to be all about? What we have seen in recent months is a lull in the fighting, unfortunately not its end. It is a fragile peace held together only by continued presence of military force. How long can that continue? Are we prepared to pay the price?

National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said the United States must remain engaged in Bosnia beyond June of next year, but that continued American troop presence has not been decided.

This afternoon, when Members of Congress meet at the White House, it is time to decide what the specifics of our Bosnian policy will be.

Compare that statement of our National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, with that of the advice of former Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger, who wrote just this past week: "America must avoid drifting into crisis with

implications it may not be able to master" and that "America has no [vital] national interest for which to risk lives to produce a multiethnic state in Bosnia."

Mr. President, no more drift. It is time for candor and clear purpose. Let the debate begin when the White House meets, finally, with Members of Congress this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I know we have a vote at about 11 o'clock and my colleague from Georgia wants to be heard before that time. I will try and move this along.

Mr. President, the vote around 11 o'clock is on a cloture motion dealing with a proposal that has been offered by my colleague from Georgia, whom I respect greatly and agree with on many issues. On this one we disagree, not because of his intent at all, but rather because I am concerned it is not the best use of scarce resources. Even though our budget situation is vastly improved from what it was even a few months ago—with the deficit now down around to unimaginably low levels—still we must make careful decisions about how to best invest those dollars.

When you are trying to help out working parents with the costs of raising children, the question becomes one of priorities in allocating resources. As I understand it, if the cloture motion that will be offered shortly were to be agreed to, an amendment that I would like to offer would be foreclosed because it would probably not pass the procedural test of being germane. I am concerned about that, and for that reason will oppose the cloture motion.

The amendment I would offer, Mr. President, would propose a substitute to what our colleague from Georgia has offered. My proposal would allow for a refundable tax credit for child care. As it is right now, we have some 2 million American families—working families; not on welfare, but working—who don't have any tax liability at all and, therefore, cannot claim the current child care tax credit.

The affordability and quality of child care, Mr. President, is an area in which most Americans are developing a growing sense of concern. The recent tragedy in Massachusetts that we have all been witness to over the last several days, highlights the concerns that millions and millions of American families have today about who will care for their children and whether they can afford to place them in a quality environment.

In contrast, when we are talking about education, choices do exist for parents. There are 53 million American children who are in our elementary and secondary schools at this very hour. About 90 percent of them are in public

schools, about 10 percent in private and parochial schools. There is a choice, Mr. President. Parents have a choice. Now, it is expensive in some private and parochial schools, but the choice of free public schooling is there. It is not a great choice in many areas because of the condition of our public schools, but at least affordability is not an issue.

When it comes to child care, Mr. President, there really are not many choices available to parents. If you are coming off welfare, if you are working, you have to place your children somewhere. The issues of quality and accessibility are obviously important, but if you can't afford it at all, if you can't afford the \$4,000 to the \$9,000 a year that it costs to place your child in a child care setting, you have no choices.

Today, when we have working families out there that are barely making it and we have about \$2 billion in tax credits we can offer, I ask the question of my colleagues of whether we can't do something to help. While we might like to do everything for everyone if we could, given the choice of providing a tax credit to someone making \$85,000 a year to send their child to a private school or saying to a working family that is barely making it, here are some resources that will allow you to place your child while you work in a decent child care setting, what choice do we make? Do we provide a tax break, with all due respect, to people who have a choice? Or do we offer a refundable tax credit of roughly the same cost as Senator COVERDELL's amendment to working families, struggling to hold body and soul together—people who have no choices.

Mr. President, the other day there was an article in the Hartford Courant about a woman who has three children, making \$6.50 an hour. She has a small apartment and a 1981 automobile. Now she is about to leave welfare. She will lose her welfare benefits of \$500 or \$600 a month. That ends this week. Now, at \$6.50 an hour, with three kids, trying to keep an apartment, trying to keep her family going, I would like to say to her I can't do everything for you with regard to your children as you go to work. But I would at least like to say that I can offer you a refundable tax credit—because at \$6.50 an hour you are not paying taxes—and give you a break to see that your three children can be in a child care setting where they may be safe.

