

to do what they can to improve the climate for safe and secure learning environments on campuses. For this reason, this amendment will give schools the flexibility they need to best provide for the safety and security of their students.

Another component of this amendment would clarify that nothing in the Federal law stands in the way of local decisions to introduce a dress code or school uniform policy—not to mandate from Washington, but make it clear that the Federal law does not prevent it or preclude it. To make sure that we don't constrain efforts to build working communities, this legislation makes it abundantly clear that Federal law does not prohibit schools from instituting dress codes. Dress codes can create a sense of belonging and unity among students and help eliminate the division of schools according to cliques. By doing so, dress codes can help schools have a sense of community among students, and Federal law should not block local educators from fostering this sense of community.

In Kansas City, MO, the George Washington Carver Elementary School, a magnet school, established a dress code policy for the 320 elementary school students in 1990. The results are positive. Philomina Harshaw, the principal for all 6 years that Carver has had uniforms, observed that a new sense of calmness exists throughout the school after students began wearing uniforms. "The students feel good about themselves, as uniforms build a sense of pride," she has reported.

Long Beach, CA, has a school uniform in all its elementary and middle schools. District officials found in the year following the implementation of the school uniform policy, overall school crime decreased 36 percent, fights decreased 51 percent, sex offenses decreased 74 percent, weapons offenses decreased 50 percent, assault and battery offenses decreased 34 percent, and vandalism decreased 18 percent, sending a clear message that some of the resources which can be used to implement such a policy is sending a clear message of freedom to our schools that they are free to act in the best interests of their students.

The federal government should be in a position to assist schools in making decisions that they believe can make a difference, particularly when the record is clear about the difference made in other districts.

In addition, this task force, which was formed to look at our federal education policy to see if anything could be done to reduce the impact of violence in schools, included in the amendment a provision which provides certain liability protections for school personnel when they undertake reasonable actions to maintain order, discipline, and a safe educational environment.

This provision, to which Senator COVERDELL will speak shortly, is based upon similar liability protections for

volunteers that was signed into law, as well as a number of state laws that offer teachers limited civil liability against frivolous and arbitrary lawsuits. We must assure that teachers and other school personnel are able to do what is necessary to provide a safe and stable learning environment for all students.

This amendment also includes language that makes certain that school discipline records follow a student when a student transfers to another public or private school.

The receiving school should have information about the discipline records of a student coming into that school environment. In the last Congress I sponsored an amendment that ensured that juvenile records were available to schools when students transferred.

My involvement on this issue began with the 1995 killing of 15-year-old Christine Smetzer in a restroom at McCluer North High School in St. Louis County. The male special education student convicted of murdering Smetzer had a juvenile record and had been caught in the women's restroom at a previous school. However, teachers and administrators at McCluer North say they were not informed of the student's record when he transferred to their school.

It was tragic the transfer didn't involve the disciplinary records, because it cost Christine Smetzer her life.

In response, I secured a provision in the law requiring that, under IDEA, student disciplinary records must transfer to a new school when the student goes to a new school.

The language in the task force amendment expands that provision, so that any student's discipline record—whether or not the student is served under IDEA—will be available to any school—public or private—to which the student transfers.

We need to send all the information we can about a student to a new school when a person transfers.

These provisions and others were developed by the Republican Education Task Force which I chaired. I want to again thank my colleagues who worked with me on the Task Force—Senators DEWINE and HUTCHINSON, GREGG, COVERDELL, and HELMS. I look forward to working with them to ensure that these proposals are included in the final bill.

It is in response to these considerations. As a result of the work product of this task force, we developed a package of considerations in an amendment.

I send the amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. ASHCROFT], for himself, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. GREGG, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. HELMS, Mr. ALLARD, and Mr. HATCH, proposes an amendment numbered 361.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. ASHCROFT. Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

A UNION OF MINDS WORTH EXPLORING

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I have scoured the newspapers in recent days in an effort to begin to unravel the pieces of the puzzle that led two young teenage boys to commit such senseless atrocity at Columbine High School. It is long past time to stop wringing our hands over this issue of school violence. We can no longer afford to sit idly by, watching our nation's schools being infiltrated by hoodlums and hate groups more concerned with converting schools into places of fear than maintaining them as havens of learning and enlightenment. This Congress and the American people must join forces and take action now to protect our young.

