

ranking member on the Subcommittee on Disability and who has made such a very important contribution on all of the issues relating to the disabled in this country over a very distinguished career, Senator JEFFORDS, and others on our committee.

This has been a strong bipartisan effort. We welcome the opportunity to work very closely with them. This is not to minimize the issues that are outstanding, but it does represent a continuing commitment of those who support the legislation to try to continue the very important efforts that have marked this legislation and finding cooperation and finding ways to deal with some of the still outstanding issues.

So I am very, very grateful for their statements on the floor today.

LIHEAP

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on the issue others have spoken to, I want to add my strong voice in hope and anticipation of the President's release of these emergency LIHEAP funds to help the families in the Northeast and Midwest. I think all of us have understood the extraordinary hardships and loss of lives that are affecting people in the Midwest, and people are hurting in my part of the country, in the Northeast, as well, with the soaring heating bills this winter.

The reduced benefit levels and the skyrocketing prices of home heating oil have been a double whammy for the 5 million low-income families nationwide who receive LIHEAP assistance.

Federal funding for LIHEAP is already near an all-time low—listen to this, Mr. President—down from \$2.1 billion in 1985 to \$1 billion today. In Massachusetts, Federal fuel aid has declined from \$87 million to \$41 million over that same period, about half of the resources in dollars. When you measure it out in terms of inflation, it is even less than that. When we see what has happened to the cost of home heating oil, we will see that people are in dire straits.

Local fuel assistance directors have been successful in past years in stretching the limited LIHEAP funds to serve as many needy families as possible. This winter, however, low stocks have sent heating oil prices through the roof, causing excessive hardships to LIHEAP recipients across the Nation.

According to the Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources, the cost of home heating oil has risen 20 percent, and, in some communities, considerably higher, from some 95 cents a gallon in December 1995, to over \$1.15 today. Despite the oil companies' efforts to bring their inventories to last year's levels, heating oil prices still remain high because of increased world demand.

This rise in heating oil prices has imposed a heavy burden on low-income families, many of whom must devote a significant portion of their limited resources to paying their energy bills.

Who are these families, Mr. President? Forty-three percent of the recipients for the LIHEAP program are elderly or disabled citizens. They spend an average of 19 percent of their income to keep their homes warm in the winter, whereas middle-income families devote 4 percent.

That is who we are talking about: elderly people, the neediest people who are living and affected by this colder climate, are spending way out of proportion of their income in order to just remain warm.

The AFDC recipients spend as much as 25 percent of their income for home heating. At the same time, these families are hard pressed and struggle to pay their bills for food, rent, and health care.

A decade ago, LIHEAP assistance could sustain a low-income family through an entire winter, purchasing as much as 750 gallons of heating oil. Today, the higher cost of heating oil and the lower benefit levels will only purchase a third of that amount. Some 10 years ago, there was the ability to address this issue for the neediest families for the winter and now a third of the winter, even with these resources that would be available.

Many local fuel assistance directors are already planning for the worst. According to Jim Murphy, whose TRICAP Community Action Program serves 1,500 clients in Malden, MA, over 40 percent will be without any heating assistance at the end of next week unless emergency funds are provided.

Other communities in Massachusetts are facing a similar crisis. In Boston, as many as 2,000 families, out of 13,000 served by LIHEAP, have run out of heating oil. An additional 4,500 households will be at risk in the next few weeks. We are talking the next 2 to 3 weeks.

In economically distressed towns like Gloucester, many working families involved in the fishing industry have already exhausted their annual benefits. According to Elliott Jacobson, chairman of the New England Energy Directors Association, charities are being tapped for additional assistance 2 months ahead of schedule, taxing their limited resources to serve the community.

Clearly, without an immediate release of emergency funds, little relief is in site for these families. If another cold spell strikes, even more families will be without protection.

As we mentioned, 49 Senators wrote to the President last week requesting the release of the emergency LIHEAP funds before more cold weather grips the country. This year, \$420 million in emergency funds could be made available at the President's discretion. The letter sent to the President Thursday requested \$300 million of that amount. I hope all of my colleagues will support this necessary action and will support action by the President to respond to these very important and critical needs.

THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION BUDGET

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on another item, I want to draw the attention of the Senate to President Clinton's announcement today for making education a top priority in his balanced budget plan. The President has announced the proposal and recognizes the importance of investing in education as the cornerstone of a stronger future for the Nation.

In the coming years, a college education will be more important than ever. We know that by the year 2005, 60 percent of all of the new jobs will require not only a high school education, but also skills in the utilization of computers. So the President's program is focused on a number of priority areas. I will introduce at the end of my statement a brief summary of those items, but I would like to just mention some of those which I think are most important.

First of all, to try and assure working families in this country that not only high school will be available, but really the 13th and 14th grades, the first 2 years of college, would be available as well. That is being done in a number of ways:

First, with a \$10,000 deduction for the payments of tuition that will be available to working families and middle-income families, what they call the Hope Tax Credit, which will be a \$1,500 credit for the sons and daughters who are going to college.

This would amount to the payment in full of tuition for 67 percent of all the community colleges in the country; and then an expansion of the Pell grants by some \$300 to a maximum of \$3,000 for those individuals who are eligible for Pell grants. That is a very important and significant commitment. That will mean about 130,000 more students across this country will be able to take advantage of the Pell grants.

Then there are the changes in the Pell grant provisions that will be primarily targeted upon older students, those who have been out in the work force and are coming back, those who are 24 or 25 years old or older. I do not know whether the distinguished Chair has had the kind of opportunity I have had to visit some of the community colleges in his own State as I have in Massachusetts. We find changes which are taking place where the makeup of the student body is considerably older.

Changes in the Pell language are going to make available 218,000 additional slots for those individuals who are returning to college to upgrade their skills, which is very important.

We also have a strong commitment in the areas of literacy. We will see an expansion of the Work-Study Program, which provides important opportunities for students to help work their way through college. It is an absolutely vital link to permit students to match together what they are able to earn in the summertime by working, with what they earn working under the

Work-Study Programs. There is a strong commitment to fulfill the President's commitment to try to make sure that every third grader is able to read by the year 2000. It is an important program that really builds upon the successful programs of the past. We will have more of a chance to review those in the Labor and Human Resources Committee later in the session.

We also see the willingness to try to help and assist those communities where a third of all of the high school students are going to school in dilapidated buildings. The Educational Facilities Improvement Act is a program that was developed by Senator CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN and has been a very creative program which will be addressed in the President's program.

Finally, the President makes a strong commitment in the area of technology, about \$2 billion over the next 5 years, to try to make sure that we are going to have technology—hardware and software—and, most importantly, trained teachers that will be able to use technology to help students learn more.

A number of States, including my own State of Massachusetts, are now involved in what we call the Net Day Program—there are 12 other States involved in it—where we have been able to bring the Software Council, the leaders of business in software, the Telecommunications Council, which represents the best in terms of telecommunications, the unions, working all together in order to provide wiring and also computers to the classrooms and schools of Massachusetts.

We were 48th out of 50 at the start of this whole effort; and we are now, I believe, leading all the States in the number of classrooms that we have already wired for the Internet with the help of this voluntary program which is very successful. More than 600 schools have now been adequately wired. We intend, within the next 15 months, to have the approximately 2,700 schools in Massachusetts achieve that.

We have benchmarks to be able to assess where we are. The next benchmark will be in April of this year. But nonetheless, this kind of commitment by the administration to technology and teacher training is enormously important.

It is our understanding that the new education programs and the strong commitment to education is paid for in the President's balanced budget. We will see the details of the President's budget in the next 10 days. But today we commend his strong commitment to education.

We are looking forward to working in our committee, the Labor and Human Resources Committee, under the chairmanship of Senator JEFFORDS, who has had a long and distinguished career of bipartisan leadership in education, to maintain the Nation's commitment to strengthen academic achievement and accomplishment. We should continue

to support local school reform efforts and to help provide seed money to communities to help bring technology into their schools—and to help ensure that technology is available to schools in all parts of the country. In addition, we will continue to make college more accessible and affordable for all students.