The question is, do I try to help her? Or, with all due respect, do I instead help someone making—\$50,000, \$60,000, or \$70,000 a year to go to a private school in Washington, Maryland or Virginia? Those are the kind of choices we have to make.

I argue very strongly that when you have limited resources, let's put them to work for people who are struggling out there, who need the help the most. Because I can't offer an amendment that I think would make the right choice if cloture were adopted, with all due respect to the authors of the amendment, I will oppose cloture.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete my remarks prior to the scheduled 11 a.m. vote.

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

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, originally we were allocated some 15 minutes for comments prior to the vote. Under this unanimous consent, I yield up to 7 minutes of my time to my distinguished colleague from New Jersey.

Mr. TORRICELLI. I thank the Senator from Georgia for yielding.

Mr. President, through the years there has been no more compelling voice on the floor of this Senate for the interests of children and families than Senator DODD. Today is no exception. Senator DODD has made a compelling case for the need for child care in America. I could not agree more strongly. I wish he had a chance on this day to have his amendment offered, and I would join in voting with him.

The choice before the Senate today is not a choice between Senator COVERDELL's proposal and Senator DODD. Both have merit. I would support each. Senator COVERDELL's proposal is fully paid for by offsetting the elimination of a corporate deduction. It has no negative impact on the budget. It is paid for, as Senator DODD's amendment, indeed, can also be paid for.

What the Senate has before it today is a chance to escape this continuing nonproductive dialog about whether or not we will engage in vouchers for private school or leave the plight to private school students unanswered. Senator COVERDELL has offered an imaginative answer by expanding what is indeed a proposal that the Senate adopted earlier in the year for HOPE scholarships offered by President Clinton. By that same concept of allowing families to save their own money to make their own choices for the education of their families, Senator COVERDELL's proposal would be expanded to high school and grade school.

It is an economic sense and a compelling answer to a real national dilemma. First, that the education of a child and some of those decisions be retained by families, where families use their own resources—not just mothers and fathers but aunts, uncles, sister and brothers—who may not be able to put away \$2,000 or \$2,500 in a year with limited resources, but can on every birthday and every anniversary and every holiday put away \$10, \$20, and \$100 so that during the course of a child's life those resources are available, families are involved, using their money.

Second, it isn't just a question of whether this money would be available for private school students. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that 70 percent of the families who would avail themselves of these resources would be public school students because under the proposal that money is available to buy home computers or

transportation for extracurricular activities, school uniforms or, most importantly in my mind, after-school tutors to help with the advancing math and science curriculum in our schools.

Third, also a compelling aspect of this case is not only is it private money, not only would much of it go to public school students, but it will also stop potentially the hemorrhaging loss of private schools in this country. A parochial school in America closes every week. We are not opening up enough public schools to make up the difference. At a time when education is the Nation's principal challenge to our economic well-being, the number of classrooms and chairs for American students is declining. This is the use of private savings, private resources, to stop that hemorrhaging loss.

Critics argue this is money that is going to help the wealthiest families in America when we should be doing more for working families. On the contrary. First, there is a cap in the legislation of \$95,000 for single filing taxpayers. Overwhelmingly, three-quarters of this money is going to families that earn less than \$70,000 a year. This is the answer to giving working families a chance to get involved in the education of their children.

Mr. President, I make no case for the procedures involved in this. There are worthwhile additions to this bill I would like to support. Senator LANDRIEU and Senator GRAHAM have a worthwhile proposal for prepaid tuitions. I believe in Senator DODD's proposal for day care and child care. I would like to see the Senate address both. Indeed, in time, I hope and I trust that we will.

But on this day we address the question of whether or not families will be able to use their own resources to become involved in their own planning for their children's public or private education. This Congress has been presented with a series of challenges by the President. One was to address new resources to education. We do it. Second, to get families back involved. We do it. Third, he has stated a great national goal to get every school in America online into the new century. We go beyond it. Sixty percent of American families and 85 percent of minority students have no access to a home computer. They are not going to school on an equal basis with all other American students. They don't have it for their homework, they don't have it for composition, they don't have it for research. The Internet and those computers are the principal tool for American students in the 21st century.

