

Where is the parity? Where is there a way of making sure we get the treatment to these kids? It is crazy. So much of this prison construction industry, so many of the people who we are now incarcerating—so many of these kids who are in trouble are in trouble because of addiction. I would love it if my colleagues would just look at the Moyers documentary. Many are viewing brain diseases. We are now talking about the biochemical and neurological connection, and we do not provide the funding. We do not provide the treatment.

Mr. President, let me conclude by saying I think we are going to have to do a whole lot better. I will talk a lot about some of my travel around the country and what I have seen with my own eyes, but I bring to the attention of my colleagues, to give this a little bit of context, a report by Amnesty International. It is called "The United States of America, Rights for All, Betraying the Young." Just a few quotes. I am not picking on any particular States, but it is important.

"Judge Zintner, I have an important question to ask you! Would you please move me out of here? Please don't leave me here with all these adults. I can't relate to any of them. They pick on me because I am just a kid. They tease me and taunt me. They talk to me sexually. They make moves on me. I've had people tell me I'm pretty and that they'll rape me . . . I'm even too scared to go eat . . . It's too much for anyone my age to handle . . . Please help me with this." Letter from 15-year-old Paul Jensen, imprisoned in South Dakota State Penitentiary, to his sentencing judge, 1997. In September 1998, his mother told Amnesty International that he had not been moved from the prison.

"There are 2.5 psychologists to see the 300 juveniles in general population. This is despite the fact that 40 percent of the juveniles received will be identified . . . as having mental health or suicide watch needs. Because of the number of juveniles that need to be seen, the supervisor has told his staff that they cannot see a juvenile more than three times a month unless they indicate that the juvenile will die if he is not seen more often." Official audit of facilities, Virginia 1996.

" . . . girls as young as twelve years old were subjected to sexual abuse, received no counselling, no vocational treatment, no case treatment plans or inadequate or inappropriate medical care, were placed in a 'levels' program in which the length of time of the juveniles detention could be unilaterally changed, lengthened or shortened depending on the whims of Wackenhet's untrained staff members, and were made to live in an environment in which offensive sexual contact, deviate sexual intercourse and rape were rampant and where residents were physically injured to the point of being hospitalized with broken bones." Texas 1998—extract from a complaint filed in court alleging abuses at a juvenile correctional facility operated by the Wackenhet Corporation, a private for-profit company.

On a Sunday morning Paul Doramus, recently appointed director of the state agency that is responsible for juvenile justice—

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, might I inquire of the Senator how long he is going to proceed? We are going past 12:30. In great deference to the Presiding Officer, we were supposed to finish at 12 o'clock.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will be done in a moment. I started at 20 after. I will be done in about 2 minutes.

Mr. BAUCUS. The Presiding Officer has let us proceed with great generosity.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I say to my colleague that I waited for 3 hours and I also deferred to others. Senator MACK needed to speak, and others. I understand that. I will finish up. I said that several times, I think, to my colleague.

On a Sunday morning Paul Doramus, recently appointed director of the state agency that is responsible for juvenile justice institutions, visited the Central Arkansas Observation and Assessment Center. He heard a boy sobbing: "Mister, get me out of here, I want my mother." Doramus discovered a 13-year-old boy in an isolation cell, "sobbing so hard he could hardly speak." The boy had been caught in a stolen car and was arrested for theft of property. At the institution he had been disruptive, and staff placed him in isolation. "As I attempted to talk with him, his calls for help just grew louder," Doramus said. The boy's next words jarred Doramus even more. "Jesus doesn't love me anymore for what I did." Doramus held the boy's hands through the cell bars. "That's not true, partner," he assured him. "He does."

"All I could think of was my two kids who were at home, who got the hugs and got the love and got the support," Doramus said. "I thought, God forgive us all. How could we allow kids to live in an environment like this?" Little Rock, Arkansas, June 1998.

This is from an Amnesty International report that came out this past year, November 1998.

Mr. President, I have seen these conditions in these facilities. I will have a number of amendments dealing with domestic violence, dealing with mental health and juvenile justice that I have been working on for the past year, dealing with the whole question of how we can get more support for kids before they get into trouble.