Now, that is very easy to say—very easy to say. And I think everyone would agree on that, that they must join forces. We must find ways to restore discipline. Now, that is a little tougher. That is a little harder to bring about. We must find ways to restore discipline.

The ancient Romans practiced discipline. And it began in the home where the children were taught to venerate their ancestors, to respect their gods. They were pagan gods, but nevertheless they were the gods of the Romans. And the young men and women in the homes were taught to revere their parents and to respect the law. Each Roman believed that the gods had designed a destiny for Rome. And each Roman believed that it was his duty to help bring about the fulfillment of that destiny which the gods had designed for the Roman state. That discipline overflowed from the home and into the Roman legions, and it was in great part because of that iron discipline that the Roman legions were enabled to conquer all of the nations around the Mediterranean Sea and to subjugate them. It was that discipline that was first learned at the hearth, in the family circle, in the home. That is where it has to start today. That is exactly where it has to begin today—in the homes.

We must instill in our children basic values and provide them with the knowledge and the skills to confront the many demands that are placed upon our society. We must prevent, if we can, a recurrence of these ruthless slaughters that continue to rock the institutional base of our Nation's education system.

It is now time to do what we can. I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And what I can do, by the grace of God I intend to do.

It is time to do what we can do, and to search out additional avenues that will return peace and tranquility to our schools and our society. So, today, I heed my words, and come to this hallowed chamber to take an essential step forward in this unfolding national debate by joining with my colleagues Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator MCCAIN to call for the convening of a National Commission on Youth Violence.

I know we appoint lots of commissions. I spoke of the Romans a while ago. So did they; they appointed commissions. I make mention of the Romans many times. Of course, I could speak of our English forebears as well. But I mention the Romans because Montesquieu thought that the ancient Romans were a unique people. The framers were acquainted with Montesquieu. He admired the ancient Romans so much that he wrote a history of the ancient Romans. It was back several years ago, when we were discussing the line-item veto, I thought that, inasmuch as Montesquieu had studied with thoroughness the ancient Romans, I would do the same. And it was there that he learned about checks and balances, and separation of powers—in his study of the Romans. So they appointed commissions as well.

This amendment, which I am pleased to learn has been accepted into the managers' package, focuses on the formidable challenge of identifying and reconciling the root causes, the underlying motives, and the influences fueling this widening streak of lawlessness plaguing the heart and soul of America.

By gathering together men and women of the highest caliber of expertise in law enforcement, school administration, child and adolescent psychology, parenting and family studies, we call upon all parties—all parties—to listen and learn, galvanizing a true national discussion on school safety. This National Commission will seek difficult answers to some difficult questions—What drives children to commit such violence?

When I was a little boy and when I was a young man, we never heard of such violence. We would never have thought of carrying a gun to school.

The most outrageous thing I ever did in school back in that little two-room school—I was always glad when the teacher appointed me as one of the two boys who would go over the hill to the spring house and bring back to the school a bucket of water, out of which we all drank. We all drank out of the same bucket and with the same dipper. One day, I decided to put a few tadpoles in my pocket and put those tadpoles on the desk of one of the little girl classmates. Well, I thought it was funny, but when the teacher got through with

me, it wasn't so funny. She didn't think it was funny.

On another occasion, when I was in high school, I was asked by one of my teachers, whose name was Margaret McKone, a question. I said, "Huh?" And I went on reading at my desk. I was not aware of the fact that she walked to the back of the room, came up the aisle, and had gotten just level with me until she slammed me in the face with a hard smack of her hand. I can feel it still, and I can feel the embarrassment that went along with it. She said, "ROBERT, don't you ever say 'huh' to me again." I did not give her any back talk, and I never said "huh" to her again.