Under the Coverdell-Torricelli proposal not only will America schools be online but so will American families at home because these students can use these A-plus accounts to buy that equipment for home.

Mr. President, I join with Senator COVERDELL on this day, asking that this be a genuinely bipartisan answer

for a genuinely bipartisan problem. Education is the American issue of these last years of the 21st century. It is the question of whether or not America maintains our standard of living and is economically competitive. Education is an issue without par in this Congress and in this country. This may not be a total answer. It is certainly not the last of the answer but it is an important addition for the labyrinth of issues and questions we must walk through in answering the education question.

Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Georgia for yielding the time.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I want to compliment the Senator from New Jersey for his remarks, and more importantly, for his steadfast support of this proposal, and not always under the easiest of circumstances. He has been a great colleague and advocate and I have enjoyed working with him on this proposal.

Where we find ourselves, moments away from this vote, Mr. President, is that the filibuster could not be broken last week and it was suggested that if we could just iron out a few amendments that both sides would come together.

Over the weekend we suggested that we would agree to two or three amendments on both sides and try to proceed. That would require a unanimous consent, or for those listening, a unanimous agreement—everybody will have to agree. The other side of the aisle cannot secure that.

Given the hour of this session, this is no time to open it up to a free-for-all. So the filibuster will probably continue and my prediction is, fall a vote or two short of ending the filibuster and proceeding with what would be easy passage of the education savings account. It is unfortunate, because every time we delay these ideas another week, another month, we just slow down the great need to get at the problems in education in grades kindergarten through high school. Every time we delay, we create another student whose economic opportunity, whose challenges in this society will be inhibited because of a lack of resources that might have been made available to that child.

However, the adoption of this concept is inevitable. The status quo, which has fought from day one and continues to do everything it can to block almost any new idea, will not prevail. The American people will override the status quo, and ideas like the education savings account are going to become law. My prediction is that, come February 1998, this proposal will be back before us and we will ultimately secure passage of it.

Just a reminder. Mr. President, the education savings account will allow families to save up to \$2,500 a year of their own aftertax money, and the interest buildup would not be taxed if the proceeds of the principal and interest are used to help an education purpose—

essentially, grades kindergarten through high school, which is where our problems are; although it could be used in college.

Senator DODD, in his remarks, inferred that these were resources that were going to allow somebody to enjoy private education. I think it's important that we take an overview of the entire proposal. The Joint Committee on Taxation says that the education savings account will be used by 14 million American families. That probably equates to 20 to 25 million children that would be the beneficiaries of this concept. That is almost half the school population in the United States that would benefit from this new structure, this education savings account. And 10.8 million of these families would be families with children in public schools. Seventy percent of all the value of these savings accounts will go to augment public schools. Thirty percent will augment those that are in a private school.

It is statistically insignificant, but it is a fact that some families will use the account to change schools. But in the overall picture, you are essentially bringing new dollars that don't have to be taxed, new dollars that people are saving themselves and, as Senator TORRICELLI said, families becoming involved, families setting aside money to augment the child's education deficiency.

Now, I call these dollars smart dollars. They are smart dollars because the family is directing their expenditure, and we know that it will, therefore, go to the exact child deficiency, which may be the fact that the child does not have a home computer; it may be that the child needs a math tutor; it may be that the child is experiencing dyslexia or some medical problem and the family will be able to augment and help support a learning disability. Well, the list goes on and on and on, as to the kind of particular or peculiar deficiencies that the child may suffer. This allows a resource to be gathered together to be put right on the problem. Unfortunately, you can't get that kind of utility for most public dollars.

As Senator TORRICELLI said, 70 percent of all these resources will assist families making \$75,000 or less. So it's going right to the hardest pressed, the middle class. It's right on target.

