

of noblesse oblige that is otherwise unknown today. In an institution that calls every male a gentleman, Chafee really was one.

He was of a size difficult for his colleagues to manage. A wrestler in college and a former Marine, he hated violence. He was a high-minded patrician of colonial lineage who came to be idolized by his heavily Democratic and ethnically diverse constituents. He served for 23 years in a body that today is renowned for its pettiness and narrow-mindedness and never to the end lost his zest for coalitions and compromises. He was a most clubbable man, jovial and kind. For many in his caucus, vision consists of imagining bringing Bill Clinton to his knees. Chafee doggedly pursued his goals: clean air, clean water, a nation free of guns, a world where nuclear weapons were under control and people negotiated their differences.

He worried about foster children who at 18 lose government subsidies; he worried about the ABM treaty. The combination of practical and cosmic concerns and a nature that seemed devoid of malice made him an object of wonder. People who eulogized him on the Senate floor, including those who never voted his way, spoke of him with love and tears.

New Hampshire Sen. Robert Smith, now an independent, remembered that in 1991, when the Republican leadership was trying to dump Chafee as conference chairman, Smith, a newcomer, decided against his fellow New Englander. When he told Chafee that he was going to vote for Thad Cochran (Miss.), all Chafee said was "Oh, dear." He lost by one vote.

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D), who served with Chafee on Environment and Public Works, remembers Chafee saying to him the next day, "There is no place for us liberals on our side any more." He was smiling as he said it.

"Liberal" is now a toxic word. "Moderate" is as far as anyone goes to describe someone who is out of step with Trent Lott. Republicans show no mercy to people who, like Chafee, sat down at committee tables and without the slightest nod to partisan sensibilities said, "Let's get at it."

Time was when Chafee's Wednesday group, a weekly lunch for the like-minded, had a dozen members and some influence. At their most recent meeting, last Wednesday, there were just five, counting Chafee. He was gaunt and feeble after August back surgery. He had weeks ago announced his decision to retire from the Senate, but he was using every last minute to make a difference. Susan Collins, a freshman Republican from Maine who, like several others, regarded Chafee as "my best friend in the Senate," told of Chafee's fervent remarks about foster children set loose at 18 and his hope that she could help in helping them.

Chafee, a gentleman of the old school, doubtless deplored what went on in the Oval Office. But he was one of five Republicans who voted against removing Clinton from office. He was one of four Republicans who voted for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Chafee took no part in the pre-debate polemics on the test ban. He and Sen. Richard Lugar (Ind.), a pivotal Republican figure in all arms control efforts, were conspicuously absent. He told me a week before the treaty suffered meltdown on the floor that he was concentrating on the ABM treaty. As usual, he was looking down the road to the day when Senate hawks would tear up the treaty on the Senate floor and remove the last obstacle to building a missile defense system, their ultimate pie in the sky.

Republicans had been sniping at ABM, calling it "null and void" because the Soviet Union, with whom it was negotiated, no

longer exists. Clinton will decide next June about going forward with a project about which the only certainty is its astronomical cost. The Russians say they will tolerate no change.

In this Senate the notion of unilateral withdrawal is a live option. So is a return to a full-throttle arms race and the Cold War. Chafee did not press colleagues on the test ban. He said he understood and shared their reservations about verification and our stockpile but on balance thought the country and the world would be better off if we ratified the treaty.

Those looking for consolation—Chafee always did in a dark hour—can find a little in the prospect that his death has greatly improved his son Lincoln's chances of succeeding him. Rhode Island is a small state that sent a great man to the Senate, and sympathy for his family is unbounded. Chafee, a pragmatist, would be pleased.

#### IN HONOR OF SENATOR JOHN CHAFEE

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I come to the floor, after many of my colleagues have already said magnificent things, to say a word about a man I revered, worked with, and cherished both in personal and professional terms. That is, of course, John Chafee. There are so many reasons I respected and, in a sense, really loved John Chafee, and do to this minute and always will.

