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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, September 15, 1997, at 12 noon.

Senate

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1997

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, as we conclude this week, we claim Your promise through Isaiah. "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'"—Isaiah 30:21. We pray for that kind of clear and decisive guidance in the relationships and responsibilities ahead of us. Speak so that we may speak in an echo of both the tone and tenor of Your truth. We tune our minds to the frequency of Your spirit. Help us communicate Your caring and compassion as well as Your justice and righteousness. May our consistent communion with You radiate on our faces, be expressed in our character, and be exuded in positive joy. Fill this Chamber with Your spirit and bless the Senators with strength and courage to listen to You, learn from You, and lean on Your everlasting arms. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader from Washington State is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, the Senate will be in session today only for the transaction of morning business.

No rollcall votes will occur during today's session of the Senate. On Monday, the Senate will resume consideration of the Interior appropriations bill. As announced, no rollcall votes will occur during Monday's session. The majority leader intends that the Senate conclude debate on the Interior bill by Tuesday. As a consequence, Members are encouraged to contact the managers of the bill to schedule floor action on any possible amendments on Monday or Tuesday.

As Members are aware, this is the next to the last appropriations bill remaining for Senate consideration, so Members' cooperation is appreciated in the scheduling of floor action as we attempt to conclude action on both the Interior appropriations bill and the District of Columbia appropriations bill next week. As a result of this policy, the next rollcall vote will be a cloture vote on the substitute amendment to S. 830, the Food and Drug Administration reform bill, which will occur on Tuesday at 10 a.m. Under rule XXII, all first-degree amendments to S. 830 must be filed by 1 p.m. on Monday. The majority leader thanks his colleagues for their attention.

Mr. President, as manager of the Interior appropriations bill, I have spoken to a number of my colleagues with interest in the National Endowment for the Arts to express my views and those of Senator STEVENS and the majority leader that to the maximum possible extent, amendments relating to the National Endowment for the Arts be presented and debated on Monday. With a single exception, all of the Members who I am aware of who may

have such amendments have been contacted and have expressed their cooperation. But for the information of all Members on both sides of the aisle, Monday will provide a time at which the National Endowment for the Arts can be debated at leisure without time constraints or the interference of other matters.

So I do hope that those Members who have an interest in expressing their views on the subject will come to the floor of the Senate on Monday afternoon and let their views be known to other Members of the Senate.

This is not to say, of course, that other amendments will not be in order on Monday, as they will be. We are aware of the possibility of amendments by Senators HELMS and ASHCROFT that would terminate the National Endowment for the Arts in the way that the House of Representatives voted to do; additional amendments by Senator HELMS with respect to content restrictions; a potential amendment by Senator HUTCHINSON of Arkansas, together with Senators SESSIONS and ABRAHAM on block granting most or all of the funds for the National Endowment for the Arts; an amendment by Senator HUTCHISON of Texas to restructure the grant process of NEA; an amendment by Senator JEFFORDS, as the chairman of the authorizing committee for the Endowment, to deal with the committee's authorization proposal as a part of this appropriations debate; and the possibility that Senator COCHRAN may wish to clarify the definition of arts education. That is not to say all these amendments will, in fact, be adopted. It is not to say there are not others. I

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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may report that there seems to be more interest in debating this issue in a number of different guises than there is of any other part of the Interior appropriations bill. I, obviously, will be here for the day. I hope I am accompanied by the great majority of those who wish to speak on the issue.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, what is the business before the Senate?

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under a previous order, there will be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes each.

OPPOSITION TO THE GORTON AMENDMENT

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I wanted to speak first today about this Gorton amendment that we adopted yesterday as part of the Labor and Human Services appropriation measure.

The Senate approved that amendment by a narrow vote of 51 to 49. And the effect of the amendment is to convert billions of dollars in Federal education funds into unrestricted block grants that go to school districts, and with very few restrictions or accountability for how the funding is spent. I think the amendment is extremely far-reaching, and it was a mistake by the Senate to go along with this amendment. I hope very much that, in the final analysis in the conference, we can drop the amendment and send to the President a bill that keeps intact the various programs that many of us have worked for on both the Democratic and Republican side of the aisle for many years.

