

are increasing, but it gives them the opportunity to be someplace where they ordinarily would not be able to go. That is good. It should also allow women the opportunity to go to college because of their athletic abilities. Title IX is helping women get athletic scholarships that they would not have gotten just a few years ago. This is important and good for the country and for education generally.

What are the benefits of sports for women and for girls? Women and girls achieve numerous benefits from participating in athletics. In my opinion, with our society becoming increasingly more sedentary, we need to increase physical activity and athletics for all of our citizens—not just for boys but also for girls.

Getting young ladies involved in sports improves their health and well-being, and increases the likelihood they will stick with athletics and exercise throughout their lives.

In addition to the general health benefits of physical activity, a study conducted at the Harvard University's Graduate School of Public Health showed that young women who participated in college sports were significantly—and I stress that—less likely to contract breast cancer and other reproductive cancers.

There are other benefits. Participation in athletics benefits young women in the same way that it benefits young men. Participation in sports has been found to increase the self-esteem of girls and boys.

Mr. President, one of my older boys played football in high school. I was talking on the telephone to one of my friends who had been a college athlete. He and I played ball together in high school. I was concerned that a boy from my son's team had just gone to the hospital with some football injury. And my friend, who is now a veterinarian, told me, "HARRY, athletics builds character. He may have gone to an emergency room. He is home now. Stick it out. Athletics builds character." That it does.

I believe, for those that I have seen participate in athletics generally, it is a character builder. It should be a character builder not only for young men but also for young women.

I believe, as I said, that athletics increases self-esteem of girls and boys. High school athletes have higher graduation rates than nonathletes. Female athletes also have lower dropout rates than nonathletes.

Studies reveal that girls involved in sports are more likely to aspire to be leaders in their communities. Expanding sports opportunities for women and girls will help more women in their leadership roles and help them to lead successful adult lives. If it is true for men, then it should be true for women.

Further, increased opportunity for women in sports increases exposure for women's athletics, and makes it possible for more women to make a career of sports.

Mr. President, the NCAA women's basketball championship this year was a sellout. The women's—not men's but women's—college basketball championship was a sellout. They played great basketball.

When I go home I love to watch women's softball. Last year UNLV was ranked in the top five of the Nation. It was exciting to watch these young women play fast pitch softball. I am sure, if you brought the men's baseball players over to play these young women in softball, that the men would lose. These young women are good. I like to watch women's basketball too. It is just as entertaining as men's. Title IX has played an important role in providing opportunities for women to excel in athletics.

It is important to stress, however, that the intent of title IX was not to cut men's programs but merely to bring women's programs up to the level that they ought to be. This costs money, and many schools aren't willing to shell out this money. Subsequently, title IX has gotten some negative reaction from schools who have limited funds.

Mr. President, I think it is important to note that schools are trying to comply. For example, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas developed a compliance action plan to make changes and work toward compliance with title IX. They have submitted a plan that will put girls athletics at UNLV on a par with male athletics by the year 2001. Their plan is to increase female athletic participation opportunities—scholarship and nonscholarship—by a minimum of 100 over the next 5 years. They are going to add women's soccer in 1998 and add another women's sport in the year 2001. They are going to provide medical support, training and equipment to meet these additional needs; and provide new funding, up to \$4 million over the next 5 years, to meet these gender equity needs.

UNLV doesn't currently meet any of the tests for title IX compliance, but they are working at it to the benefit of Nevada's athletes, and I think to education generally.

Mr. President, compliance with title IX is not unreasonable, nor is it impossible. Seven NCAA Division I schools meet the proportionality test, where the percentage of female athletes is within five points of female undergraduates.

Among the schools in compliance are Dartmouth, Lehigh, the University of Massachusetts, Harvard, and Montana State.

So it is not all of these eastern schools. It can be done, if people try. Obviously, Montana State was interested in complying, and they accomplished that.

Even the most basic efforts that schools make toward compliance with title IX have started a nationwide boom in women's sports.

I talked about basketball. But as more women have entered athletics

they have not displaced men. Instead the total number of athletes has increased. There has been an ongoing struggle. We have had case decisions in the U.S. Supreme Court. On Monday, April 21, the Supreme Court declined to review a case filed by Brown University where they wanted to test the Constitutionality of title IX.

The Supreme Court would not even consider the case. As a result of that, we are going forward with more proportionality. We are going to make an even playing field.

Because of these positive outcomes, title IX must be supported and enforced because it is good government. Somewhere out there are future female professional athletes and Olympic gold medalists who may never jump a hurdle or pick up a ball if their families, coaches, and schools do not give them the opportunity and the encouragement to play sports. These girls and women who are the champions of the future must be supported. Title IX is vital to that effort.

(Ms. COLLINS assumed the chair.)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. REID. Madam President, when I came to the Senate about 11 years ago, one of the first things I did was come to the Senate floor and talk about the need for campaign finance reform. I thought it would come very quickly. I could not believe, with all the problems that occurred during that election cycle, including what happened in my election in the State of Nevada 11 years ago, we would not rush to reform the way we elect Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.

The problems were replete, with the Federal Election Commission being really a toothless tiger. They had no money to enforce the rules and the laws that existed. Much to my chagrin and, frankly, much to my surprise, 11 years later we have done nothing, zero. In fact, things have even gotten worse. Why? Because the Supreme Court, among other things, declared that any money that goes to a State party cannot be regulated. So this last cycle, even though we had Federal law to the effect that there would be no corporate money in Federal elections since the early part of this century, the Supreme Court stood that on its head, and suddenly not only do we have the problems we have had with a myriad of people trying to skirt the law, now we have the fact that you can use corporate money in Federal elections.