My old coal miner dad said: If you ever get a whipping in school, you will get another one when you get home. I knew something about his whippings. He started out with a hickory limb. Later, as I became a little older, he used a razor strap.

One day, we had a substitute teacher. We never thought of doing violence in school. Violence? Why, it wasn't allowed in our school. Nobody talked about violence. I took a piece of paper and I folded it and made myself a toy airplane. When I saw the teacher's back was turned—this was a substitute teacher, as I say—when the substitute teacher's back was turned, I sailed that paper airplane across the room.

The teacher turned just in time to see the airplane still suspended in air and my outstretched hand. He said, "ROBERT, come up here." He called me to the front of the class. He put a chair up there. He said, "ROBERT, get up in that chair." He drew a circle on the blackboard and said, "Stick your nose in the center of that circle." I did. When I did, there were resounding whacks on my posterior which I will never forget, after which I turned to my seat red faced amid the snickers of my classmates. They were somewhat veiled snickers, but I heard them. It was embarrassing. I got just what I asked for.

What would you think of the things some children are doing in school these days? They are not sailing paper airplanes. And up until a few years ago, we did not have these outrageous, violent crimes being committed by youngsters.

My old coal miner dad never bought me a cap buster at Christmastime. I was lucky to get an apple, or an orange, or a piece of candy. He never bought me a cap buster. He never bought me a cowboy suit. He always got me a drawing tablet or a water-color set or a book. He taught me to learn. He urged me to learn so I would not have to work in the coal mine.

Those were the two people who raised me. They were religious people. They were not of the religious left, not of the religious right. They did not make a big whoop-de-doo over their religion, but they were religious. How did I know? Many times when the lights were out and in my early boyhood, the

house was lighted by a kerosene lamp. We did not have any running water in the house, no electricity. But when the light was out, I would hear that great lady who raised me praying. I would hear her praying in another room. I knew she was on her knees. I had seen her many times on her knees. When my old coal miner dad left this world, he did not owe any man a penny.

They taught me to be honest, pay your debts, and work, work hard. It never hurt anybody. It may have killed John Henry, but that is about all I can recall. We were taught to work, to be honest, to revere our father and mother. The Bible says: Honor thy father and thy mother. We were taught to do that, not talk back.

Thank God I am one of those few Americans left who grew up in the Great Depression, who knows something about the Great Depression, who was in school during the Great Depression.

I was the coal mining community's scrap boy. I went around the coal town and gathered the scraps from the coal miners' tables and fed my dad's pigs. He always bought about 10 to 12 Poland China pigs. I would feed those pigs. I would gather the scraps year round. I was the village scrap boy. Some people called it the village "slop boy," the town's "slop boy."

When we were in school, we always had prayer every morning and pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States. I am the only Member of 535 Members of this Congress today who can say that I was here, in Congress, on June 7, 1954, when the House of Representatives voted to insert the words "under God" into the Pledge of Allegiance—"under God," on June 7, 1954. The Senate followed suit the next day, and on June 14 it became a law.

The first thing we did was have prayer. They do not do that these days. It did not hurt any of us. It was good for us. If there is anything about which I would amend the first amendment, it would be that. I am not above amending the Constitution, but I think we had better be very slow about it. Don't do it very often, certainly. But that is one thing that I think would help, if the Nation returned to God first.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Bring up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

When we parents are looking around wringing our hands and we politicians are looking around and wringing our hands saying, "What should we do?" let's return to some of the country's basics, the fundamentals that made this a great nation.

The Bible says remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set. That is one of the old landmarks. We have gotten too far away, drifting too far from the shore. My friend from Alabama will remember that old hymn—drifting too far from the shore.

I will tell you, there is nothing wrong with this Nation that some old-time religion will not cure. It does not have to

be my religion; it does not have to be a Baptist; it does not have to be Methodist, Presbyterian, whatever—just a basic belief in a Creator.

Now, you might say: Well, Charles Darwin didn't believe that. You read his books. Read his books. He mentions the Creator in "The Origin of Species." And in "The Descent of Man," he said he made a mistake in "The Origin of Species," he had exaggerated, he had gone too far.