We have every expectation that colleges and universities will join us in this partnership to increase accessibility and affordability and that they will not respond by raising tuition. We will work with them over the course of this Congress to ensure that this happens.

To reiterate, I commend President Clinton for making education a top priority in his balanced budget plan. The President's proposal recognizes the importance of investing in education as the cornerstone of a stronger future for the Nation.

In the coming years, a college education will be more important than ever. By 2005, 60 percent of all jobs created will require education beyond high school. A college graduate earns almost twice what a high school graduate earns, and almost three times what a high school dropout earns.

But too often, college is priced out of reach for many families. From 1980 to 1990, the cost of college rose by 126 percent, while family income increased by only 73 percent.

To meet the rising cost of college, students and their families are going deeper and deeper into debt. In the 1990's, students have borrowed more in student loans than in the three preceding decades combined. In 1996 alone, students borrowed \$30 billion—a 65-percent increase since 1993. Since 1988, borrowing in the Federal student loan program has more than doubled.

The President's proposal recognizes that making college more accessible and affordable is a top priority for the Nation. His proposal increases funding for higher education, provides tax cuts for education, and cuts student loan fees.

Under the proposal, funding for higher education will increase by 20 percent by 2002, including a \$1.6 billion increase in Pell grants. The Pell grant maximum will increase by \$300 in the first year to \$3,000, to give 130,000 low-income students greater access to college. With reforms in eligibility rules, the proposal will also help over 200,000 adults obtain the extra education and training they need to compete in the modern workplace.

The proposal targets tax cuts for education to help students and working families. Students with incomes below \$70,000 would benefit from the \$1,500 Hope Tax Credit, which makes 2 years of community college affordable.

All families with incomes below \$100,000 may take advantage of a \$10,000 tuition tax deduction. The President's budget also provides for penalty free withdrawals from IRA's to pay for education expenses. Student loan fees will be cut in half, saving students \$2.6 bil-

lion over the budget period. The College Work-Study Program will be expanded to help up to 1 million students gain work experience while they earn money for college.

In the area of elementary and secondary education, the President's proposal provides significant support for school reform.

The Information Age has arrived, yet millions of children attend school in conditions inadequate to modern needs. By the year 2000, 60 percent of new jobs will require skills possessed by only 22 percent of the young people entering the labor market. Already, more than half of high-wage jobs require the use of network computers. Jobs that require computers pay 15 percent more, on average, than those that do not.

Schools across the country are struggling to repair decrepit facilities, let alone develop modern classrooms. Fourteen million children in a third of the Nation's schools are learning in substandard classrooms. Yet enrollments are at an all-time high of 52 million students and are continuing to rise.

We must also do more to help children learn to read—40 percent of all children now read below their grade level. Higher standards are clearly needed to encourage reading and other basic academic skills.

The President's proposal responds to these needs by investing almost \$2 billion in improved education technology over the budget period—a \$252 million increase in fiscal year 1998 alone.

The President's plan will also invest \$2.45 billion over the budget period in the America Reads Challenge, to help children read well by the third grade. It invests \$5 billion to improve school facilities. Funding for Goals 2000 will increase to help children meet higher academic standards. Funding for charter schools will increase. The title I program and the Eisenhower Teacher Training Program will receive increases to give students the extra help they need to improve their skills.

President Clinton's plan is effective and comprehensive. It sets the right priority for education, and the right priority for the Nation's future. President Clinton has proved once again, that he truly is the education President, and I look forward to working with all Members of Congress to achieve these essential goals.

CONTROLLING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND PROTECTING JOBS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last week I introduced a bill to control illegal immigration and protect U.S. jobs. I would like to take a few minutes to expand on that bill.

Last year, Congress passed landmark immigration reform legislation intended to curb illegal immigration.

But that Republican legislation addressed only half of the illegal immigration problem. Republicans did not get the job done. So today, with the support of our Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE, I introduce legislation