I look forward to this debate, and I hope before it is all over we will have a balanced piece of legislation. I am sorry for being so sharp in my response to my colleague from Montana, but when I read from such a report—and these are children's lives—I just don't like to be interrupted.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Montana.

(The remarks of Mr. BAUCUS pertaining to the introduction of legislation are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate now stands in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, at 12:49 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:16 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak as if in morning business for up to 5 minutes, and that following their remarks there be a quorum call: Senator ROTH, Senator JEFFORDS, and Senator KENNEDY.

Mr. LEAHY. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I want to accommodate the Senator from Delaware. Could we also say that following that quorum call the distinguished Senator from Virginia, Mr. ROBB, be recognized to discuss an amendment? We will not introduce the amendment, of course, unless the chairman of the Judiciary Committee is here.

Mr. ROTH. As if in morning business.

Mr. LEAHY. Certainly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

THE WORK INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, in January, I joined Senators MOYNIHAN, JEFFORDS, and KENNEDY to introduce S. 331, the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. This legislation has a simple objective—to help people with disabilities go to work if they want to go to work, without fear of losing their health insurance lifeline.

S. 331 creates two new Medicaid options for States to make it possible for people with disabilities who choose to work to do so without jeopardizing health insurance access. The bill also extends Medicare part A coverage for a 10-year trial period for individuals on SSDI who return to work.

In addition to these health coverage innovations, the bill provides a user-friendly, public-private approach to job placement. Because of a new, innovative payment system, vocational rehabilitation agencies will be rewarded for helping people remain on the job.

Mr. President, this combination of health care and job assistance will help disabled Americans succeed in the workplace.

Tremendous progress has been made on many fronts in the 8 years following the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act. However, there are still serious obstacles standing in the way of employment for individuals with disabilities.

Unfortunately, federal programs for individuals with disabilities too often discourage work. The most important barrier to employment identified by disabled individuals is the fear of losing health insurance.

The unemployment rate among working-age adults with severe disabilities is nearly 75 percent. Many of these individuals would prefer to be working and paying taxes. Unfortunately, Mr. President, the simple fact is that people with disabilities are

often presented with a catch-22 between working and losing their Medicaid or Medicare. This is a choice that no one should have to make.

But even modest earnings can result in a loss of eligibility for Medicaid or Medicare, and disabled individuals cannot surrender their insurance access without jeopardizing their health.

Today, more than 7.5 million disabled Americans receive cash benefits from SSI and SSDI. Disability benefit spending for these two programs totals \$73 billion a year. If only 1 percent—or 75,000—of these SSI and SSDI beneficiaries were to become employed, federal savings in disability benefits would total \$3.5 billion over the worklife of the beneficiaries.

Mr. President, income tax day, April 15, is still fresh in our minds. It is not very often, especially at this time of year, that we hear from millions of Americans eager to become taxpayers. I say we should welcome Americans with disabilities into the ranks of tax-paying citizens.

In my own State of Delaware, experts on disability policy have made their support for S. 331 clear. Larry Henderson, Chair of Delaware's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, testified in support of S. 331 at a Finance Committee hearing. He supports S. 331 "because it does not penalize persons with disabilities for working in that it allows for continued access to health care."

For this reason, more than 100 national groups have endorsed the bill, representing veterans, people with disabilities, health care providers, and insurers.

Mr. President, on March 4, the Finance Committee marked up and passed S. 331 by a vote of 16 to 2. S. 331 was the first health care bill passed out of our committee this year, and I appreciate the spirit of bipartisan cooperation that made our vote possible.

The strong support for S. 331 shown by our committee is also reflected in the full Senate. Mr. President, a total of 75 Senators now sponsor S. 331. Let me say that again—75 Senators have signed on to S. 331. That would be a remarkable total for any bill, let alone a health care proposal.

I think S. 331 has been so popular on both sides of the aisle because it is all about helping disabled Americans work if that is what they want to do. It is about helping people reach their potential. It is not about big government—it is about getting government out of the way of individual commitment and creativity.

