

Rabbi Drooz spoke out for JOE BIDEN, too. He spoke out for me at a time that could have stopped me in my tracks from winning the election in 1972.

Please allow me this point of personal privilege to tell this brief story. Just days before that election, I was falsely accused of being anti-Semitic in an unfounded charge by a disgruntled, former campaign worker. I was 29 years old. Hardly anybody knew me. Those who knew me knew, and my record as a Senator has demonstrated, I am far from an anti-Semite. As a matter of fact, I am accused these days by my opponents of being the other way.

At the time, as a 29-year-old guy from a family with no influence or money running for the U.S. Senate in a year when George McGovern was being trounced in my State. I was accused in this sort of Pearl Harbor sneak attack the weekend before the Tuesday of being an anti-Semite, and it was printed in our largest paper.

Rabbi Drooz immediately went into action on the Sunday prior to the election. Rabbi Drooz organized a meeting of Delaware's Jewish community, enlisting the support of the very influential Governor of Pennsylvania who happened to be Jewish, Milton Shapp. Rabbi Drooz spoke out for JOE BIDEN and supported me against this untrue, unfair accusation. Needless to say, he was effective in setting the record straight, or I would not be standing here today. The mere fact that Rabbi Drooz said, "I know JOE BIDEN," was good enough for the entire community in my State.

I will forever hold Rabbi Drooz in the highest esteem for his courage, his leadership, his boldness and for getting me back on my feet at a time when I needed his courage, leadership and boldness the most.

After I became a Senator, on a regular basis I would brief Rabbi Drooz on the situation in the Middle East. He would put together people for me to speak to. Seldom did we disagree, but when we did, there was no question about my independence, and he never questioned whether or not I should be.

Rabbi Drooz was a fighter to the end. Alzheimer's stole his mind, but not his spirit. Just six months before he died, as an octogenarian, he agreed to participate in a study for Alzheimer's to test new medication.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I point out that I truly believe his spirit lives on in his son Daniel and his daughter Johanna, his brother Arnold and his six grandchildren. They are respected in the community and continue to participate in the community.

I say goodbye to Rabbi Drooz. Shalom and peace be with you, my friend, and may all that you did for the good of Delaware be remembered.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized under the previous order for 1 hour.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, during the course of this 1 hour I will be yielding to other Members on this side of the aisle. We will be discussing a range of topics, primarily focusing on questions of education.

Let me say at the outset, Mr. President, last week I journeyed back to my home State of Illinois—a welcome interlude from our impeachment proceedings—to address issues which I consider to be very critical to the future not only of my State but this Nation. In the span of 4 days I visited a variety of communities and had nine different meetings with educators, teachers, administrators, students, parents, and interested people in the community to talk about the state of education. It was an eye-opener.

As we started to discuss education from a brand-new perspective, to throw out some of the assumptions and some of the rules, to take a look at education today, I found that there were three basic fallacies in educational thinking today which these educators understood and many in Congress do not. The first fallacy is the belief that children start to learn at age 6, and therefore, we have a social responsibility to put children in school at age 6.

Any parent will tell you, and certainly those who study the issue can confirm it, children start learning at a much earlier age. Teacher after teacher told me of students who showed up in kindergarten already far behind where they should be—students who had fallen behind because of family problems or the lack of family initiative or the lack of exposure to an educating environment. Of course, it took the teachers a long time to bring these kids up to speed. They challenged the premise, the assumption, that education starts at the age of 6.

When I asked my staff, incidentally, to research why we put kids in school at age 6, they couldn't find a reason. We looked at history. We asked the experts. They couldn't come up with a reason. The best we came up with is most kids can sit still at age 6, and in the old days that is what a classroom was all about—kids sitting still at their desks. It is not the modern threshold and should not be the threshold education of decision.

