

We can break the grip of special-interest money on the political process.

Family incomes have been stagnant too long. We can get them moving in the right direction again.

We make 2 years of college the new standard for education in this country.

We can guarantee that every child in America is able to see a doctor—and save on health care costs in the long run.

We can significantly increase the number of Americans who are able to retire with dignity and security.

We can make our communities safer and preserve rural America. We can help small businesses to create the jobs of the 21st century and help workers acquire the skills that will be demanded by those jobs.

We can do all of this, and more, if we work together. Democrats are ready to start today. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEMPTHORNE). Under the previous order, the next 60 minutes will be under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Who yields time?

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—BILLS PLACED ON CALENDAR PURSUANT TO RULE XIV

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, pursuant to rule XIV, I shall shortly send to the desk eight bills to be considered en bloc and considered to have been read for the first time and be objected to following their second reading en bloc. I ask unanimous consent that be in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I send the bills to the desk. I ask unanimous consent that the statements with each be printed in the RECORD.

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

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, today I will introduce a series of eight bills to: First, restore the right of our children to pray; second, restore the rights of the unborn; third, strengthen the penalties for drug dealers and violent acts of crime; fourth, restore the supremacy of the individual over Government-imposed quotas; and fifth, protect the constitutional right to hold and express moral beliefs.

Mr. President, our traditions, our children, and our institutions which made this country great, are all under assault. They are not threatened in the military sense—instead they are threatened by moral decay. This Nation simply must regain its moral footing.

We are less than 4 years away from a new century full of promise for this great country. New technologies abound and unprecedented discoveries

in medicine are within our grasp. Yet, if America is to continue to prosper in the next century, Americans must retain the values and traditions established by our Founding Fathers.

Since the beginning, America has been protected by the moral foundations on which she was established. Values like personal responsibility, liberty, respect for human life, and an abiding faith.

These values have made America a shining beacon on a hill and the envy of the world.

Sadly though, we have seen a steady erosion of these values and beliefs. This raises a significant question: Where are we headed? Quo vadis America?

Mr. President, I believe we are in a battle—in the sense that we are engaged in a struggle for the soul of America. The moral decay has also chewed away at the institution of the family and led to soaring rates of illegitimacy and drug abuse.

The liberal establishment has turned a blind eye to what has been going on in America. Their supporters from the Hollywood crowd to Planned Parenthood set forth an agenda that eroded the values of this country.

We live in an era when it is fashionable to pretend that our Founding Fathers did not build this country upon biblical principles.

Mr. President, on September 7, 1864, Abraham Lincoln thanked a group of citizens for a Bible he was given saying, "In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to this world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong."

It is imperative, that as we look to the next century, we not forget what brought us to this point in history—the faith and ideals of our forefathers. Alexis de Tocqueville, after traveling throughout this country, found the source of America's strength. He stated that America's greatness lies in its churches and synagogues.

Mr. President, the legislation that I will introduce today will go a long way to ensuring that America's foundations remain secure.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bills will now be placed on the calendar pursuant to rule XIV.

Mr. ROTH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. ROTH. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. ROTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ROTH. I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. CHAFEE and Mr. SMITH pertaining to the introduction of

legislation are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. COVERDELL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH and Mr. CRAIG pertaining to the introduction of Senate Joint Resolution 1 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 3 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements and Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 10 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I also want to note that I have filed three other bills today; in particular, the Curt Flood Act of 1997, which is the baseball antitrust bill that I believe now is coming to fruition, which is something that we have tried to do for a long time. We have named it after Curt Flood, who died a day or so ago, and who really deserves the recognition because of the fights that he led on this act in organized baseball. That is S. 53.

We have also filed S. 54, which is the Federal Gang Violence Act of 1997, a bill by Senator FEINSTEIN and myself. She has worked very hard with me and others on the Judiciary Committee, and we certainly want to mention her sterling work on that bill.

Finally, the Civil Justice Fairness Act of 1997, which is already introduced.

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 53 and S. 54 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HATCH. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. ASHCROFT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. ASHCROFT pertaining to the introduction of S. 4 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. ASHCROFT pertaining to the introduction of S. 5 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MACK addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

(The remarks of Mr. MACK pertaining to the submission of Senate Resolution 15 are located in today's RECORD under

"Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the minority has 1 hour under their control. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

COMMITMENT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all, I rise to express appreciation to our leader, Senator DASCHLE, who has over the period of these recent weeks and months been working with many in our caucus and I know will be working closely, as well, with those on the other side of the aisle who are really interested in this Nation's commitment to the young people of this country in the field of education.

I think all of us who have had the opportunity to travel through the country, certainly in my travels around Massachusetts over this last year—no matter where we traveled—heard the concerns that parents had about access and availability in areas of education as one of the paramount issues.

The President has addressed those concerns by recommending a tax credit, also a \$1,500 tax deduction, and some \$10,000 that will be helpful to working families. Also included in the Daschle proposal are recommendations that we consider the interest on the debt for education in the same way that we would consider interest on the debt for machinery or the manufacturing industry assets, in being able to provide some deduction for those expenses as well.