Let me just say, putting it in its baldest terms, that this amendment would eliminate much of the U.S. Department of Education. That is a radical and a misguided effort, which does not have strong public support. This is an issue that was discussed in the last Presidential campaign. It became clear, I believe, during the course of that campaign and in the polling that was done throughout the campaign and since, that the American public does not favor elimination of the Department of Education, either in a formal way or by the gutting of the Department through an amendment such as this.

I have fundamental problems with the notion that there is no national interest in helping parents and schools and students to compete in the world

economy. What we are saying is that the local schools in every part of this country can figure out how to prepare their students to compete in the international marketplace if they have no help from outside. I disagree with that. It is not realistic to expect a local school board to have at its disposal the resources and expertise that we can develop at the national level and provide as assistance in the educational process.

So there is an honest disagreement here about whether we as a nation can step up to this responsibility and assist States and local school districts, or whether we need to stay completely out of it. I feel very much that we need to provide assistance and expertise where we can.

The Secretary of Education, in a quotation in the morning paper, says very clearly—this is Secretary Riley in the Washington Post:

Secretary Riley warned that the Senate's action, which he called a "back-door attempt to kill the Department of Education" would abolish many vital programs for students, including Clinton's Goals 2000 grants for school reform.

Madam President, when you look at the roughly \$12.5 billion in annual funding for Federal education programs that would go into block grants under this amendment, you see how broad-based this amendment is. Let me just go through the list so the people know what we are talking about here.

First of all, there is the Goals 2000 program that, of course, has been somewhat controversial, but has been a great benefit to many school districts in my State. I go to school district after school district as I travel around New Mexico and talk to those school district administrators and teachers and students about the Goals 2000 program. I find good support for it. I think they appreciate the funding they have received and the assistance that the Federal Government provides. So it would be eliminated.

The School-to-Work Program. The education funds involved in the School-to-Work Program—not the Department of Labor funds, but the Education Department funds—would be eliminated.

Education technology. This has been a concern of mine and of many Senators for many years now as to how do we get additional resources to our schools and to our school districts so that they can put in place the various purchasing of hardware and software and training of teachers that is necessary for them to turn out a technologically literate group of graduates at the end of the high school experience.

Star Schools Program, the regional technology education consortia, the telecommunications demonstration programs that are in place around the country, the challenge grants for technology innovation, technology literacy challenge fund—all of these are specific initiatives that have benefited my State significantly.

I think it would be a major error for us to eliminate the Federal funds.

Some will say we are not eliminating Federal funds, we are giving a block grant to the school districts and if they want to spend them on this, they can. The unfortunate reality is that a local school district is under tremendous pressure. The school board members in my State are elected, as they are throughout most of the country. They are under tremendous pressure at the local level to raise salaries, raise salaries for school administrators, to build additional facilities, and to do a whole range of things. If we want funds to go to improve technological literacy and provide educational technology for our schools, we have to specify that is what the money goes for. Otherwise, the reality is that it will be spent for other purposes.

So this Gorton amendment eliminates any requirement that any funds be spent for this purpose. I think that would be a major mistake. In my own State, we have received, this year, about \$1.7 million in Federal funds for educational technology. We are expected, this next year, to receive \$3.5 million in funds. The total, nationwide, is \$425 million. I think this is money well spent. It is cost-effective. It is a cost-effective way for the taxpayers to try to assist in improving education at the local level.

Let me go through some of the others that are covered here. The Eisenhower professional development State grants. These are funds that go to assist teachers in getting additional training so that they can better teach and remain in the profession of teaching. The innovative education program strategies under title 6. The safe and drug-free schools program. Again, in my State, I have gone to many schools and they have been extremely appreciative that the safe and drug-free schools program has allowed them to hire counselors to work at the middle school level, so that when students are beginning to get into difficulties with drugs or beginning to lose interest in school and become truant, they can have counselors there to be an early prevention device to keep those students involved. That safe and drug-free schools money would be eliminated under this amendment.

The magnet schools assistance. That, again, has been very helpful in many school districts around the country. Education for homeless children and youth. Women's educational equity funding. Education for native Hawaiians. Alaska Native education equity funding. Charter schools funding. Funding for Indian education. All of these are specific programs that will not be funded if this amendment prevails. So, clearly, I think we have a major problem. Bilingual and immigration education programs are another example.

The key part of this amendment that I think is most objectionable is that it creates an unmonitored windfall to local school districts that would be used for any of a wide range of purposes. There would be no oversight, no