The second notion we challenged is the premise of the schoolday. Why on God's green Earth are students dismissed from school at 3 in the afternoon? Why? There was a day, of course, when they would go home to a parent or their parents, but the days of Ozzie and Harriet with cookies and milk waiting for the kids, I am afraid, are long gone. Most kids have no adult supervision. I am not surprised to find reports from those who know that kids, between the hours of 3 o'clock and the arrival of an adult for supervision at, say, 6 o'clock, are the kids most prone to get in trouble—kids who are involved in scrapes with the law, exposure to drugs, gang activity, teen preg-

nancy. These things are happening during unsupervised hours.

That is why when we discussed in our proposals on Capitol Hill afterschool programs, it is in the best interest of all of these children—those who are coming out of school who need remedial help, as well as those who are doing well in school and need enrichment.

The final point that came through loud and clear is that summer months with 3 months of vacation is something that we all look forward to as kids, but it doesn't make as much sense anymore. There was a time when kids needed the summer months off to go work on the farm. Not many kids do that anymore. Frankly, kids need an opportunity to do something constructive, positive, and supervised during the summer months, as well.

I am happy the democratic proposal on education addresses these three issues and addresses many others. At this point, I will yield to several of my colleagues who have joined me on the floor.

I see my colleague from California, Senator BOXER. I am happy you have joined in this discussion. I yield to the Senator as much time as she needs to express her thoughts on this issue.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask my colleague if he would engage in a colloquy. I don't have a speech, but I was so moved by what the Senator just described as what we need to do.

Oftentimes I wonder if the Senator would agree that what we see happening here with the leadership on the Republican side is that they know that education is a key issue and they bring before the Senate these very narrow bills. For example, last time we had a bill that would have given a benefit of about \$7 a year, allowing some children to get \$7 more to go to a private school. We were arguing that we needed a broader vision.

I say to my friend, does he not see this in somewhat the same fashion? We have a narrow bill when, as the Senator says, we need to look at afterschool, we need to look at more teachers, see that the classrooms are smaller; we need to look at what is happening to kids when they need mentoring. We have to look at what kind of classrooms they are in. And my colleague misses Senator Moseley-Braun, who worked so hard on school construction. I wanted to ask my friend if he saw a pattern here developing where certain folks take a poll and they see there is an important issue, and they come back with a very narrow answer when what we need is a broader vision for the next century.

Mr. DURBIN. I agree with the Senator from California. There is no doubt that the funding for education is primarily State and local. The responsibility follows the funding. But we are remiss at the Federal level if we don't realize we have an important role here. As I have traveled around and have spoken to school administrators, the

source of the funding was secondary. They were talking about solving problems and what to do with those problems.

I see that we have been joined by the Senator from Washington, Senator MURRAY, who was a teacher in the classroom before she came to the Senate. I welcome her to join us in this colloquy. She knows, as well, that there are practical problems. When the administration starts talking about technology in schools, they are sometimes heartened by the fact that they have the new computers, but they quickly add, "Senator, don't forget, we have to bring the teachers up to speed now." Many teachers my age, as decrepit as I am, and even older, are trying to become well versed in technology in order to keep up with the students. If the kids don't get the technology and the teachers don't get the training to give it to them, then we are all going to be losers. I agree, that is a central part of this.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am going to finish quickly because I want to give the Senator from Washington the floor.

When I think about kids and schools, I think about Senator MURRAY because of her hands-on experience. But I can tell you that as a parent—now a grandparent—decrepit as you are, I say to the Senator from Illinois, and even a little more, in my younger days, I volunteered to work in the auxiliary, going down to schools in San Francisco where they needed volunteers, and this whole issue of keeping the kids busy after school is an education issue and it is a crime issue. A lot of people hear say they are tough on law and order. What better way than to give our children something to say yes to?

The FBI tells us that between 3 o'clock and 6 o'clock are the hours kids get into trouble, when juvenile crime peaks. You don't need a degree in criminology and psychology to know that this makes sense. The President has a tremendous expansion of "after school" in his budget. We need to talk about that when we get this Ed-Flex bill before us. Kids should not be going into classrooms where they can't read because it is so musty. I have been in those rooms. I had to run out of one particular classroom in Sacramento, which was so musty because there were leaks that hadn't been fixed; it was a disaster. To think that our children are in that atmosphere—that is not right.

