

clearly we have an interest, and a responsibility to protect our children from this kind of material.

Mr. President, I thank you for the time.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 324 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. KOHL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. I thank the Chair.

DEADBEAT PARENTS PUNISHMENT ACT AND SUNSHINE IN LITIGATION ACT

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, I introduced two bills, the Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997, and the Sunshine in Litigation Act of 1997. Both address issues that are of enormous importance to our communities and country.

First, Senator DEWINE and I introduced a measure to toughen the original Child Support Recovery Act of 1992 to ensure that more serious crimes receive more serious punishment. Our new proposal sends a clear message to deadbeat parents: Pay up or go to jail.

Current law already makes it a Federal offense to willfully fail to pay child support obligations to a child in another State if the obligation has remained unpaid for longer than a year or is greater than \$5,000. However, current law provides for a maximum of just 6 months in prison for a first offense and a maximum of 2 years for a second offense. A first offense, however, no matter how egregious, is not a felony under current law.

Police officers and prosecutors have used the current law effectively, but they have found that current misdemeanor penalties do not adequately deal with more serious cases, those cases in which parents move from State to State to intentionally evade child support penalties or fail to pay child support obligations for more than 2 years—serious cases that deserve serious felony punishment.

In response to these concerns, President Clinton drafted legislation that would address this problem, and we dropped it in last month.

This new effort builds on past successes. In the 4 years since the original deadbeat parents legislation was signed into law by President Bush, collections have increased by nearly 50 percent, from \$8 billion to \$11.8 billion, and we should be proud of that increase. Moreover, a new national database has helped identify 60,000 delinquent fathers, over half of whom owed money to women on welfare.

Nevertheless, there is much more that we can do. It is estimated that if delinquent parents fully paid up their child support, approximately 800,000 women and children could be taken off the welfare rolls. So our new legislation cracks down on the worst violators and makes clear that intentional or long-term evasion of child support responsibilities will not receive a slap on the wrist. In so doing, it will help us continue to fight to ensure that every child receives the parental support they deserve.

With this bill, we have a chance to make a difference in the lives of families across our entire country. I look forward to working with my colleagues to give police and prosecutors the tools they need to effectively pursue individuals who seek to avoid their family obligations.

The second bill I introduced 2 weeks ago was the Sunshine in Litigation Act of 1997, a measure that addresses the growing abuse of secrecy orders issued by Federal courts. All too often, our Federal courts will allow vital information that is discovered in litigation and which directly bears on public health and safety to be covered up, to be shielded from people whose lives are potentially at stake and from the public officials we have asked to protect our health and safety.

All of this happens because of the so-called protective orders, which are really gag orders issued by courts—and designed to keep information discovered in the course of litigation secret and undisclosed. Typically, injured victims agree to a defendant's request to keep lawsuit information secret. They agree because defendants threaten that, without secrecy, they will refuse to pay a settlement. Victims cannot afford to take such chances. And while courts in these situations actually have the legal authority to deny requests for secrecy, typically they do not because both sides have agreed and judges have other matters they prefer to attend to. So judges are regularly and frequently entering these protective orders using the power of the Federal Government to keep people in the dark about the dangers they face.

This measure will bring crucial information out of the darkness and into the light. The measure amends rule 26 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure to require that judges weigh the impact on public health and safety before approving these secrecy orders. It is simple, effective, and straightforward. It essentially codifies what is already the best practices of the best judges. In cases that do not affect the public health and safety, existing practice would continue, and courts can still use protective orders as they do today. But in cases affecting public health and safety, courts would apply a balancing test. They could permit secrecy only if the need for privacy outweighs the public's need to know about potential public health and safety hazards. Moreover, courts could not, under this

measure, issue protective orders that would prevent disclosures to regulatory agencies.

I do want to mention that identical legislation was reported out of the Judiciary Committee last year by a bipartisan, 11-to-7 majority. I do want to remind people that this issue is not going away: A number of States are currently considering antisecrecy measures; the Justice Department itself has drafted its own antisecrecy proposal—one that in many ways goes further than my own. The grassroots support for antisecrecy legislation will continue and grow, as long as information remains held under lock and key.

So, Mr. President, I look forward to working with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to do more to combat deadbeat parents and limit court secrecy.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I speak to my colleagues and to the American public today about a quiet crisis that is occurring in our Nation. This is the crisis that has resulted from our failure to adequately invest in the basic services that will render our Nation economically productive, with a strong national security, and prepare the next generation of our citizens to meet their responsibilities. All over our Nation, from the largest cities to the smallest rural communities, we are seeing a deterioration of our basic public support system. Our schools, our bridges, our highways, our water and sewer systems are deteriorating.

In areas of growth, we do not have enough resources to meet the needs of an expanding population. Too many children are learning in overcrowded and unsafe classrooms. Too many motorists are driving on inadequate roads and highways. Too many communities are being forced to make do with inadequate water, sewer, and environmental systems.

Our ability to compete in the economy of the future, and to maintain and enhance the quality of life of our citizens, will, in large part, hinge on whether and how we correct those problems.

As we enter the 21st century, we must build and rebuild the foundations which will serve our people and their needs for years to come. In the near future, I intend to continue the efforts that are underway with my Republican and Democratic colleagues who have expressed similar concerns. Out of this will come legislation which will assist States and local communities to build the schools, roads, and water systems that they need now and in the future.