We can pass all the laws that we can pass, all the laws we care to pass, but it has to start out in the home. In the home, that is where it begins. That is the root.

So what drives children to such violence? Why are students taking the lives of their classmates? How do we prevent future incidents like those at Columbine High School from recurring? I hope the commission can find some prescriptions for change as a result of these explorations. But perhaps, most important of all, the commission's mandate will serve as a catalyst for our Nation's parents, teachers, industry leaders, and their communities, to each—each; you, me; each; him, her; each—take responsibility in protecting our Nation's children.

One of the many charges delegated to the National Commission is an exploration of the ever-important role of school teachers and administrators in the lives of their students—school teachers. Part of the cure, I believe, lies in the need to restore basic discipline—basic discipline—to the classroom.

When I was a young boy, I attended to my lessons and I attended to my lessons. I threw a paper airplane once in a while, but I attended to my lessons. And in a two-room schoolhouse my teachers were my role models. I wanted to be the best in the algebra class; I wanted to be the best in the geometry class; I wanted to please my teacher, and I wanted to please that old couple who took me to raise. They were my role models.

I have met, in my long political career, with kings and shahs and princes and queens and Presidents and Governors and men and women of the highest station in this world, but one of the few great men whom I ever came to know was that old coal miner dad who raised me. He was a great man. I never heard him say God's name in vain in all the years I was with him—not once, not once.

So those teachers, along with my adoptive parents, taught me the so-called "old values" of integrity, honesty, respect, and loyalty that I carry with me to this very day.

Now, I am no paragon. I do not claim to be a paragon of rectitude or whatever, but, as Popeye used to say, I am what I am. My old dad and mom, they taught me to be what I am, and they taught me to believe in a higher power, taught me to believe in God.

Now, if parents ingrain that kind of teaching in the child, they may stray

from the righteous path from time to time but they will come back, they will come back.

The classroom was a sacred precinct where a quiet and wholesome environment prevailed, and where students came to learn. They came to learn the fundamentals of math and science and grammar and literature and history. Discipline was expected and discipline was enforced.

And on that little report card that I took back home, there was one item, department—department. I was always careful that my dad would see a good mark in every category, and particularly in department.

When disorder broke out, as it did very rarely, the teacher had the authority and the command of the classroom to bring students to upright and full attention.

Mr. President, I know that it is easy to hear someone from my generation speaking of morals and values and the way things used to be and simply dismiss those words and sentiments as being old-fashioned or out of step with the world today. Well, in some things I do not want to be in step with the world today. Let the world go its way. But for the sake of our future, I think we can learn from our past.

Today, the discipline that we once knew has eroded to the point that students no longer resolve conflicts with words, but with weapons. The normal angst of adolescence has given way to anger and outright violence. As a consequence, we have teachers who fear the very environment in which they one day thrived, wondering whether they, too, might be caught in the line of fire.

I remember there was a class in agriculture when I was in school in Spanishburg, WV, may I say to the distinguished Senator from Missouri, who is presiding over the Senate today with a degree of dignity and skill that is so rare as a day in June. The teacher was talking about the potato and about the eyes of the potato. He called on me and asked me a question. I thought it would be funny if I said that the potato got dirt in its eyes. I thought that was kind of funny. And he said, "ROBERT, stand up. Now, you apologize to the class for what you just said." See, I was making a little light of a serious matter. I thought I was being a kind of showoff, which I did not particularly try to do many times. But he said, "You stand up and you apologize to the class." And I apologized to the class.

Mr. President, our teachers deserve the opportunity to teach just as our children deserve the opportunity to learn.

A Builder builded a temple,
He wrought it with grace and skill;
Pillars and groins and arches
All fashioned to work his will.
Men said, as they saw its beauty,
"It shall never know decay;
Great is thy skill, O Builder!
Thy fame shall endure for aye."
A teacher builded a temple
With loving and infinite care,

Planning each arch with patience,
Laying each stone with prayer.
None praised her unceasing efforts,
None knew of her wondrous plan,
For the temple the Teacher builded
Was unseen by the eyes of man.
Gone is the Builder's temple,
Crumbled into the dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for consuming rust.
But the temple the Teacher builded
Will last while the ages roll,
For that beautiful unseen temple
Was a child's immortal soul.