After school children need to be kept busy, and during school they need small class sizes. We know what we have to do when we get a little bill that is very narrow here. And it may make some people feel happy that they are doing something. But I think it is our obligation—those of us on both sides of the aisle who care about our children—to point out that just passing a bill that has the title "education" in it doesn't mean that we are really doing right by our kids. It is just a sham. I am very proud to be here with

my colleagues, and I am very much looking forward to this debate on the Ed-Flex bill, to make it a bill that really meets the needs of our young people.

I yield back to my friend, Senator DURBIN.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from California. I notice that the Senator from Nevada is on the floor, and I know he wants to address some education issues. I will be happy to yield to the Senator from Nevada, Senator REID.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, I want to express my appreciation to the senior Senator from Illinois for arranging this opportunity for us to talk about education.

Mr. President, what I want to talk about today is an amendment that Senator BINGAMAN from New Mexico and I are going to offer on the Ed-Flex bill. Senator BINGAMAN and I offered this amendment, which passed the Senate last year. The problem has gotten no less complicated and no less important. Every day in America 3,000 children drop out of high school; that is 500,000 a year. This is something about which this country should be embarrassed. "So what," some say. Well, each child who drops out of high school is less than they could be.

It also complicates societal matters by increasing the cost of welfare and the criminal justice system. It even complicates increasing costs in our educational system.

If you look at the people in prison, 82 percent of the people in prison are high school dropouts. I repeat, 82 percent of the people in our prisons are high school dropouts. That should say it all.

We need to be concerned about high school dropouts. We know statistically without any question that the children of dropouts have a much higher dropout rate than those who finish high school.

The median income of college graduates is more than three times that of high school dropouts. The probability of falling into poverty is three times higher for high school dropouts than those who had finished high school. Unemployment rates of high school dropouts are more than twice those of high school graduates.

The statistics are replete with evidence that we should do something about this. What should be done? There are a number of things that we can do.

But the legislation that has been offered by Senator BINGAMAN and I, which will be an amendment to the legislation that will be before this body next week, would establish a department within our Department of Education whose sole function, sole responsibility, would be to focus on high school dropouts.

There are programs around the country that some of the school districts have adopted mostly on a very small basis that work, and work quite well.

We want someone to be gathering information to find out which of these programs work and which programs don't work.

We would provide \$30 million a year for this program, and a total of \$150 million.

Think of the money it costs us to keep people in prison. Is it \$20,000 a year? Is it \$30,000 a year. It is a huge amount of money to keep somebody in prison. Remember, Mr. President, that 82 percent of the people in prison are high school dropouts.

Our legislation would establish within middle and high schools around the country—those that have high dropout rates—an ability to compete for grants that would enable them to implement proven and widely replicated models of comprehensive reform.

The State of Nevada, I am not proud to say, leads the Nation in high school dropouts. I wish we didn't, but we do. We worked on a number of programs, one of which I am sure will be, if this legislation passes, one of the model programs. It is a program in Carson City, NV, our capital, where Hispanics are in a program called Ola, Carson City. It is a program where these young Hispanic students have a little TV station. They do TV programs. It has kept scores of these young people occupied and in high school. They are proud of the fact that they are going to be high school graduates. This is a program that has been going for 6 years.

Mr. President, I don't know of anything that we could do that would be more important in the education field than keeping our young people in school; in high school. There are 3,000 dropouts a day; 500,000 a year.

I hope that as we proceed through this debate, we will understand that the problems are not the same with every ethnic group.

