

can see a very modest upward trend from 1990 to 1992 to 1996 at the three different grade levels, 4th, 8th, and 12th. As you can see, we are nowhere near approaching the level of improvement that is necessary if we are going to meet any of the national goals that we have set out for ourselves.

Delays in developing standards have been made worse by the fact that, despite the abundance of tests and report cards published by State and local education agencies, very little of the information is comparable from district to district, or very little of the information is set at a high enough standard for us to make reasonable comparisons to these international tests.

As Education Week recently pointed out, "If the data that we depend on to monitor the economy were as incomplete, as unreliable, and as out of date as the data we depend on to monitor education in the United States, we might as well have the economy of a Third World country."

Instead, we have a hodgepodge of different tests and standards, most of them testing basic skills rather than world-class materials, a lot of data that only describes how students in one area are doing compared to how they did in the previous year.

Differences in student "pass rates" on State and national testing indicate enormous gaps in what we are testing for. Let me show you the final chart that I have here, Mr. President, to make that point. You can see from this chart entitled "State NAEP Scores for 4th Grade Reading Compared to the State's Own Assessment" that, for example, in the State of Wisconsin, it shows here that 35 percent of the students are shown to reach the standard that NAEP sets on their National Fourth Grade Reading Test. In their State standard test, Wisconsin shows 88 percent of their students meeting the standards. So you can see there is very little comparability between what the States are testing for and the level of performance that they are expecting and what the NAEP, the national assessment, is testing for.

As a result, we still have schools that are doing superbly, and we also have schools that are doing miserably. Many times they are in the very same areas and in the same school districts. Parents and educators often do not even know which of those types of schools their own children are in.

In response to this situation, many have come to agree that we need to set our standards much higher and we need to gather more accurate information in order to improve achievement, as has been done with great success in several parts of the private sector.

The National Association of Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Round Table have now focused their joint efforts on raising standards and promoting more accountability in our schools.

The National Education Association president, Bob Chase, spoke out about

the need for his 2.2-million-member union to support key changes such as these.

Frequent education critics Checker Finn and Diane Ravitch recently offered surprising enthusiasm for standards. Let me quote: "how powerful it will be for parents and teachers to compare the math prowess of 8th graders in, say, Phoenix and Minneapolis, to the performance of their peers in Korea and the Czech Republic."

In addition to national polls showing strong support for high standards, a Public Agenda poll last month showed that high school students themselves know that our expectations for them are low, and those very high school students respond accordingly.

Raising academic standards has proven to be an immense and costly job for States and for school districts, who have been left to do the job largely on their own. They have been struggling to make the necessary progress but have been unable to do so. For these reasons, we need renewed national efforts toward making standards a reality in the near future.

ALBERT SHANKER

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about the recent death of a great education leader, Albert Shanker, who was as committed and effective in the fight for National standards as anybody in our country. For those of us who believe that the Federal Government should do more to improve the quality of education in the country, Al Shanker's death was a great loss. More than anyone else in the Nation, Al Shanker was the visionary pushing for higher standards and national standards for teachers and students alike.

In a recent piece in the Washington Post, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., said it very well:

If a single person could be said to be responsible for the shift in sentiment that prompted the President to call, in his State of the Union Address, for national educational standards—a proposal that would have been unthinkable a few years back—it would be Al Shanker.

Albert Shanker had an abiding belief that collectively we in America could improve the lives of all of our citizens. He dedicated his life to that belief. He also believed passionately that public schools were the great strength of our country and were the means by which we could improve the lot of Americans.

A recent essay by Albert Shanker was contained in the New York Times. I would like to read two paragraphs from that. This is an essay that he wrote in a publication a few years ago. He said:

Why do I continue when so much of what I've worked for seems threatened? To a large extent because I believe that public education is the glue that has held this country together. Critics now say that the common school never really existed, that it's time to abandon this ideal in favor of schools that are designed to appeal to groups based on ethnicity, race, religion, class, or common

interests of various kinds. But schools like these would foster divisions in our society; they would be like setting a time bomb.

Public schools played a big role in holding our nation together. They brought together children of different races, languages, religions, and cultures and gave them a common language and sense of common purpose. He was not outgrown our need for this; far from it. Today, Americans come from more different countries and speak more different languages than ever before. Whenever the problems connected with school reform seem especially tough, I think about this. I think about what public education gave me—a kid who couldn't even speak English when I entered first grade. I think about what it has given me and can give to countless numbers of other kids like me. And I know that keeping public education together is worth whatever effort it takes.

Al Shanker believed that the National Government needed to commit itself to improving our Nation's schools. Should we have national education goals? Al Shanker believed strongly that we should. Should we have educational standards? Al Shanker believed we should so that every parent could determine whether their child was getting the education that they deserved.

Mr. President, I was privileged to work with Al Shanker on several issues but, most importantly, on the issue of improving standards for our schools. His vision and his strength of commitment were always an inspiration.

With his death, the American Federation of Teachers lost a superb president and all of us in America lost a tireless champion for public education and for a better America.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

A TRIBUTE TO ROY D. NEDROW

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a lifetime commitment to law and order in the United States. On March 1, 1997, Mr. Roy D. Nedrow retired as the Director of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, ending 33 years of law enforcement service to the community at the local, State, and Federal levels.

Mr. Nedrow began his law enforcement career in 1964 with the Berkeley, CA, Police Department and served there for 6 years, first as a patrolman and later as a training sergeant and detective. In 1970, Mr. Nedrow was appointed a special agent with the U.S. Secret Service where he distinguished himself during assignments in the field and at the Service's Headquarters. As a result of his outstanding performance and talents, Mr. Nedrow earned a number of promotions culminating in his appointment to the Senior Executive Service and assignment as the Service's Deputy Assistant Director for the Office of Investigations where he oversaw the investigations and protective support activities conducted by the Service's 1,200 special agents at its more than 100 field locations.