Many of them had to do with what it was that he didn't say and what it was that he didn't find a need to do. There was an interesting article in the Washington Post this morning by Mary McGrory that made me think back to the time I was in the Peace Corps. I served with a man who has since died by the name of Marty Grobli. We were working on the Philippines program together. He was an enormous hero of the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He had done works of heroism which I never learned about because whenever as a young person in my early twenties I tried to ask him, because I wanted to learn about it, he said he didn't want to talk about it. I think that is the way of many who have been through searing emotional and physical experiences of danger, of patriotism, of great personal risk—they simply keep it to themselves. There isn't a need to tell others. War is not pleasant. War is destructive; war is carried out in the interests of the Nation or of many nations against one or several others.

John Chafee never felt a need. In fact, in all the years I knew him, I never heard him talk about serving in two wars, World War II and the Korean war, or the fact he was a marine. If one looked at John Chafee, particularly in the latter years, one wouldn't necessarily—unless you looked at that chiseled face—say this was a marine in the sense that one thinks about it in classical terms. He was not into looking tough, acting tough, or being tough—he just was tough. But he was tough on behalf of people he loved, whom he represented in Rhode Island, those he didn't directly represent, al-

though he did as a Senator in the form of children and women and the inheritance of whatever quality of environment we will inherit in our country.

He was a steward of all of those things. He was ferocious in the way he fought for them. He never pushed himself forward. It always seemed, watching him on the Finance Committee when he was in a hearing conducting questioning, he was searching for truth, not either to show knowledge, of which he had a deep, deep repository, or to show special seniority. It was always that he was interested in what the witness was saying, reflecting on what the witness was saying, being courteous to the witness, tough on the witness where the witness might be withholding information or not fully disclosing some of the other arguments that might have been brought through that witness' answers.

I loved him for those qualities. I had no idea, I think as no one did, that this was going to be his fate. I didn't look forward to the fact he was going to retire, but since he announced he was going to retire I looked forward to the fact he would go back to Rhode Island, his beloved Northeast, to prowling his State, to be with the people who stood by him in all the years.

As the Senator from South Carolina knows, John Chafee was also a Governor. I was a Governor, and I think Governors bring to this body a particular ability and desire to want to reach a compromise to find a solution. The Presiding Officer was a Governor. And Governors often can't allow themselves to tarry because of an ideology. They can't tarry on simply a petulant feeling about this situation or that person because they are the only person in that State, be they man or woman, who can resolve the situation. Therefore, they have to seek a compromise. They have to seek a solution. I love that quality in a Senator. It is a quality John Chafee had in just an unparalleled amount.

So he never got to go back home. I feel very sad about that. I wanted to think about John Chafee at home, enjoying the fact he was looking back on all of his years of national service and public service and enjoying his grandchildren, his children, Ginny, his beloved State of Rhode Island, and all of the Northeast. He was a remarkable person.

I quote another thing Mary McGrory said which I liked so much:

In an institution that calls every man a gentleman, he really was one.

That kind of puts us in our places. But it also very much says something accurate about John Chafee. I have heard him talk to people sharply. But it was always on substance. It was always on issues. It was always on what it was between himself and a resolution to a policy problem that he cared about.

In the leader's chair sits the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY. He and I will remember, because we were both there,

it was only last week—which is the heartbreaking part of it—that Senator John Chafee, as the senior member of the Finance Committee, was conducting a hearing on independent living. That is the problem caused when children are brought up, often abused by their parents or by others, through a foster care system, and then all of a sudden at the age of 18 they are declared independent.

Our colleague, the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Ohio, is also very interested in this problem. John Chafee was quizzing the young people who were there, who had come through the system—many, many foster parents, some of whom had worked, some of whom had not—but they had been, at the age of 18, declared independent. They were just cast out. They lost their health insurance. They didn't know how to open a bank account, not necessarily even how to operate a washing machine, and they said that to us in very clear and compelling ways.

I thought it was in situations such as that—I think my friend from Iowa will agree with me—that John Chafee was at his best. He was in his 70s. Yet he focused so much of what he did heavily on children who were in their fourth and fifth year, or in their teens. It was a burden and a passion that never relented.

The Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, and I are working very hard with our staff and the Finance Committee staff to try to complete that independent living bill, not simply—because that would embarrass him—as a way of honoring John Chafee, but, frankly, because John Chafee would be on us to do it. Knowing he is not here to do it himself, we intend to do that and we will do that. We hope it will pass this body and the other body and be signed by the President.