Through my work on S. 331, it has become vividly clear to me that we are all just one tragedy away from confronting disability in our own families.

Unfortunately, we cannot prevent all disabilities. But we can prevent making disabled individuals choose between health care and employment.

It is time now to act. Mr. President, together with Senators MOYNIHAN, JEFFORDS, and KENNEDY, I have asked that

S. 331 be scheduled for a vote before Memorial Day. I ask all my colleagues to join with us on behalf of millions of disabled Americans.

With a Senate vote in support of S. 331, we can move another step closer to unleashing the creativity and enthusiasm of millions of Americans with disabilities ready and eager to work. I look forward to seeing S. 331 enacted into law this year.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I join today with Senators ROTH, KENNEDY, and JEFFORDS in announcing that we have a total of 75 cosponsors supporting the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. This bill would address some of the barriers and disincentives that individuals enrolled in Federal disability programs face in returning to work. We rise today to make the case that this measure deserves consideration in the Senate as soon as possible. We are committed to passing this bill promptly and without amendment.

The great enthusiasm and broad support for this legislation has created its impressive momentum. Senators JEFFORDS, KENNEDY, ROTH, and I introduced the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (S. 331) on January 28 of this year. On February 4, the Finance Committee held a hearing on the bill. Our former chairman and majority leader among others testified in emphatic support. On that day, we already had a bipartisan list of 42 Senators. The committee reported the bill without amendment on March 4 by a vote of 16 to 2. At that time, the total cosponsor list reached 60, including 18 Republicans and 42 Democrats.

The President included the Senate legislation in his fiscal year 2000 budget, and expressed his support for this bipartisan initiative in his State of the Union Address.

The overwhelming support for this legislation is not surprising given its simple and universal goal: to provide Americans with disabilities the opportunity to work and contribute to the fullest of their ability. Its supporters include persons with disabilities and their families, veterans, health care providers, and health and disability insurers.

I join Senators KENNEDY, ROTH, and JEFFORDS in urging its earliest possible consideration and passage by the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join with my friends and colleagues, the Senator from Delaware, Mr. ROTH; and the Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS; and my colleague from New York, Mr. MOYNIHAN, in urging the Senate to move ahead with this excellent piece of legislation which has been described by the Senator from Delaware and which I will summarize at the conclusion of my remarks.

Once in a while the Members of this body get together and try to exercise a judgment which is going to have an im-

portant and dramatic impact on improving the quality of life of the people of this country. This is such an undertaking. The reason it is so powerful is because it reflects the best judgment of the disability community in its entirety—not only those who are affected by some particular kind of challenge—it has the input of parents; it has the input of the medical profession, both the doctors, nurses and the caretakers; it has the input of those who have worked in this field for many, many years.

It is the result of the extraordinary work over a period of some 18 months, tireless work of the members of the community—not Democrat or Republican, not just the four of us here today, but so many others on our committees and off our committees who are so strongly committed toward providing this kind of opportunity for those who have a disability to participate in the economy in our country.

This body took monumental steps a number of years ago when we passed the Americans With Disabilities Act. However, we were reminded after the passage of that act that we were no longer going to permit discrimination against those with disabilities in our country, those who had the ability to be able to perform in the areas of employment. That was a major, major step forward. What we found out very quickly is that there was another barrier for those who had disabilities. That was the fact that if individuals who had disabilities could work, wanted to work, were able to gain entry into the employment in the country, they were going to lose because of the cutoff in terms of cash payments or lose, in terms of their medical health and assistance, the kind of help and assistance in terms of health care and in terms of their income that would put them at enormous risk.

What was worked out in this amendment and in this legislation understands that. That effectively says to those who have a disability or a challenge that they can go on out and be a part of the American dream, a part of the American economy, and that we are working in a process that will continue to make the health insurance available and affordable when a disabled person goes to work or develops a significant disability while working, and it will gradually phase out the loss of cash payments as the incomes rise, instead of the unfair sudden cutoff which so many workers with disabilities face today. It will give people with the disabilities greater access to the services they need to become successfully employed.

I think many in this body and across the country think that "disabled" applies to individuals who are born with some disability. In fact, this occurs in only about 15 percent of those who are disabled.