For example, in the State of Nevada, 25 percent of the students—actually more than 25 percent of the students—in our Clark County school district, Metropolitan Las Vegas area, are Hispanic children. I am sorry to report that the Hispanic children have a dropout rate that is about 20 percent higher than any other ethnic group. Some ask why. There are a number of reasons. Most of the Hispanic students in Nevada come from Mexico. Mexico doesn't have a tradition of public education. There are at times language problems. And also one of the problems is Hispanics have such a great work ethic. They are willing to work as young kids, and they perform so well that their employers really do not in any way inspire these young people to complete high school. As a result of that, they are doing the same thing when they are 55 years old that they are doing when they are 16 or 17 years old.

We need to recognize that within a few years. In fact, by the year 2030, in America, Hispanics will make up 20 percent or more of our population. The Hispanic leaders in this country know

that the most important thing for them is educating their youth. We have to participate so that we join with the Hispanic leaders in this country to keep Hispanic youth in high school.

I hope that we all realize that this legislation, the Ed-Flex bill, is something that gives us a vehicle to focus on education.

I heard the Senator from Illinois talk about the fact that we no longer are an agrarian society. Why should kids be out of school 3 months out of the year in the summertime? Should we have year-round school? That is a debate that should take place.

I remember when I went to the State legislature almost 30 years ago I talked about year-round schools. People laughed at me at the time. But now in Nevada we have year-round schools in a number of places, mainly because of the population growing so large they can't build the schools fast enough. And now we have year-round schools.

In short, Senator BINGAMAN and I are going to do everything we can to see that this legislation passes.

I, again, express my appreciation to the Senator from Illinois for allowing me to come and speak on this very important issue.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, will the Senator from Nevada yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes. I also say, before yielding, as the Senator from Illinois has already pointed out, that it is tremendous to have someone who has been in the classroom teaching children. We talk about it from an outside perspective, but the Senator from Washington has been in effect in the trenches.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Senator from Nevada.

I wanted to ask a question and share a story with him, because I think what we are talking about in terms of the dropout prevention is so important today.

I am sure the question that the Senator from Nevada hears so often, and the Senator from Illinois hears so often in these debates today is, What role does the Federal Government have in this? Should this be a local decision? Should we just hand the dollars down to our local districts?

What I want to share with you is that I met with a number of students last week in Washington State who had fallen through the cracks. I come from a State where the constitution says it is the paramount duty of the State to provide funding for education, and we do a good job. But we are struggling like everyone else with our budgets at home. This school happened to be in a district that has well-founded schools. This was a young student who had fallen through every single crack and dropped out of school. What brought him back was the Federally funded School-to-Work Program. When I asked the student if the Federal Government had a role, he said, "Absolutely yes. You need to be there when everybody else fails."

I am wondering if the Senator from Nevada has heard that as well.

Mr. REID. I say to the Senator from Washington, without question, the answer is yes. There are programs that work. I would also say that the Federal Government has to identify national problems in all areas. Education is an area where we have to identify national problems. I believe that if there was ever a problem that this country has, it deals with high school dropouts.

I repeat. There are 3,000 children a day dropping out of school. Can you imagine how much better society would be if we could keep only 500 of those children in school so that we only—and I emphasize "only"—had 2,500 children dropping out of high school a day.

I have heard every day the constant refrain that the Federal Government has no business dealing with local education.

The program that Senator BINGAMAN and I are sponsoring is a program that gives local school districts absolute control. We are not telling them what to do. All we are saying is we are going to be a resource for you. Washington, DC, is going to be a resource. We have all of these programs that we have analyzed and evaluated. Here is how they work. If you have a problem in your school with a dropout, make an application and we will give you a grant and we will extend the money to the local school districts. They can implement the program, if they think it will help their kids.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if the Senator from Nevada will yield, I think it is interesting to step back for a second and look at what Congress does. We believe that because there is a problem of crime in America, we should Federalize a lot of crimes. Even the Chief Justice of the United States recently noted that if we continue this trend of Federalizing crime, we are going to dramatically change law enforcement in the United States. The enforcement of laws involving crime used to be a State and local responsibility. But because of our interest on Capitol Hill in crime, we continue to Federalize more and more crime. Yet, when it comes to prevention programs such as the one suggested by the Senator from Nevada, many people argue, "Keep your hands off." If you want to prevent crime, it has to be done at the State and local basis.