John Chafee's health is something I have to comment on because I always thought of him, and do think of him, as so strong. I wondered, as many of us did in the last several months, what was it that caused him to seem to become so fragile so quickly? But because I knew John Chafee and had known John Chafee, I always believed it would pass because John Chafee always came back. He was always there. He was frail because he had back surgery, but that was not going to lead to something else. It was simply something he was going to get over and come back and take his place over there, behind where the flowers are placed on his desk, and resume his work.

That is what John Chafee did. He did not retire when he was in his late 60s. He certainly was financially independent enough to do so, but he didn't retire because he wanted to work. He loved public policy. He loved helping children and families. He loved health care.

I can remember during the Clinton health care debates, it was classic John Chafee because we would go on Sunday

television shows and he and I would have a wonderful conversation—before. We had different views on the legislation. We would have a very warm conversation before and then he would, during the course of the interview, proceed to shred me mercilessly, in good Marine fashion; you know, using good facts and good examples. Then, as soon as it was over, he would go back and we would be amiable.

I commented to him on that several times, and he just would sort of brush it off. He was doing his work. He was doing the work he was here to do.

When we think of children in this country getting health insurance, let us remember John Chafee because it was John Chafee who drove that. It was called the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIPs. And Laurie Rubiner, his staff person, drove that. They were driving this independent living bill. There were so many things he did for people of all sorts.

I haven't even mentioned, except very briefly at the beginning, the environment.

John Chafee was also a very independent person. I do not say this as a Democrat; I say this as a Senator. I liked so much the fact that he was so ferociously independent of his own party when he chose to be; of his own party when they applied pressure on him; from his constituents, presumably, when they applied pressure on him. He always did what he thought was right. In the longer day of life, if you are who you are and you stay who you are, people will come in your direction. If you bend to other people's wills and people have a sense of that, then there will never be a need for them to come in your direction because they will sense, if they outwait you, they will prevail.

You could not do that with John Chafee, whether it was because he was this incredible person from Rhode Island and Northeast, this son of early America; whether it was because he was a marine; whether it was because of his own particular and unique nature—he never backed away from anything.

John Chafee was a great figure of the Senate. I am not in the position at this point to rate great figures in the Senate over eras. But I certainly start with the idea that John Chafee was and is one of those. I think he was an inspiration. He inspired me. I felt better when I saw him, when I was in his presence. I felt more motivated. I felt better about everything because he just did that to you, whether he was on his cane, as he was in the last month or so, or whether he was vigorous, as he was always before that. He enriched the lives of so many. He seemed to care very little about his own comforts, but, on the other hand, he was so devoted to his family.

In closing, I want to think about Ginny; I want to think about his children; I want to think about his grandchildren; I want to think about his

staff, people who must be absolutely devastated now, all of them, each of the categories of people close to him, whom I have mentioned. I want them to know they were related to, married to, children of, grandchildren of, and working for, a really very great American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on Monday, as so many others in this body, I was shocked to hear the news of the passing of my dear friend and our colleague, Senator John Chafee.

I spoke out at that time of the feelings that both my wife Marcelle and I have for John and for Ginny and for their family. I would like to expand on that just a little bit further on the floor of the Senate.

When I spoke first, it was off the floor. But John and I spent so much time in this body that I felt it would be only appropriate to say something here because I feel that it was an incredible privilege to have served with him. I know his presence is going to be missed greatly by everyone.

It still seems strange to stand on the Senate floor and see his desk with a black shroud on it and the flowers there—something that in my 25 years I have seen several times for colleagues. You always hope you will not see it because when you see it you know—whichever side of the aisle it is on—that you will miss a Member of this very special family. There are only 100 who are privileged to serve, at any one time, in this body representing a quarter of a billion people. We have respect for each other, affection for many.

I think in this case, when you hear what has been said by Senators on both sides of the aisle, you know the great affection and respect there is for John Chafee. And it is only natural. He was a truly extraordinary man. He dedicated his life to serving his State of Rhode Island and his country. He did so with a commitment that yielded many benefits to all Americans, way beyond Rhode Island or New England.

He had a distinguished military career. He never questioned when duty called, even when it was at his own personal expense. He left Yale University as an undergraduate to serve in World War II. He returned to active duty in Korea shortly after receiving a law degree from Harvard. His contribution to Rhode Island and our country continued as Governor of his State, as Secretary of the Navy, and as a Senator.