This is a challenge that is out there every single day, for every member of this body, for every citizen in this

country. We are an accident away from having the kind of physical or mental challenge where we could even be affected or impacted by this legislation. Just look at the number of people in the workforce every single year who experience hazards and difficulties. Accidents happen.

This is not just dealing with something in the past, this is something about America today and America in the future. We have the expanding economy, the growing economy which is offering such hope and opportunity for millions of Americans with the exception of those who have some kind of disability. With this legislation, we are guaranteeing now for the first time, one, that they will not be discriminated against in terms of employment; second, that they will be able to get the training, be able to gain the employment, and be able to have useful, productive, and contributing lives and be part of the whole process and system. That is the kind of opportunity this legislation means for so many of our citizens.

I thank all who have been a part of this, including the leadership of Senator JEFFORDS, who has been strongly committed to this legislation, and our Human Resource Committee, that has worked so hard in the development of the legislation, so many of the other members of our committee, Republican and Democrat alike, and to the members of the Finance Committee, the chairman, who I have mentioned—Senator ROTH, who has been enormously committed to it—and our colleague and friend, Senator MOYNIHAN. This has passed virtually unanimously in our Human Resources Committee, it has that degree of support; and 16 to 2 in the Finance Committee.

We ought to be about the business of calling this legislation up, considering it and passing it. Every day that goes by we are denying these opportunities to individuals; every day, every week, every month that goes by. We have been through the legislative process. I daresay the four of us are prepared to agree, as we have uniquely so in other situations, on sort of a “no amendment” strategy. We feel, since we have tried to gain input from so many of those who have been involved in this process, this legislation could pass in a relatively short time, in the time of a couple of hours, and still it would reflect the best judgment of so many of those in so many different parts of the country.

We are strongly committed. With the overwhelming support we have, 73 Members reflecting every possible viewpoint in the Senate, and the overwhelming need, this is legislation that needs to pass, should pass, must pass. I hope we can do it in the next few days. It should not take much time. The disability community deserves it.

Mr. President, to reiterate, I strongly support the Work Incentives Improvement Act, and I urge Senator LOTT to bring the bill to the floor and allow the

Senate to complete action on this important bipartisan legislation before the Memorial Day recess. Last month, under the impressive leadership of Senator ROTH and Senator MOYNIHAN, the act passed in the Senate Finance Committee by a 16-2 vote. Today, 75 Members of the Senate stand behind this bill, which removes the barriers that present so many of our citizens with disabilities from living independent and productive lives.

As former Majority Senator Bob Dole stated in his eloquent testimony to the Finance Committee, “this is about people going to work—it is about dignity and opportunity and all the things we talk about, when we talk about being an American.”

We know that a large proportion of the 54 million disabled men and women in this country want to work and are able to work. But they are denied the opportunity to do so. Removing barriers to work will help disabled Americans to achieve self-sufficiency. It will also contribute to preserving the Social Security Disability Trust Fund.

For too long, Americans with disabilities have faced unfair penalties if they take jobs and go to work. They are in danger of losing their medical coverage, which could mean the difference between life and death. They are in danger of losing their cash benefits, even if they earn only modest amounts from work. Too often, they face the harsh choice between buying a decent meal and buying their medication.

The Work Incentive Improvement Act will remove these unfair barriers facing people with disabilities who want to work.

It will continue to make health insurance available and affordable when a disabled person goes to work, or develops a significant disability while working.

It will gradually phase out the loss of cash benefits as income rises—instead of the unfair sudden cut-off that so many workers with disabilities face today.

It will give people with disabilities greater access to the services they need to become successfully employed.

Many leaders in communities throughout the country have worked long and hard and well to help us reach this milestone. They are consumers, family members, citizens, and advocates. They see everyday that the current job programs for people with disabilities are failing them and forcing them into poverty.

They have spent many months helping to develop effective ways to right that wrong. And to all of them I say, thank you for helping us to prepare this needed legislation. It truly represents legislation of the people, by the people and for the people.