The numbers tell the story. A recent General Accounting Office report says

that one-third of our Nation's school districts have buildings in need of immediate and extensive repair. The same report states that 25 million students go to schools with poor lighting and heating, bad ventilation or air quality, or a lack of physical security; 25 million boys and girls attend schools with those deteriorating conditions. It has been estimated that \$150 billion will be needed to remedy this situation. That dollar amount does not include the cost to meet new school construction for expanding populations.

This affects my State. It affects all of the States of the Nation. The school facility crisis is estimated, for instance, in the State of North Dakota, to cost \$450 million to remedy; \$5 billion is needed in Texas, \$7.5 billion in Florida, \$15 billion in New York State, and \$20 billion in the State of California. In Louisiana, 88 percent of the 1,500 public schools are in need of repair; 77 percent of Connecticut's more than 1,000 schools need some rehabilitation. In Illinois, 89 percent of more than 4,000 schools need improvement.

I firmly believe the administration of elementary and secondary education is the responsibility of State and local communities. It is not a Federal responsibility. The Federal Government should restrain itself from interfering with curriculum, personnel and other educational policies. But I believe there is a role for the Federal Government in helping increasingly underfunded and overburdened school districts in the construction of badly needed new schools and the renovation of existing schools. That is a role in which the Federal Government has had some history.

I recently spent a day working in a rehabilitation project on Opa-Locka Elementary School in Dade County, FL. I was impressed when I looked at the plaque on the wall of Opa-Locka Elementary School, a school which is 60 years old this year. It was built by the U.S. Public Works Administration as a Depression-era job-creation project. The Federal Government has a history of assisting school districts in meeting their capital needs and has done so without the criticism of inappropriate Federal intrusion.

Mr. President, I applaud the President's proposed school construction initiative. It was one of the 10 points in the education program that he presented to the Nation during his State of the Union Address. He has opened the door to an important Federal-State-local partnership, and we must walk through that door. However, I believe the door needs to be widened.

Our school construction needs are much greater than the President's proposal would address. States and local school districts need to have a wider range of policy and fiscal options to meet their needs. We must aggressively build on the President's plan so that States and local governments can solve their tremendous needs.

School construction is obviously not the only capital issue facing States and

local governments. For example, the United States has 39 million miles of roads and 574,000 bridges. Recent estimates show that 60 percent of our roads and a third of our bridges are substandard and in need of repair. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that we currently invest \$35 billion annually in highway construction. This is \$15 billion less than is needed to keep up with deterioration and \$33 billion less than the amount estimated to keep ahead of growth, change, and congestion.

Nationally, our water and sewer management investment needs are in excess of \$138 billion.

The key question for us and for America is, how will we face these problems? We must address these problems in a way that is responsible, both to our commitment to a balanced budget and to the needs of States and local communities. It is vital that we find a funding source that is limited, stable and viable over an extended period of time.

I suggest that some of the principles of this new partnership of the Federal Government with State and local communities in meeting their education, transportation and environmental infrastructure needs would include these: We must form an expanded and long-term partnership. It must be a partnership built on a basic respect for the responsibilities of State and local government to make the key policy decisions.

It must also be built on a requirement that it be a true partnership with the States and as a condition of participation that they provide a matching source of funds to that which will come from the Federal Government and that they maintain their current level of effort so that this will truly be an additional effort toward meeting our unmet needs, not a substitution for current effort, and that there be maximum flexibility to the States in the form in which they choose to meet those needs and the priorities which they establish.

I am going to suggest, Mr. President, as we develop these concepts into legislation, that one of the most appealing ways in which to provide that stable and sustainable revenue source in order to be able to form this partnership is to utilize the 4.3 cents per gallon of motor fuels tax which was enacted in 1993 and which goes directly to the Federal Treasury, not as does most other federally imposed motor fuels tax into a highway trust fund. This revenue source is currently generating in excess of \$6 billion.

If States and local communities are willing to provide a substantial match to these funds—and I will suggest that that match should be in the ratio of one-third State and local to two-thirds Federal—the total effect of this Federal contribution for educational, transportation, environmental needs over the next 5 to 10 years could be in excess of \$200 billion, if these funds

were used as the basis of innovative financing methods.

Mr. President, this will have the potential of tremendous positive impact on our Nation's economy. Clearly, the economy will benefit by having children who are educated in appropriate environments. The country will benefit by having a transportation system that can meet our current and future needs that will not impose excessive costs due to congestion and inadequacy of facilities. Our Nation will be enhanced by having quality environmental systems that will protect our water and our air and our natural resources.

Those are some of the benefits. But in addition to those, a program of this scale will provide employment for literally hundreds of thousands of people, as we strive to construct these facilities that will have such positive long-term benefits.

Mr. President, in the next weeks I expect to continue to work with my colleagues in developing this into specific legislative proposals.

Our motorists and our Nation's commercial interests need safe, modern, and reliable highways. Our communities deserve responsible water and sewer and other environmental systems. Our children will require the best quality of educational facilities in order to achieve world-class standards of educational performance. We can wait no longer to meet the needs of this quiet crisis of deteriorating infrastructure in America. Now is the time to act. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. BUMPERS pertaining to the introduction of S. 325, S. 326, and S. 327 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. HOLLINGS. The distinguished Senator from Arkansas is right on target, it is the king of corporate welfare. The Senator from Arkansas has been at this for years trying to save the conscience of this particular body. I have been most interested in his factual, in-depth study and report to the Congress, and particularly here to us in the Senate. It is just astounding to me that it continues.

As he said, the public can hardly believe what he says. I want to turn to a subject that the public cannot believe, and that is what we say, because we have a funny way of talking about deficits. Specifically, if you look, Mr. President, at the budget message of the