Mr. President, there is another unique feature about the education savings account. The education savings account, which for most people would resemble an IRA, is different in that it would allow sponsors to contribute to the account. That could be an extended family member, an uncle, aunt, cousin, grandparent. More importantly, it could be a church, it could be an employer, it could be a community assistance organization, it could be a labor union. The imagination can't even perceive the kinds of community activities. How often have we seen a law enforcement officer fall in the line of duty and the community wants to

come forward to help? This is the kind of tool that would be used. That community could set up an education savings account for the surviving children so that they would be more able to deal with their educational needs as they grow older without their father or mother.

I can envision a company saying, well, we will put \$50 a month in the account for the children that work for our employees if the employee will match it. By the end of the year, that would be half of the amount of money that is legally available; that would be \$1,200. So it's an instrument that allows the entire community, the entire family to bring together resources to help with whatever problem that child may confront when they get to school.

The other side has tried to describe it as a voucher. It's not. A voucher is public money given to the parents to decide what to do with. This is the parents' money. This is private money. We are allowing the parents an opportunity to get focused on that child's education, and just with the attention alone in creating 14 million family accounts like this, there will be an attitude change. You know, they can get focused on it and they think of their child and what that child needs, and they will have an exhilarated feeling of putting a resource in that account once a month, or every quarter, or on holidays, as Senator TORRICELLI said.

They have said this goes to the wealthy. It does not. It goes to the middle class. They have even said, at one point, well, it doesn't amount to much. If it doesn't, I can't imagine why in the devil I am facing this filibuster and why the President said he would veto the entire tax relief plan if this proposal were in the tax relief bill.

Mr. President, this is an idea whose time has come. The education savings account is going to become law. It is just a matter of time. I hoped we could do it in this session, but I think the filibuster is, once again, going to deny a good idea. America, as Senator TORRICELLI said, is focused on education. It will not accept the status quo. It is going to force new ideas. We cannot afford to have a failed elementary education system in place as we come to the new century.

So, Mr. President, I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that have stood up to the special interests and have said we are going to change the status quo. I appreciate all the assistance from the colleagues on my side of the aisle.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today we will vote on whether to invoke cloture on a bill—H.R. 2646—that would allow parents to save money for their children's education without incurring tax liability.

The proposed new education savings account, which expands existing law, would allow families to contribute up to \$2,500 per year in a savings account for a variety of public or private education-related expenses. Congress had

earlier voted to support the Coverdell amendment 59 to 41, on June 27.

Currently, the reconciliation law we passed this year as part of the budget agreement, allows parents to save up to \$500 per year for their children's college education without penalty.

The new education savings accounts are more expansive in that they allow the money to be used for children's kindergarten through 12th grade education expenses as well as college.

Our adoption of this bill without further delay comes at a notable time, a time of increasing focus on the future of America's children. Just over a week ago, the White House held a summit intended to bring children's issues into the forefront as a national priority.

What better way to turn consensus-building into action than to give parents the practical tool which the Coverdell bill supplies; a tool which allows parents to better provide options for their children's education.

The education savings accounts help working families. They are a good complement to the \$500 per child tax credit I have long championed, which was included in the tax bill this year. They encourage savings and allow families to make plans which shape a child's future.

This provision is directed at low and middle income families, not wealthy families who currently have education options. All families should have a better opportunity to choose the best education for their children.

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, the great majority of families expected to take advantage of the education savings accounts have incomes of \$75,000 or less.

In other words, in families where both parents are working, individual parent income is at the very most an average of \$37,500 in more than two-thirds of the families expected to take advantage of this legislation. Clearly, these are the families who need our help the most.

Mr. President, this important legislation offers a real solution for America's working families. We must act now to help families best provide for one of life's most basic necessities—a child's education.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I oppose the Coverdell bill because it uses regressive tax policy to subsidize vouchers for private schools. It does not give any real financial help to low-income, working- and middle-class families, and it does not help children in the nation's classrooms. What it does is undermine public schools and provide yet another tax giveaway for the wealthy.