I hope we can find a balance here.

As I traveled around Illinois, I found some extraordinary ideas coming out of local school districts about after-school programs, bringing kids up to the reading levels in school, remedial activities, and the like. I want to express that.

I notice the Senator from Nevada was careful to say that he wanted to see this local creativity, that we were not going to send down a Federal rule book, a manual of instruction. We are looking for results. We want accountability. I think if we take that ap-

proach, we can build Federal programs that are welcomed at the local level, and not rejected.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend from Illinois, I keep throwing these statistics out because to me they are overwhelming. They are mindboggling. I didn't take a lot of mathematics courses in high school or college. But I don't have to be a mathematician to understand that 82 percent of people who are in prison who are not high school graduates, that there is some reason people who do not graduate from high school are more likely to go to prison. We have to recognize if we can keep kids in high school, we are going to keep them out of prison. I don't know how much more we need to talk about prevention. That is one of the biggest prevention programs. We don't need to build youth centers, although that is a help. We don't have to come up with new inventions every day to keep kids in school to realize that if we keep them in school we keep them out of prison.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Illinois. I thank the Senator from Nevada for his work on this extremely important issue and wish him well as he offers this amendment next week on this important bill. I thank my colleagues for allowing us today to talk about issues that are really going to make a difference in our classrooms across the country.

Mr. President, across this country families are having conversations at their breakfast tables about how we can improve education. They are talking about reducing class size. They are talking about afterschool programs. They are talking about dropout prevention. They are talking about teacher training, because parents know that is what is going to make a difference for their own child, for their family, for their neighborhood, and for their community. That is the type of conversation we need to be having on this floor in this Senate in this Congress, as well. I am delighted that we are finally going to have the opportunity to do that.

Mr. President, I am pleased that one of the first bills that is going to be considered is S. 280, which is the Ed-Flex bill. It is a bill that will help States develop new and innovative programs, and it is an important issue and one that I am glad we are going to address and that I am happy to support.

I think it is really important to note that merely improving the process is not enough. We also have to make an immediate and a direct impact on the overcrowded classrooms that our children across this country find themselves in every single day in this country.

That is why I am going to be introducing an amendment that will authorize a 6-year effort to continue to help local school districts hire 100,000 new, well-trained teachers nationally to begin to reduce class size in first through third grade where it will have the most impact.

My amendment builds on the bipartisan success of last year's agreement. It is based on local control and flexibility, and it focuses on improving teacher quality, which is so important. Local school districts will make all the decisions about hiring and training their new teachers. Any school district that has already reduced class size in those early grades to 18 or fewer students will be able to use the funds to either further reduce class size in the early grades or to reduce class size in other grades or carry out activities to help improve teacher quality.

My amendment will also provide accountability and ensure that schools communicate with parents which is so essential today. These funds are supplementary, and they cannot replace current spending on teachers or teachers' salaries. School districts will be required to send a report card in easily understood language to their local community including information about how achievement has improved as a result of reducing class size, and they won't have to fill out any new forms. Reducing red tape and improving local decisionmaking in education programs is a bipartisan effort, and both Ed-Flex and my class size reduction amendment accomplish both.

Last year's bipartisan agreement that we reached included my legislation to provide \$1.2 billion as a downpayment on the goal of hiring 100,000 new teachers, and it did it without requiring any new reports or any new forms. Governors and legislators across this country are now responding to our budget agreement last year and addressing this at their local levels. Local school districts are putting together their budgets right now as we speak and teachers are writing their lesson plans for next year with the expectation that we will deliver on the promise that we made to them last year. They are all counting on us. We must take this opportunity to now fulfill our commitment to reduce class size.

Mr. President, smaller classes mean a better education for children. Studies have shown it. Teachers know it. Parents know it. And they know it from experience. I have seen it with my own eyes. Controlling a room of 30 children is not teaching. It's crowd control. We need to return to teaching.