The list of positions he held indicates a man of rare qualities. But what he did in those positions is what places John amongst the finest Americans to have served in the Senate. He was passionate about issues, but he had the unique ability to search for compromise among otherwise divided colleagues. He never seemed to lose sight of the fact that the Senate was working toward a common good, not an individual one.

From taking the office of Governor in 1962, in a largely Democratic State, to his four terms in the Senate, John Chafee showed the country he was willing to look past party lines and see what was at the heart of the issue at hand.

He made so many significant, visible and invisible, contributions to the Senate in the 24 years he served in this body. I was privileged to serve with him in each of those years. He was a tireless advocate of the environment, becoming the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee in 1994. He was a staunch supporter and advocate of many of the most important environmental protection laws that have been passed, including the Clean Air Act of 1990. He was always one of the strongest voices behind the protection of our wetlands, as well as the need to stop global warming from further progression.

I remember our latest legislative effort together on the so-called takings legislation, when John and I took to the Senate floor defending the rights of States and local officials to make their own decisions about their communities. I am sure many in the Senate probably grew tired as the two of us reminisced about New England character and the landscape we love so much. At times during that debate I thought the Chambers of Commerce of Rhode Island and Vermont should probably have hired us for all the things we were saying, but we made our point.

In health care, John was an advocate of compromise. His efforts to strengthen Medicare and Medicaid were actually seen as trying to appease Republicans and Democrats alike. What he was trying to do was to bring us together, because in every bend of the road, John was an advocate of serving his country to the very best of his ability. And he was successful in that every day of his life.

I think of arms control issues in the 1980s. John Chafee, John Heinz, Dale Bumpers—I remember working with them. We were sometimes referred to as the "Gang of Four" as we worked to bring reason to the nuclear arms race, even though we spanned the political spectrum among us. But as a veteran, as a decorated veteran, as a respected veteran, as a respected former Secretary of the Navy, John was not only an inspirational strategist in the "Gang of Four" but also an important resource of knowledge about the needs of an operationally effective nuclear triad.

So all of us have lost a beloved friend, one who will be missed dearly in the Senate. But the country should know the country suffered a great loss. Here was a man whose outlook and morals were of the highest standard. That should be something Senators in the present and the future should emulate. He was an anchor of civility for the Senate.

It is interesting that both he and my distinguished predecessor, as the senior

Senator from Vermont, Bob Stafford, served as chairmen of the Environment Committee—both bringing those New England characteristics of civility in working for the better good.

Marcelle's and my thoughts and prayers are with Ginny and the rest of the Chafee family; and also with John Chafee's staff, who are among the finest people here—his extended family.

He will be missed. It was a privilege for the 99 remaining Senators to have served with him. And I think all 99 know that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to join with my colleagues in paying tribute to Senator John Chafee. With his passing this week, the Senate lost a wise and courageous voice. Anyone who spent any time in the Senate could see that Senator Chafee's reputation for honesty and individual conviction were well-deserved.

I want to offer his family my deepest sympathy and my deepest appreciation for sharing him with us for so long. He served as a role model of what a Senator should be.

The more I think about Senator Chafee—the more I realize the qualities that are rare today, were common in the gentleman from Rhode Island. Rare qualities like courage, independence, and a desire to always do what is right.

He often fought alone for what he believed was right. He worked for legislative compromise, but never compromised his own principles.

I was proud to join with him on many important initiatives, and his mark can be found on many of the landmark environmental protection laws enacted in the last twenty years. He was a thoughtful environmentalist—protecting the health and welfare of people, wildlife, and the environment as a whole, while at the same time balancing the needs of the economy. He recognized the fact that the West had a different relationship with its natural resources than the East. His work on clean air, clean water, oil pollution, and endangered species has benefited the entire nation. The people and the environment in my state, 3,000 miles away from Rhode Island, are far better off today, because a man named John Chafee served 23 years in this body.

Senator Chafee was also a consistent and articulate supporter of trade. And on issues like China MFN, he and I worked for the same goals.

Senator Chafee was a champion of women's health care long before it was politically correct. Long before anyone had ever heard of "soccer moms," he stood alone many times to fight for women's health, and he never backed down.

