

needs—including knowing how to use technology to boost student achievement.

What is Congress' reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we cannot give our students the well-trained teachers they deserve. The people are speaking; Congress is not listening.

The American people have said they want their children to learn in modern schools, not schools where plugging in a computer blows all the electrical circuits. What is Congress' reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we will not be able to modernize our aging schools. The people are speaking; Congress is not listening.

Over the past year, one place where our children should be the safest, our schools, has become a home to unspeakable acts of violence. At the end of last school year, we had tragedies in Colorado and Georgia. The American people have told us they want their children to be safe in school. What is Congress' reply? The Republican budget will cut education funding by more than 17 percent and guarantee that we take away resources for safe and drug-free schools now, when we need them the most. The people are speaking; Congress is not listening.

When my colleagues say they are listening to the American people, they must be listening with their hands over their ears because they aren't getting the message.

Let me be clear: Cutting education funding by more than 17 percent is not what the American people want. It is not what our students need, and it is not what this Congress said it would do.

Why do I feel so strongly about this? Because making sure that we invest in public education and prepare our students and our country for tomorrow is at the core of who I am and why I am a United States Senator. When I was raising my children and my State was about to cut a small but very essential preschool program, I started talking to people around me about how we could keep that program. It wasn't very long before I had 15,000 people behind me making their voices heard in my State capital to save that preschool program. We fought very hard over a very small program, and we prevailed. The program wasn't cut, and today it is still helping students as it has been for the past 40 years.

These same parents and parents like them from around my State have responded so deeply to the need to invest in education that they sent me to the school board, the State senate, and now to the United States Senate. I stand before you as a person with a mission—to make sure that policymakers across this country do not walk away from their responsibility to the future of America and that they understand the importance of the Federal education dollar.

Since I have been in the Senate, I have noticed a change. Because of the efforts of Members like myself, TOM HARKIN, TED KENNEDY, CHRIS DODD, BARBARA BOXER, JACK REED, and Republicans such as Senator JEFFORDS and others, this body is finally talking about education in a way that it never has before. This Chamber's discussion is more reflective of the discussions that go on around kitchen tables all over this country. But you don't get points for talk alone.

I am sure that after my remarks today, some Members of this body will come here to say our public schools are failing, and they will paint us all a picture of woe and despair. The truth is, our public schools are doing a good job educating our children, and they are doing that good work in the face of enormous challenges today.

I have to say it again because it has never been more clear: Our public schools have not failed us, but if we don't stop this Republican budget, we will be failing our public schools.

The American people say education should be the highest priority. This Congress is making it our last priority. The American people say education should be our first priority. This Congress made it the last bill we will debate, after all the dollars have been spent, and there is only a little bit of spare change left.

Some of the proposals out there would have you believe that we can solve everything just by making our Federal programs more flexible. We all want our programs to be flexible. But you can have all the flexibility in the world, and it won't solve our education problems. Our schools need resources and our schools need funding.

The education budget has been left for the last. When we go home in a month, how will we explain the resulting decisions to our constituents? Which 17 percent of the kids are we going to say are not worth educating? To which 17 percent of the parents and families are we going to say: Sorry, we didn't have enough money to teach your child? Which 17 percent of schools are not worth making safe, secure, and drug free?

We cannot waste a single student. Even though it is very late in the game, and there is a lot of work to be done, we can turn this around. We can still decide to keep our word on education and to keep in step with the wishes of the American public.

It is not too late. I urge all of my colleagues to act now to increase education funding and do right by our children.

I thank the Chair and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, is the Senate in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

BELLEVUE INTERNATIONAL'S INNOVATION IN EDUCATION AWARD

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, today is National Student Day. In honor of this day, I would like to congratulate an outstanding group of students from my home state. Recently, the SAT scores for Washington state's graduating classes of 1999 were released. At the top of the public school list were the graduates of the International School of Bellevue, averaging 601 on verbal and 590 on math. Both scores surpassed the national averages by almost one-hundred points.

In my visits to hundreds of schools across Washington state, I have seen the benefits of countless innovative reforms and programs. The International School of Bellevue is an example of what local educators can do when they are given the freedom and flexibility to create new and better ways to educate.

The International School is a public school that was created approximately eight years ago by highly innovative teachers from the Bellevue School District. The founders' vision was to create a school in which a student would be placed in the classroom based on his or her ability—not his or her age. The founders also wanted to create an atmosphere in which each student would maintain close relationships with the teachers, and would gain clear understanding of how our country fits into today's world.

At the Bellevue International School, each student is required to take seven classes each year which include humanities, international studies, math, science, a foreign language, fine arts, and fitness. Even though this school serves grades 6-12, there are not specific grade levels. Each student takes his or her courses at the student's own performance level, starting at level one and ranging up to level seven for each of the seven courses.

The students are also encouraged to spend one month abroad at one of the International School's sister schools. While abroad, the students attend classes and are treated as regular students of their guest schools.

In order to attend the International School, students are not required to take an exam, submit test scores or previous grades. Any student with the desire and motivation to attend this school can submit his or her name into a lottery out of which names of the new students are chosen.

The Principal of the International School said that her students, "are not necessarily the smartest kids, but they have a terrific work ethic, converse with their teachers, and are highly resourceful and responsible for themselves and for others."

I applaud the International School's class of 1999 for its magnificent scores

on the SAT. I also applaud the rest of the student body for its passion for learning and for taking advantage of this tremendous opportunity. I know that each student who graduates from the International School will leave with an outstanding education and greater understanding of our country, our world, and his or her place in it.