Just yesterday, I heard from Christi Rennebohn-Franz, who is a first and second grade teacher in Pullman, WA, and she wrote and told me that "without small class sizes, we cannot reach all children and give them the time that they deserve. If you have too many students in your class, you go home every day knowing that you came up short giving them the attention they need."

Another teacher from Fircrest, WA, wrote to me to say that "since I teach at an at-risk school, lower class size means that I can more effectively work with students on a variety of problems they bring to my classroom every day."

Mr. President, I am looking forward to working with Senators from both sides of the aisle to ensure that we meet our promise to these teachers and all the other parents and students across America to reduce class size and truly make a difference in the education of our children and our country's future.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I checked with the Republican cloakroom. I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended a half an hour.

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

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as the Senator from Nevada said earlier, many of us have theories on education as parents who watched our kids go through school and met with teachers and administrators. The Senator from Washington has spent enough time in classrooms to teach all of us, and I think her suggestions are very valuable suggestions.

What I have found as I have traveled around my state, and I think other Senators have as well, is that the basics of what they need in education and a helping hand can make such a difference.

When we talked about after school programs in school district after school district, they said, Senator, can you help us with transporting the kids safely from a school to an after school program and back home again?

A practical concern that stops them from doing things that are so important. And I think there are ways we can help here. Yesterday, we passed an important bill about military salaries. We decided to put \$11 billion more in the bill than the President's budget requested, and many of us raised questions about where that figure came from, why there had been no hearings on it. And they said, of course, we want to help the military. We all do. But it really raises the question, if we were to come up with \$11- or \$12-billion today for education for after-school programs, I am afraid there would be a firestorm of opposition. People would say, wait a minute, you didn't have a hearing; it's too much of an undertaking by the Federal Government. I really hope that we can get this priority right.

People across America identify education as the No. 1 concern. I think it's because of their personal experience and also the realization that opportunity in this country comes with achievement, achievement in school is really I guess the best way to get started on a good life in America and many other places.

I am happy today to join with the Senator from Washington to discuss

this. Isn't it interesting, President Clinton's suggested 100,000 more teachers to reduce classroom size. My Republican Governor in Illinois, in the State of the State message, George Ryan, suggested 10,000 new teachers for our State. The reaction from local school districts? "Where are we going to put them? We need classrooms. You can't just give us more teachers and expect smaller classroom sizes without new classrooms."

That is why the President's proposal to help school districts modernize their schools, expand their schools, build new schools is really a timely suggestion. The GAO report a few years ago said that we need 6,000 new schools in America by the year 2006. One-third of all schools in America, serving 14 million kids, need extensive repair and replacement. So I think we understand that the President's proposal for teachers and classrooms is the only sensible way to have class room size reduction in a way that will be handled effectively.

Mrs. MURRAY. Will the Senator from Illinois yield on that point.

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Senator from Illinois brought up an extremely important point, and that is that hiring new teachers is one part, hiring well trained teachers is the second part, and providing classrooms for them clearly is a critical part. That is one of the reasons why in my amendment we make sure that it is very flexible language, so that local school districts that do have a school construction, a very real school construction crunch can use those dollars in a very flexible way so the teachers can work jointly in classrooms, that it isn't just one teacher per classroom, that we can do some local ways of providing extra one-on-one help with youngsters who need it the most.

We also must address the school construction problem. It is a real challenge to crumbling schools that exist across our country where our kids are in unsafe classrooms, where they are crowded simply because there is no space to put them. It is an area we have to address, and I am delighted the Senator from Illinois recognizes that.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Washington. I have noted this on the Senate floor before, but it struck me that at the turn of the last century one of the most amazing things that happened in America was that between the years 1890 and 1920 we built in America on average one new high school every day. We started our new century with a dedication to public education. We Democratized education unlike any country in the world. And we said, whether you are rich or poor, you are going to have a chance to go to high school.

That wasn't a Federal mandate. That sprung up from local communities that said, if we are going to build a community in Washington or Illinois, and it is going to be a real community, we are