So the worth of a good teacher can never be measured. But without the involvement of parents, I fear that the madness overrunning our nation's classrooms will not abate. We have sadly learned that, all too frequently, one parent's complacency can result in another parent's worst nightmare. And so I call upon parents to be alert and active participants in their child's education—whether it means attending parent-teacher conferences or reviewing their child's math assignments. Parents should strive to know their children inside and out—their temperament, their habits, their strengths and their weaknesses. And they should make it a priority to know their children's friends and the parents of their children's friends. In today's two-working parent society, such supervision is extremely difficult and places a greater burden on the community, as a whole, to look at this dilemma in a new light, and to help parents juggle competing demands. It is my hope that the National Commission will help parents refocus on this role of individual responsibility, reinforcing the urgency in parents' stepping up to the plate, and enabling them to take a more active and involved role in their children's lives.

Furthermore, with parents caught up in the hustle and bustle of their own everyday life, many children today have much too much unsupervised time on their hands, with free run of their own money—I never knew what it was to have a loose nickel in my pocket when I was a boy—and their own leisure activities. Mr. President, I do not mean to discourage the idea of children working after school. It instills within our children at a young age a strong work ethic and an appreciation for the value of a dollar. If you want to know the value of money, try and borrow some. For some families, it is necessary to ensure that the family's needs are met, or to save for college. But too often, at the hands of disengaged parents, the lessons have been lost, with after-school jobs serving only to enable misconduct—giving young people the unchecked financial means to purchase guns and to buy bomb-making materials. Once again, we witness the eternal need for parents to be an integral component of their children's lives, to teach them right from wrong, and be their first line of defense in leading them away from these kinds of troubling situations.

Today, with the overwhelming amount of violence and amorality inundating kids' minds from the media and entertainment industry, parents face an even greater challenge than before.

How fortunate my wife and I are that our children, our two daughters, were virtually grown women before we had a television set in our home. I know it must be more difficult today than it was when our two daughters grew up.

It saddens me to think that we have reached a point where a National Commission is necessary to explore these pervasive negative influences—movies. I have been in the Washington area 47 years this year. I have been to one movie in that 47 years, and I haven't lost anything. I have watched some good movies—Alistair Cooke's great movies, performed by British actors who knew the English language and who could speak it well: "The Six Wives of Henry VIII," "Elizabeth R," great movies. But I went to one movie. I walked out before it was over. It was boring. Yul Brynner played in that movie. I walked out. I haven't lost anything. But I have seen some great movies on television, I mean great movies.

I wouldn't waste my time on trash, because I don't have a lot of time. You don't either. You don't have much time. We are only here a short time. Why waste it on trash—movies, video games, television. I suppose if I had young children in my house, the first thing I would take out is the television set. Take it out. And they wouldn't miss anything except a lot of junk. That is not to say that television is all bad. It is a great medium, a great medium for informing the people. It is a great medium, a great tool for good, but all too often the programming is absolutely lousy. It is built around the dollar, the dollar. What can make money. Movies, video games, television, the Internet, and other free-wheeling vehicles, to explore these pervasive negative influences for disseminating smut and violence, smut and violence. You watch many of the advertisements on the TV. They are full of violence, the advertisements themselves.

It is particularly troublesome that the bad tends to overshadow the good aspects of the entertainment arena. When I think of movies such as the recent "October Sky," which tells the story of three young boys growing up in Coalwood, West Virginia in the late 1950s, with a dream to build and launch their own homemade rockets in the hopes of winning the National Science Fair's college scholarship awards, I realize that there, too, are wholesome stories to be told. The kind that inspire and motivate youth to push beyond their daily homework assignments and to shoot for the stars. To find a mission in life, once thought impossible, and tackle it. The kind of movie that all parents ought to take their children to see. There are some good movies.