When we think of citizens with disabilities, we tend to think of men and women and children who are disabled from birth. But fewer than 15 percent of all people with disabilities are born with their disabilities. A bicycle acci-

dent or a serious fall or a serious illness can disable the healthiest and most physically capable person.

This legislation is important because it offers a lifeline to large numbers of our fellow citizens. A disability need not end the American dream. That was the promise of the Americans With Disabilities Act a decade ago, and this legislation dramatically strengthens our commitment to that promise.

We know that disabled citizens are not unable. Our goal in this legislation is to reform and improve the existing disability programs, so that they do more to encourage and support every disabled person’s dream to work and live independently, and be a productive and contributing member of their community. That goal should be the birthright of all Americans—and when we say all, we mean all.

The road to economic prosperity and the right to a decent wage must be more accessible to all Americans. That is our goal in this legislation. For too long, our fellow disabled citizens have been left out and left behind. This bill is the right thing to do, and it is the cost effective thing to do. And now is the time to do it.

I especially commend Senators JEFFORDS, Senator ROTH, and Senator MOYNIHAN for their bipartisan leadership on this legislation. Now is the time to enact this long overdue legislation and free up the enterprise, creativity, and dreams of millions of fellow Americans.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

MR. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for his very kind words. I want to express my deep appreciation for his efforts throughout his time here in the Senate to assist those people with difficulties and disabilities.

Mr. President, let me pose a question. What would most people do if they had health insurance coverage if they stayed home but not if they worked? Believe it or not, this is exactly the dilemma that many individuals with disabilities face today. They must choose between working or having health care. This is an absurd choice. Current federal law forces individuals with disabilities to make this choice. The Work Incentives Improvement Act, S. 331, bipartisan legislation, with 75 cosponsors, addresses this fundamental flaw.

Reaching this day has taken 2 years of hard work. Over 100 national organizations endorse our legislation and many helped us craft a consensus-based bill.

Chairman ROTH and Senator MOYNIHAN of the Finance Committee joined Senator KENNEDY and I as original cosponsors along with 35 of our colleagues. The cooperation and support we received, helped us move this important legislation from introduction on January 28, to a full Finance Committee hearing on February 4th, a Finance Committee markup on March 4,

and filing of the committee report on March 26.

It is time for the Senate to complete its work on S. 331. Many of our constituents are watching and waiting for us to make this bill a law.

In my state, Vermont, 24,355 Social Security disability beneficiaries are waiting for S. 331 to become law. There are 9.5 million people waiting across the country. Under current law, if these people work and earn over \$500 per month, they lose cash payments and health care coverage under Medicaid or Medicare.

This is health care coverage that they simply cannot get in the private sector. S. 331 allows them to work and have access to health care coverage. It also provides them choices regarding job training and placement assistance.

Do Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities really want to work? The answer is a resounding "Yes." Over the last 10 years, national surveys consistently confirm that people with disabilities of working age want to work, but only about one-third are working.

I have heard many compelling stories from individuals with disabilities. Some sit at home waiting for S. 331 to become law, so they can go to work. Others work part-time, careful not to exceed the \$500 per month threshold which may trigger a cut-off of their health care. Each of us has received letters in support of S. 331. Let me share one story with you. Don is a 30 year-old man, who has mild mental retardation, cerebral palsy, a seizure disorder, and a visual impairment. Don works, but only part-time.

At the end of his letter, Don wrote:

The Work Incentives Improvement Act will help my friends become independent too. Then they can pay taxes too. But most of all they will have a life in the community. We are adults. We want to work. We don't need a hand out . . . we need a hand up.

We should give Don and his friends a hand up. Doing so would be good for Don and good for the Nation. The hard facts make a compelling case for S. 331:

As I indicated, there are 9.5 million Social Security beneficiaries. Of those who work, very few make more than \$500 per month. In fact, of working individuals with disabilities on supplemental security income, only 17 percent make over \$500 per month and only 10 percent make over \$1,000 per month. Another 29 percent make \$65 or less per month. Let's assume that S. 331 becomes law, and just 200 Social Security disability beneficiaries in each State work and forgo cash payments. That would be 10,000 individuals across the country out of 9.5 million disability beneficiaries. The annual savings to the Federal treasury in cash payments for these 10,000 people would be \$133,550,000. Clearly, the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 is targeted, fiscally responsible legislation.