That effectively, Mr. President, is to respond to the President's commitment to the American people to make the next two grades beyond the 12th grade—13th and 14th, the first 2 years of college—accessible and available to the young people in this country, so that future generations will be able to say that we, as a nation, during this Congress, have committed this Nation to the next two grades in the area of education.

I think this is a bold commitment. I think it is a dramatic enterprise. I think it will take the best judgment of all of us to achieve and accomplish this. But, nonetheless, as we understand it, the President's budget that will be submitted in the next 2-week period will demonstrate the funds that will be necessary to achieve it, and we will be able to say, in effect, when we actually legislate these proposals, that they are effectively paid and paid in full. That will be very, very important and a significant commitment to the young people of this country.

Included in the education proposal, Mr. President, are a number of other items which I think all of us should be able to embrace and endorse, and these have been outlined by Senator DASCHLE, I have been informed, earlier during the course of the day.

There will be commitments in terms of additional new technologies for our

young people in schools across this country, to make sure they are going to be able to take advantage of the latest in technology and also resources to make sure we are going to be able to train teachers so that they will be able to be well-trained and able to impart to the younger people of this country the skills that young people will need to be able to use these technologies.

It will be a modest program, but an important program, that follows the leadership of CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN, to try and give focus and attention to many of the schools in local communities across the country that are in very dilapidated conditions. That is true for most of the older cities of this country. It is true in my own city of Boston. It is true in many of the older communities of my State—Lowell, Lawrence, New Bedford, Fall River, Springfield, Worcester, and many others. It is equally true in many of the large urban areas.

This is a very modest program, but a very innovative and creative program about leveraging limited financial resources to address those particular needs in a modest way. Hopefully, we will be able to bring additional support for continuation of that program into the future.

A very important continuing commitment to literacy and expanding the opportunity for children to read in our society so that we can achieve the goal that children who have reached the third grade will be able to read in a rather creative way is using the funding that will be allocated in the various competitive grants in ways that the young people of this country are going to be able to read and to really challenge the young people in our Nation, many who are going to schools and colleges, to help and assist with that undertaking, and to challenge American people, in general, to help and assist young children in this country.

These are some of the elements of it. There are a number of others which are important, but I have summarized it, Mr. President. I hope that we will be able to move ahead in the area of education. It is extremely important.

At the end of the last session, we did move forward in terms of funding various programs. We are going to have to find the funding for these programs and also for the increased number of children who will be going to high school. We are seeing an increase in total student enrollment, and we want to make sure that their particular needs are going to be attended to, as well. I think that is very important. That is something I know Senator DASCHLE has addressed, and I know that the President's program will address it.

Hopefully, we will have broad, broad bipartisan support. For so many years in this body, the support for education was broad-based and bipartisan. It is bipartisan and broad-based in the country, and we should try and find ways to maintain that in the Congress and Senate.

Second, Mr. President, is an area that I consider of enormous importance and that is to address the needs of 10½ million children who are uninsured today. Ten and a half million will be uninsured over the course of a particular year. The leader has outlined approaches to addressing this issue.

There is a rather dramatic definition of who those children are, Mr. President. Children are the fastest growing segment of the uninsured population. It is a rather dramatic phenomenon. They are the ones who are being dropped from coverage in the current insurance system. Nine out of ten of the 10.5 million children who are uninsured have parents who are working.

We have the Medicaid Program which addresses the poorest children in this country. I welcome the fact that the administration is going to try and be more creative and imaginative in terms of reaching many of those children who are eligible for Medicaid. These children are desperately in need of a healthy start and are not receiving it today. But we are talking about the next level; that is, the sons and daughters of working families. These are men and women who go to work every day, they play by the rules, 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year making America work. They are the backbone of so much of what is right in our society, but their children are being left out and being left behind.

The figures and statistics are a fierce indictment of what is happening in our society. As one of the major industrial nations in the world, we still have one of the highest infant mortality rates. We are 17th among the industrial nations of the world.

More than half of all uninsured children with asthma never see a doctor, with all the implications that has, in terms of a child's future development and growth. As the father of a son who now happens to be a Congressman who had chronic asthma when he was a child, it is unbelievable to me the difficulties that he had in terms of coping with the problems of asthma. I do not know how he would have coped unless he had been able to get important medical attention.

We know one out of three uninsured children who have recurring ear infections never see a doctor. There are significant increases in the number of ear infections and the number of children who are going deaf in our society from preventable diseases. And the list goes on.

The final point that I want to make in this area, Mr. President, is that expanding coverage for children is wise economic policy.

We are always going to have to come back to justify this from economic means. We all know for every dollar that is invested in immunization, the savings are \$5 to \$6. That is true in terms of the investment in children's health. It is true certainly in terms of providing the kind of prenatal care that would be included in this program