Public education is one of the great successes of American democracy. It makes no sense for Congress to undermine it. This bill turns its back on the Nation's long-standing support of public schools and earmarks tax dollars for private schools. This bill is a fundamental step in the wrong direction for education and for the Nation's children.

Senator COVERDELL's proposal would spend \$2.5 billion over the next 5 years on subsidies to help wealthy people pay the private school expenses they already pay, and do nothing to help children in public schools get a better education.

It is important to strengthen our national investment in education. We should invest more in improving public schools by fixing leaky roofs and crumbling buildings, by recruiting and preparing excellent teachers, and by taking many other steps.

If we have \$2.5 billion more to spend on elementary and secondary education, we should spend it to deal with these problems. We should not invest in bad education policy and bad tax policy. We should support teachers and rebuild schools—not build tax shelters for the wealthy.

Proponents of the bill claim that it deserves our support because the Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that almost 75 percent of funds will go to public school students.

But they're distorting the facts. According to the Department of Treasury, 70 percent of the benefit of the bill would go to those families in the highest income brackets. An October 28, 1997, Joint Tax Committee memorandum states that 83 percent of families with children in private schools would use this account, but only 28 percent of families with children in public schools would make use of it. It is a sham to pretend that the bill is not providing a subsidy for private schools. The overwhelming majority of the benefits go to high-income families who are already sending their children to private school, and does nothing to improve public education.

In fact, the Joint Tax Committee memorandum clearly confirms this basic point that the bill disproportionately benefits families who send their children to private schools. As the committee memorandum states, "The dollar benefit to returns with children in public schools is assumed to be significantly lower than that attributable to returns with children in private schools."

Proponents of the bill claim that 70 percent of the benefits from the Coverdell accounts would go to families that earn under \$70,000 a year.

But again, they're distorting the facts. The facts are that the majority of the benefits under the proposal go to upper income families. Only about 10 percent of taxpayers have incomes between \$70,000 and the capped income levels. Therefore, 30% of the benefits would go to just 10 percent of the taxpayers. In addition, the majority of the benefits for families who earn under \$70,000 a year go to those earning between \$55,000 and \$70,000 a year.

Other families will get almost no tax break from this legislation. Families earning less than \$50,000 a year will get a tax cut of \$2.50 a year from this legislation—\$2.50. You can't even buy a good box of crayons for that amount.

Families in the lowest income brackets—those making less than \$17,000 a year—will get a tax cut of all of \$1—\$1. But, a family earning over \$93,000 will get \$97.

Proponents also claim that these IRA's do not use public money. The money invested in the accounts, whether by individuals, their employer, or their labor union is their own money, not public funds.

But the loss to the Treasury is clear. This proposal will cost the Treasury \$2.5 billion in the first 5 years. It is nonsense to pretend that these funds are not a Federal subsidy to private schools.

Scarce tax dollars should be targeted to public schools, which don't have the luxury of closing their doors to students who pose special challenges, such as children with disabilities, limited English-proficient children, or homeless students. Private schools can decide whether to accept a child or not. The real choice under this bill goes to the schools, not the parents. We should not use public tax dollars to support schools that select some children and reject others.

We all want children to get the best possible education. We should be doing more—much more—to support efforts to improve local public schools. We should oppose any plan that would undermine those efforts.

This bill is simply private school vouchers under another name. It is wrong for Congress to subsidize private schools. We should improve our public schools—not abandon them.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kelly Miller be granted floor privileges during this vote.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). Pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 2646.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 2646, the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools.

Trent Lott, Paul Coverdell, Robert F. Bennett, Pat Roberts, Strom Thurmond, Gordon H. Smith, Bill Frist, Mike DeWine, Larry E. Craig, Don Nickles, Connie Mack, Jeff Sessions, Conrad Burns, Lauch Faircloth, Thad Cochran, and Wayne Allard.

CALL OF THE ROLL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under a previous order, the live quorum required under the rule has been waived.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on H.R. 2646, the Education Savings Act for public and private schools, shall be brought to a close?