It enables individuals with disabilities to enter the workforce for the first time, re-enter the work force, or avoid leaving it in the first place.

These individuals would not need to worry about losing their health care if they choose to work a 40-hour week, to put in overtime, or to go for a career advancement. Individuals who need job training or job placement assistance would get it. S. 331 reflects what individuals with disabilities say they need. It was shaped by input across the philosophical spectrum. It was endorsed by the President in his State of the Union Address. S. 331 will give us the opportunity to bring responsible change to Federal policy and to eliminate a perverse dilemma for many Americans with disabilities—if you don't work, you get health care; if you do work, you don't get health care. S. 331 is a vital link in making the American dream an accessible dream, for Americans with disabilities. In closing, I would like to tell you about a young constituent of mine. Her name is Maria, and she faces many daily challenges as a result of her disability. She recently contacted my office to let me know that she is counting on S. 331. Maria is a junior majoring in Spanish at a college in Vermont. She plans to graduate to become a bilingual teacher for children and adults from Central and South America.

Maria has her whole life ahead of her. She has dreams and she has contributions to make. Enactment of S. 331 will make Maria's dreams possible. She will be able to pursue a career without fear of losing the health care she needs. Let's enact S. 331 now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. The Senator from Virginia.

VIOLENT AND REPEAT JUVENILE OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY AND REHABILITATION ACT OF 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, under a previous unanimous consent order, I am to be recognized to speak on an amendment which I plan to offer to the pending legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I had appeared on two previous occasions today believing that would be the time at which amendments would be accepted only to find that that had changed. Because I, like the Chair, have responsibilities with the defense authorization committee and subcommittee markups, I may be absent when that time eventually arises.

I rise now to discuss, rather than offer, an amendment, which I will offer as soon as we are permitted to do so, that I hope will add an essential component to the larger debate we have begun about school violence and juvenile justice.

Given the last year of school tragedies in Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oregon, and now Colorado, discussions about seemingly random acts

of school violence have moved from the school board meeting rooms to the kitchen tables of America. Our dialog has encompassed everything from Internet use and video games to gun control. If anything positive has resulted from these tragedies, it is that we, as a nation, have finally started to focus on school violence by acknowledging that this is a multifaceted problem demanding multifaceted solutions.

Unfortunately, the issue of violence in our schools is not new. Six years ago, I stood in this Chamber to talk about school violence and offered an amendment to create a 2-year commission to study school violence. I acted in response to shootings that involved students and took place in the Norfolk area of Virginia.

When I spoke in 1993 about school violence, I mentioned that we had experienced a cultural change. In fact, I brought this very chart to the floor to illustrate that point.

In 1940, public schoolteachers were asked to cite the top disciplinary problems they dealt with on a routine basis. The list included: Talking out of turn, chewing gum, students making noise, running in the halls, cutting in line, dress code violations, and littering. The same list of routine disciplinary problems in 1990 looked like this: Drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, and assault.

That was 1990. If the same survey were done today, I suspect assault would rank even higher on the list. In the 1996-1997 school year, 43 percent of our Nation's schools had no incidents of crime at all. For those that did, the vast majority of crime involved theft and vandalism. But despite these facts, in the last year alone, 40 people have died as a direct result of school shootings. The most serious of them, of course, occurred 3 weeks ago today at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO.

The most common questions asked following incidents of school violence are: Why? and, What could have been done to spot the warning signs and intervene before it was tragically too late?

In an effort to better educate school districts across the country about how to develop violence prevention and intervention strategies, the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General last August issued a comprehensive guide entitled "Early Warning, Timely Response." The guide was developed with the help of experts from law enforcement, education, juvenile justice, mental health, and other social services and was based upon extensive research about violence prevention plans. The emphasis of this guide is communitywide involvement.

Our children come into contact every day not only with us as parents, but also with teachers, administrators, pastors, bus drivers, coaches, counselors, and so many others. We all have a responsibility to help parent and guide our Nation's children.