The International School's impressive performance on the SAT demonstrates that when given the flexibility to create a program, local educators will succeed. I believe that we must give control of federal education dollars to the states and local school districts because those who work with out children on a daily basis—their parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members—best understand the needs of our children and should have the most significant role in setting education policy and priorities in our schools.

Mr. President, I might be a bit disingenuous in sharing this praise with you if I were not to point out that my oldest grandchild, my granddaughter, Betsy Nortz, just won the lottery last spring and started last week as a sixth grader at Bellevue International. Already, in just a few days, she reports great interest in the intellectual challenges to which she is subjected. She and I and her parents look forward to a fine career in the single school, I believe, in the State of Washington in the public system with the highest SAT scores.

The students and educators at the International School of Bellevue deserve our recognition and I hope my colleagues will join me in applauding their achievements.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to talk for a few moments about the Transportation appropriations bill we just passed and about one major component of that bill, and that is the U.S. Coast Guard.

I rise this afternoon to make one point very clear. The U.S. Coast Guard needs our help and needs our support. The future of the Coast Guard depends on a continued congressional commitment to provide adequate resources to the Coast Guard to carry out its very important mission.

Now, Congress—only in the last few years, with the leadership of a number of my colleagues—has begun to devote resources toward rebuilding the readi-

ness of the Coast Guard. But we have to understand that this is a continuous process. These investments we have made have come at a time when we have seen the missions of this important agency increase and expand.

Let me pause to congratulate Senators SHELBY, LAUTENBERG, and the rest of the committee. They have been very supportive of the Coast Guard and have worked very hard to come up with the very scarce dollars that are needed for the Coast Guard. I appreciate their work. I understand very well that they know and understand the challenges the Coast Guard faces. They have supported investments in the Coast Guard and understand the important role it plays in fighting drug trafficking.

I also know that in crafting the Transportation appropriations bill, my colleagues were faced with very difficult budget constraints. It is essential, however, that our overall investment in the Coast Guard keeps pace with the demands we are now placing on the Coast Guard and that we build on the recent successes we have seen in regard to the Coast Guard. We simply, as a Congress and as a Nation, in very tough and difficult budget times, must make funding for the Coast Guard a top priority.

It is obvious why a Senator from Ohio would have an interest in the Coast Guard. In my home State of Ohio, the Ninth Coast Guard District performs many vital functions critical to human safety and economic development. With more than 2.3 million of America's 11.5 million recreational boaters residing in the Great Lakes region, the Ninth Coast Guard District search and rescue units handle close to 7,500 cases annually, saving hundreds and hundreds of lives.

Further, to facilitate commerce on the Great Lakes during the winter months, Coast Guard cutters work closely with the Canadian Coast Guard to clear the way for approximately \$62 million worth of commercial cargo annually. This Ninth District also maintains more than 3,300 buoys, navigational lights, and fixed aids throughout this critical shipping region.

In addition to this role of the Coast Guard in my State of Ohio, it plays a significant role in the international drug fight. This may not be what people have historically thought about regarding the Coast Guard, but let me tell you, based on my own experience in going out with the Coast Guard and seeing what they do, if we give them the money, if we give them the resources, they are not only capable but they are willing and eager to go out and fight our antidrug battle for us.

To quantify it, because of the Coast Guard, each year close to \$3 billion worth of drugs never reach our neighborhoods, never reach our schools, and never reach our children. They are stopped before they get there, and they are stopped by our Coast Guard.

I have spoken on the Senate floor on several occasions in the past about

U.S. counternarcotics policy. I have spoken about the Coast Guard's ability to enforce that policy. As I have said before, I believe we need a balanced program to attack the drug problem on all fronts. We need to invest in domestic reduction and law enforcement programs. But we also need to invest in international programs to increase interdiction and reduce production of illegal narcotics, and we need to do our best to stop drugs from ever reaching our shores.

A balanced program means international drug interdiction. It means domestic law enforcement. It also means prevention, education, and treatment. We have to do all of these, and we have to do all of them all the time.

Sadly, though, for the last 7 years this administration has pursued an antidrug strategy that I believe is clearly out of balance—a strategy that has failed to reverse a dramatic rise in youth drug use and a strategy that has allowed drug trafficking organizations to become a dominant source of political instability in Latin America and countries to our south.

Before the Clinton administration took office, almost a third of our entire antidrug Federal budget was committed to stopping drugs from ever getting into our borders—international drug interdiction and eradication. We invested in a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week antidrug operation in the Caribbean. It worked. Drug prices increased and drug consumption went down.

But tragically this all changed in 1993 when the Clinton administration came into power and began to change things. Our counternarcotics budget dedicated to international eradication and interdiction efforts went from one-third of the total budget in the late 1980s and early 1990s to less than 14 percent by 1995. This change in policy meant significant cuts in the Coast Guard. In fact, Coast Guard funding for counternarcotics decreased from \$443 million in 1992 to \$301 million in 1995, almost a one-third reduction. As a consequence, the number of ship days that were devoted to overall counterdrug activities declined from 4,872 in 1991 to 1,649 in 1994—a huge decrease.

As a result, with the reduced Coast Guard presence, more and more drugs are making their way into our country through the Caribbean. That is the main reason why drugs are more affordable. It is also one of the reasons why youth drug use in this country is dramatically higher now than at the beginning of the Clinton administration.

Last year, as I have shared with Members of the Senate before, I saw firsthand what the Coast Guard can do. I went with the Coast Guard to see the counterdrug operations off the coast of Haiti, off the coast of the Dominican Republic, and off the coast of Puerto Rico. These personal visits convinced me that the Coast Guard can do more if we simply provide the right levels of