Senator Chafee was also a strong advocate of a woman's right to choose. He was a voice of reason in an increasingly emotional debate. He protected a woman's right to determine her own fate and to make her own health care decisions. He worked to improve access to reproductive health care services

and to improve security at women's health clinics. I always took a great deal of comfort knowing he was at the table fighting for women.

Perhaps his greatest commitment was to children, all children. He worked to expand Medicaid to provide health care for millions of low income children. He fought to protect Medicaid. I know there are millions of children who are now healthy adults because of the work of Senator Chafee. One of my most vivid memories of Senator Chafee was fighting on the floor in June 1997 to expand health care security for the 10 million uninsured children. He refused to give up his goal, and he refused to pass an empty promise. His work created the successful, bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) which ultimately will provide health security for five million children. Think of the kind of impact he will have on the quality of life for these five million children.

Mr. President, I believe one of my roles in the Senate is to speak for those that have no voice—children, working families, the environment, battered women, and the elderly. Those are the same causes John Chafee served and served so selflessly. I only hope I can measure up to the standard he set.

When someone like John Chafee—someone with rare personal qualities and a legacy found in the millions of people his policies helped—when someone like that leaves this world, it makes the rest of us reflect on his contribution. Mr. President, this Senate is the poorer for his passing.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, today I join my Senate colleagues, the people of Rhode Island, and the citizens of this great nation in bidding a sad farewell to our friend and countryman John Chafee.

From the shores of Guadalcanal to his hometown of Providence, RI, to the floor of the United States Senate, John Chafee was a true patriot. In everything he did, he put the best interests of the United States first.

And even when I disagreed with him, I knew that our disagreements were legitimate disagreements about what each of us felt was the best interests of this great country.

Descendant of two Governors and a Senator, John liked to joke that the one member of his family who ran for office as a Democrat—Harvard professor Zechariah Chafee—lost handily. John, knowing the family history, signed up as a Republican and never looked back.

John was a remarkable man coming from a remarkable family. His legacy gave him a lot to live up to, and he not only met but exceeded all expectations.

John's record of successes began at an early age. In high school, he was the runner up in the 135 pound class in the state wrestling championships. And let me tell you, nobody wrestles like those 135 pounders! Not only was it an impressive achievement, but it was good training for a future career as a Senator.

Later, at Yale, he was captain of the undefeated Yale freshman wrestling team. We will never know if he would have repeated that achievement the following year, because he left Yale in his sophomore year to enlist in the Marines—he didn't have to do that, but because he was an American Patriot, he did.

In the Marines, he served at the Battle of Guadalcanal. John was in the first wave of Americans to join in the bloody and important battle there. This country will always owe a great debt to him and the other Marines who served so bravely there.

After the Marines, John sought to move on with his life. He went to Harvard Law School, got married, and began the practice of law in the state he loved so dear. But duty called once again, and he returned to the Marines, to lead a rifle company in our struggle in Korea, and the nation's debt to him became even greater.

After his service in Korea, John returned to Rhode Island and embarked upon a political career. While John had ups and downs in his time, he certainly had more ups than downs. And more importantly, he knew how to handle those downs.

One of the downs came in 1968, when he lost the governorship in a surprising upset. Richard Nixon, recognizing the talent in John, tapped him to be Secretary of the Navy. There he was faced with a difficult decision concerning the chief officers of the *Pueblo*, a Navy ship that had been taken by the North Koreans. John decided not to court martial the captain and chief intelligence officer of the ship, deeming that they had suffered enough during their internment in a Korean prisoner of war camp. It was a difficult decision, but John Chafee has a great wisdom in difficult matters and the nation once again benefited from John's leadership.

In 1976, he was elected to the United States Senate, the institution to which he would devote the rest of his days. Both John Chafee and I won elections to the Senate in 1994, he for his fourth term and I for my first. Despite the disparity in seniority, we became friends, exchanging greetings on his birthday, which was just last Friday. He always appreciated my greetings, and sent the kindest thank you notes in response.

In my time here, I had the pleasure to work with him on a great number of issues, but two in particular stand out.