We have learned from the recent events the ease with which a youngster

can access dangerous information, dial up polluted Web sites advertising recipes for bomb making and solicitations for joining hate groups. Likewise, we know that violent video games in the home and at the arcade confuse or override a child's moral sense of right from wrong by rewarding them with points for shooting their enemy dead. Until we find solutions to curb or counteract this madness spewing forth from the TV set, the radio, and cyberspace, we, as a community, must demonstrate greater vigilance and care, and think twice before giving our children free rein of the remote control or leaving inquisitive young minds unattended in the wilderness of cyberspace.

Mr. President, seemingly, in the blink of an eye, we have witnessed the true demise of part of the American dream. The once peaceful and serene schoolhouse has been marred by episodes of violence and bloodshed, with precious young children falling victim—children who may have grown up one day to be great teachers, great physicians, great lawyers, great architects, great physicists, businessmen and women.

There is no one-step solution to ending schoolyard slaughters, but it is my strong hope that this National Commission will provide answers to the many whys and hows infesting America's psyche, and begin to remedy this harrowing problem once and for all. Let us all work together to ensure that the tragic events of Columbine are not revisited in another American neighborhood.

I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day
And as my fingers pressed it still
It moved and yielded to my will.
I came again when days were past,
The bit of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it, it still bore,
And I could change that form no more.
I took a piece of living clay
And gently formed it day by day.
And molded with my power and art
A young child's soft and yielding heart.
I came again when years were gone,
He was a man I looked upon.
He still that early impress wore,
And I could change him nevermore.

Our children, the home, that is where we got off the track. That is where we are going to have to get back on the track—the home.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, one of the great delights in the Senate is being able to listen to Senator BYRD, on a number of occasions, share his wisdom with us. I think the story of the Roman legion and others he has shared with us are not unimportant. They go to the very heart of the decline in discipline and order in America today, and it is deeper than most people think.

I have often thought what good does it do to have a \$500 text book if a 14-year-old won't read it, would even scoff

at the thought of reading it, and has no intention of reading it or paying attention to the teacher, who we are paying and encouraging to try to teach. It does go back to the home. The home is also being undermined, I think, by the popular culture, as Senator BYRD suggests. It is difficult to conceive how we can have any moral order not founded in religion.

I suggest that we really don't need to amend the First Amendment. We really need to have it enforced as it is written. It says that Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of a religion. In other words, Congress can't establish a religion. That is us. Congress cannot establish a religion or prohibit the free exercise thereof. Congress can't prohibit the free exercise of religion. I think we need to get back to the first 175 year's interpretation of the plain words of that amendment, and little children might be able to have a prayer in the morning. I don't think it hurt me. I think it was a benefit. As a matter of fact, I know the Senator knows Judge Griffin Bell, former Attorney General under President Jimmy Carter. He was asked once at a big bar meeting what he thought about the litmus test President Reagan was applying to judges. I think he shocked everybody in the room when he stepped up to the microphone and said, "Well, we need a litmus test. Nobody ought to be a Federal judge who doesn't believe in prayer at football games." I have thought a lot about that. Maybe that had a lot of insight to it.

Y2K ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, tomorrow we will be having a critical vote in the morning. It will be a vote on cloture to the Y2K legal reform bill that will be coming up. It is being subjected to a filibuster, unfortunately, by members of the minority. I hope that in the morning the agreements can be reached so that that vote will result in our ability to proceed with the bill and that we could make some progress.

To share a few comments on it, the computer industry is critical to America's growth, prosperity and ability to be competitive in the world market. It is one of our major exports. People come here from all over the world to learn about computers. Our design and technology has created a huge number of jobs that have been very helpful to America, and we are exporting around the globe large product in that area, which helps us with our balance of payments, which is not good in general.

In addition, and maybe even more important, high tech computer equipment is increasing our productivity as a nation. As a matter of fact, Alan Greenspan has raised the question in several moments of testimony I have been present to hear in the last 2 years as to how it is possible that we can have an increase in wages much higher than the increase in inflation, the cost