On December 28, 1992, Mr. Nedrow retired from the Secret Service to accept

the appointment as the Director of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. His induction came a critical time in the Agency's history. His strong leadership restored stability to an agency which needed greater independence and a change of direction. Assembling a team of highly qualified professionals, Director Nedrow overhauled the Service, reorganizing it to diminish its bureaucracy, and to provide greater accountability and responsiveness to its consumers. He provided his people with a new vision, the necessary resources and support, and the inspiration to achieve positive change. Under his leadership, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service gained national recognition for its innovation in the field of homicide investigation. Its approach to the investigation of previously unresolved or cold case homicides, some as old as 28 years, was lauded in October 1996 by the International Chiefs of Police [IACP] during its prestigious Webber Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement Ceremony for innovation and excellence in law enforcement programs. The NCIS cold case methodology has since been adopted by numerous law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. Director Nedrow also recognized the problems and anxieties endured by families of deceased service men and women whose deaths occurred under other than natural circumstances. He revitalized and championed a Family Liaison Program to assure responsiveness to the needs of, and issues raised by, surviving family members during the death investigation process. His legacy of additional achievements with and for the Service include a well-respected Critical Incident Debriefing Team, a proven Alternative Dispute Resolution system, and a cutting edge Computer Crimes Investigation Group.

"The final test of a leader," renowned journalist Walter Lippman wrote in 1945, "is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and will to carry on." The testimony to Roy Nedrow is that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service is indeed a better agency today and that he leaves it in most capable and inspired hands.

Mr. President, in closing I wish to commend Roy Nedrow for outstanding leadership and service and thank him for his dedication to the Nation as a guardian of our peace. I wish him, and his wife, Claudia, Godspeed in his retirement.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. HAGEL assumed the Chair.)

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEASURE READ FOR THE FIRST TIME—SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 19

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I send a joint resolution to the desk on behalf of myself and Senators FEINSTEIN and HELMS, a joint resolution relative to Presidential certification of Mexico regarding drugs, and ask that the joint resolution be read for the first time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

To disapprove the certification of the President under section 490(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 regarding foreign assistance for Mexico during fiscal year 1997.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I now ask for its second reading and object to my request on behalf of Democratic Members on the other side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The bill will be read the second time on the next legislative day.

(The remarks of Mr. COVERDELL and Mrs. FEINSTEIN pertaining to the introduction of Senate Joint Resolution 19, Senate Joint Resolution 20, and Senate Joint Resolution 21 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). The Senator from Indiana.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, over the last 15 years, the balanced budget amendment has been debated over and over again in this Chamber. Members of one or both Chambers of Congress actually have voted on this proposal six times. The arguments, by this point, are familiar. We have heard them over the last several weeks and the last several years in these debates. So there is the disturbing process by which the vested interests of this institution are protected against the clear will of our democracy.

We are not, of course, debating about passage of a balanced budget amendment. We are debating whether or not to send that decision to the States and to the people of America. Often that gets confused. People think that the entire decision, the entire vote, rests with the 100 Members of this Senate body, when in fact the only thing that rests with us is whether or not we will make the decision to give the people of America, to give democracy, an opportunity to decide whether or not we ought to have a balanced budget directing our fiscal affairs here in Washington.

We are debating whether to prefer our interests above their wisdom, and it appears we will once again by the narrowest of margins decide to sustain this corrupt and corrupting Federal power of unlimited debt.

Once again our debate on this matter has been conducted to maximize public cynicism—not intentionally but that is certainly the result—with twisted arms, violated promises, pressure tactics, and broken commitments. We have seen it all surround this issue time and time again. And, once again, as we are debating this, people are switching their position, people pledging to their constituents during the campaign: "I will be there when the balanced budget call is taken; when the roll is called, I will be on the plus side." And, of course, now we hear the excuses as to why since the election is over that is no longer the case. Even those who have voted for the balanced budget amendment in the past now find convenient reasons not to do so in the present.

So I guess we cannot really blame the American people for being cynical, for being apathetic about what takes place here in this body, in the Congress, in Washington. All of this in a desperate attempt to prevent the American citizen from having a voice and having a vote, all to prop up, if just for a few more years, the ability of Congress to cripple the success and the prosperity of the future.

There are many divisive issues debated in this Chamber, but this issue is unique in one way. The defeat of a balanced budget amendment represents the raw exercise of political power against the desires of over 80 percent of the American public. In my experience in politics, no proposal with support so strong and so consistent has ever been frustrated for so long by the Congress.

Make no mistake. A balanced budget amendment will eventually be sent to the States for ratification. I think that is guaranteed by the breadth of public commitment which will not go away and will only grow in strength. We can delay this process, as apparently we will do once again, but not deny it. Every year of delay increases our danger and ought to add to our shame and guilt.

Rather than rehearse the detailed arguments of this debate, let me take, if I could, a long review of what I think we have learned. First, the history of the last few decades and the nature of the political process itself argues that the Congress is incapable of self-restraint. We have a system in place, a system that allows us to vote public benefits to the very people who keep us in office. We have a system that allows us to place the burden of those benefits on the future while we gain political support from the present. We have found an efficient way to betray future generations in favor of the present. And it is easy and relatively painless because our generation can vote while future generations cannot and our silence and their anger is distant. We do not feel or hear their anger at the next election because they do not have a vote at the next election. So we please those who benefit us now at the expense of those in the future.