The first is ISTEA, the all-important transportation legislation we passed here few years ago. I worked closely with John to secure desperately-needed transportation projects in my home State of Missouri. John was always willing to work with me and my staff, and the citizens of Missouri must be added to the list of those who owe him a debt of gratitude.

The other issue that stands out in my mind when I think of John is his effort to reform the Superfund program. John was always concerned about the environment; back in 1969, the New York

Post reported that John would stop his campaign motorcade and get out of his car to pick up a piece of litter. John always understood that we were all responsible for improving the environment, and his efforts to improve Superfund were based on that belief in individual action. As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, he was in a position to act on his love for the environment, and his work in reforming Superfund is one of his most important achievements.

John leaves behind a loving wife, Ginny, 5 children, and 12 grandchildren. My prayers are for them at this time. They will miss him, as will we all.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to remember my friend and colleague, Senator John Chafee.

We were both elected to this great body in 1976. But, John was not your average freshman Senator. Whereas I had never held office before, John came to the Senate with a service record to his State and his country that was already exemplary.

He was a war hero, having fought with the Marines on Guadalcanal. He was a Rhode Island state legislator, Governor, and Secretary of the Navy.

But here, he was not content to rely upon past achievements, no matter how great those achievements were. He fought diligently for a cleaner environment, better health care, and a fair and fiscally sound Medicare and Medicaid system. Most recently, we worked together on the "Caring for Children Act," a bill which would have responsibly taken our nation's child care policy into the next century, providing parents with more options and expanding the ability of states to meet the needs of low-income working parents.

It was my pleasure to serve with John Chafee on the Finance Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence. His leadership and understanding on these issues will be greatly missed.

I secretly admired John in another way as well. I understand that he could play a mean game of squash, which is a game I never learned.

Of all of John's titles—Governor, Secretary, Senator—I know that his favorites were "Dad" and "Grandpa." I offer my deep condolences to John's wife, Virginia, and to their children and grandchildren. I know that spending more time with them and in his beloved Rhode Island following his retirement next fall was something that he looked forward to. The tragedy of his sudden death is all the worse because he was cheated out of this well-earned retirement.

John Chafee was a gentleman, a statesman, and a true public servant. There is no higher accolade that I can pay him.

Elaine and I send our deepest sympathies to his wonderful family and to all Rhode Islanders on this great loss.

#### CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are nearing the end of the budget process, and there were inferences made on the floor yesterday that the class size initiative should not be part of the final budget agreement because—it has been claimed—the President doesn't have the authority to insist that we hire more teachers to reduce class size.

Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to clarify the President's important—and authorized role—in fighting for smaller classes. I have also come to the floor to remind my colleagues that this year we have smaller class sizes—where discipline has been restored and kids can learn the basics—because last year Congress made a bipartisan agreement—and a bipartisan commitment—to hire 100,000 new teachers in order to reduce size in first, second, and third grades.

Today, as the budget process winds down, I want to make sure that our agreement is not pushed aside.

Let me remind my colleagues that the President does have the authority in the Constitution to register his opinion on whether or not the budget is acceptable. In fact, the President doesn't just have the authority, but he has the responsibility under Article I, Section 7 to return bills with his objections that he does not approve of. And I'm glad the President has that authority and that he will use it if this Congress doesn't guarantee class size reductions. And 38 Senators signed a letter saying we would stand behind his threatened veto because we agree class size reduction is critical.

Mr. President, in trying to reduce the number of students in each classroom, I have followed the process. In March, I was told it wasn't the right time. In the subcommittee, I was told we weren't allowed to offer amendments. In full committee, I was told it was too controversial. Then, when I got the floor, I was told I'd have to wait until the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was written. If we have to wait until then, we won't be able to tell kids they will have small classes next year, and we can't tell teachers they will have their jobs next year.

Mr. President, I have followed the process, and I have waited. But I am tired of waiting as I sense that this Congress is trying to undo our bipartisan commitment. What am I supposed to tell students, "Congress has to write the ESEA and until then, you have to learn your ABCs in a class with 35 students." To me, that is not acceptable. I'm not going to tell them that. If this Congress feels so strong that guaranteeing smaller classes is not important, you can give them your excuses.

This is about money in the budget that Congress approved last year, and it is about us keeping our commitment to improving education by reducing class size.

The class size reduction effort has been a success in its first year. Today, we have kids learning in classrooms