I think that is wrong. I think it is too bad that we have not done something. That is why I am here today to commend and applaud Senators FEINGOLD and MCCAIN for their courageous work on campaign finance reform. I am a cosponsor of that legislation. I do not agree with every jot and tittle, every line and verse within that legislation, but it is a step in the right direction, and I happily joined in cosponsoring that legislation. Why? Because it is going to do some things—it

is going to reform campaign financing significantly and importantly and in a good way. It will require greater disclosure of independent expenditures. I believe independent expenditures is a sore that is festering and is going to wind up tremendously damaging the body politic.

Unnamed people, with money coming from unknown sources, are running campaign ads viciously attacking candidates. That is wrong. That is really un-American.

The McCain-Feingold legislation will require the FEC to provide advance notice to complying candidates if they have been targeted by these independent expenditures or outside organizations.

McCain-Feingold would restrict contributions from people not eligible to vote in Federal elections. It could ban incumbent use of franked mass mailings in the calendar year of an election.

It would increase disclosure and accountability for those who engage in political advertising. And it would strengthen penalties for willful violations of Federal election law. We must do something to make people feel better about the elections.

Elections are 18 months away. Negative ads are already starting around the country. That is wrong. People who say we need to hold more hearings to determine whether or not McCain-Feingold is a good law, I say let us look at what has happened over the past 10 years. Congress has produced almost 6,800 pages of hearings. There have been 3,361 floor speeches. I guess because of this one, it is 3,362 floor speeches. There have been 1,060 pages of committee reports, 113 Senate votes on campaign finance reform, and one bipartisan Federal commission. Certainly this is enough. We have enough information to act responsibly.

Over the next 2 years, Madam President, Congress will deal with changes to regulations and programs that affect virtually every American, from clean air and water to education programs, matters dealing with crime in the streets, juvenile crime, trying to improve our infrastructure, Medicare, Medicaid, problems dealing with our Nation's elderly. In order to address these concerns credibly, should we not first act to reform the way we are elected? I say yes. I hope that my colleagues join hands in rallying around the McCain-Feingold legislation. It is the best we have to bring debate to the Senate floor and to get something done. I have talked about it for 11 years. It has been a problem even longer than that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MAINE HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPATES IN "WE THE PEOPLE" PROGRAM

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, during this past weekend, 14 students from St. Dominic Regional High School in Lewiston, ME, joined with almost 1,200 other high school students from across the Nation to participate in the national finals for the "We the People" competition, a program designed to help students better understand the history of our Constitution and its Bill of Rights, which are the foundations upon which our system of government rests.

The St. Dominic High School students have been representing the State of Maine during this weekend's activities, which will culminate in a national winner being chosen tonight, at an awards banquet here in Washington. The St. Dominic's team spent a considerable amount of time and energy reaching the national finals this weekend by winning various competitions in Maine in order to earn the honor of representing our State.

The 14 members of our State's outstanding team, who should be individually acknowledged for their efforts in this undertaking, are:

Robyn Adair, Michael Beam, Julie Blanchette, Nicole Bouttenot, Rachel Bouttenot, Martin Bruno, Derek Coulombe, Emma Dore-Hark, Jennifer Elliott, Jonathan LaBonte, Kendra LaRoche, Kathryn Mailhot, Michael Theriault, and Matthew Walton.

Of course, in addition to these outstanding students, I want to acknowledge and recognize the hard work of their teacher, Rosanne Ducey, who deserves her fair share of the credit for the team's success as well. The "We the People" program coordinator for Maine, Pamela Beal, has also contributed a significant amount of her time and effort to help the St. Dominic team reach the national finals.

The "We the People" program, which is administered by the Center for Civic Education, is the most in-depth educational program in the country developed specifically to educate high school students about the U.S. Constitution. This past weekend's 3-day national competition re-creates a public hearing in which the student's oral presentations are judged on the basis of their knowledge of constitutional principles and their ability to apply them to historical and contemporary issues.

The "We the People" program has been operating for 10 years now. Since its origination, millions of students nationwide have participated in this program at either the elementary, middle, and/or high school level. This program provides an excellent opportunity for students to gain an informed perspective on the significance of the U.S. Constitution and its place in our history and our lives.

Mr. President, I'm pleased to be able to recognize the valuable contribution that the St. Dominic Regional High School team has made to the success of

the "We the People" program, and I wish these students and their teachers the very best of luck. I am proud of their accomplishments.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, April 25, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,345,392,363,906.29. (Five trillion, three hundred forty-five billion, three hundred ninety-two million, three hundred sixty-three thousand, nine hundred six dollars and twenty-nine cents)

Twenty-five years ago, April 25, 1972, the federal debt stood at \$428,301,000,000 (Four hundred twenty-eight billion, three hundred one million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,917,091,363,906.29 (Four trillion, nine hundred seventeen billion, ninety-one million, three hundred sixty-three thousand and, nine hundred six dollars and twenty-nine cents) during the past 25 years.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ABRAHAM. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Elizabeth Kessler, a member of my staff, be granted privilege of the floor for the period of time during which the Volunteer Protection Act is discussed.

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

VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT OF 1997—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 543, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 543) to provide certain protections to volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers.

The Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Madam President, this week in Philadelphia, President Clinton is joining former Presidents Bush and Ford, along with former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell at a summit to promote voluntarism.

I commend any and all efforts to increase charitable activity on the part of Americans. And I find it extremely fitting that this summit is being held in the City of Brotherly Love because charitable activity does more even than providing help and counseling to those in need. Charitable activity helps all Americans by promoting habits and appreciation of benevolent actions—actions aimed at helping those in need because it is the right thing to do.