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Senate

(Legislative day of Friday, September 22, 2000)

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. Heaven and Earth are filled with Your glory. Praise and thanksgiving be to You, Lord most high. Ruler of the universe, reign in us. Creator of all, recreate our hearts to love You above all else. Provider of limitless blessings, may we never forget that we have been blessed to be a blessing. Sovereign of our Nation, we commit our lives to You. We surrender the false idols of our hearts: Pride, position, power, past accomplishments. Without You, we could not breathe a breath, think a thought, or devise a plan. May our only source of security be that we have been called to be both Your friends and Your servants. You are the reason for living, the only one we must please, and the one to whom we are ultimately accountable. With united minds and hearts, we dedicate the work of this Senate to You. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM BUNNING, a Senator from the State of Kentucky, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. today. At 12:30, the Senate will recess for a party caucus meeting until 2:15 p.m. It is hoped that the Senate will receive the HUD-VA appropriations conference report and/or the continuing resolution from the House by early afternoon. The Senate may also have a procedural vote with respect to the bankruptcy reform bill during today's session. Therefore, Senators can expect up to three votes this afternoon. As usual, Senators will be notified as votes are scheduled.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each and with the time to be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Missouri, Mr. ASHCROFT, is recognized to speak for 15 minutes.

The Senator from Missouri.

REMEMBERING GOVERNOR MEL CARNAHAN

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, today I rise with a deep sense of sadness. As you all are aware, on Monday night Missouri's Governor, Mel Carnahan, was killed in a tragic plane crash. Also killed in the crash were the Governor's son, Randy Carnahan, and the Governor's long-time aide, Chris Sifford. My wife Janet and I join with all Missourians in mourning these deaths. We express our deepest sympathies to the Carnahan and Sifford families. We will continue to pray that God will grant these families comfort, healing, and strength in this time of great sorrow. This is a time when the Carnahan and Sifford families must bear the burden of a tragedy so unexpected and so profound that each of us

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• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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feels their loss. That our Senate campaign could have ended so tragically is shocking.

As the collective heart of Missouri mourns the loss of a leader, this is a time for unity and common purpose in Missouri. We, as both a State and Nation, join together to mourn the loss of Governor Carnahan—a committed public servant. Although we were competing for the same office, Governor Carnahan and I had a unique relationship united by the common bonds of public service and respect for the people of Missouri. We both were honored to be sons of educators. We both loved time spent with our families on our farms.

Governor Carnahan and I also shared a commitment to the greatest promise for our Nation's future: the education of our children. We committed to the commonsense idea that to continue our prosperity, we should invest part of the Federal surplus in educating America's children. That is a theme which I will pursue with intensity here in the Senate. Governor Carnahan has always been present and accounted for when duty called. He served as a member of the United States Air Force. He was a municipal judge. As a member of the State House of Representatives, he served as majority floor leader. He was elected State Treasurer in 1980, Lieutenant Governor in 1988, and Governor in 1992. He was highly respected and the State prospered during his time as Governor.

As we absorb the blow of this tragedy, we should be reminded of what truly is important in life—commitment to God, to family, and to our fellow citizens. These were the commitments of Mel Carnahan. He served the people of Missouri with dignity and honor for more than four decades. I will remember him, and all of Missouri will remember him, for his dedication to his family—as a husband, a father, and a grandfather. We are all grateful that Mel Carnahan was willing to spend his life serving the people and the State of Missouri. I again extend my deepest sympathies to Governor Carnahan's wife, Jean, and to his family. Our prayers are with them in this time of great loss.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I join my colleague from Missouri in telling the family of Mel Carnahan how deeply sorry we all are.

It must be a terribly difficult time for the citizens of his State, for his family, and for everyone who knew him. I hope we can carry on his tradition, one about which he talked so much in the last four decades, of making sure all of our children get a good education and the people of this great country have the opportunities about which he cared so deeply.

I thank the Senator from Missouri.

EDUCATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to talk about education.

In the past month, students across our country have gone back to school. They have entered schools where there are health and safety hazards, and they are trying to learn in classrooms that are overcrowded. They are competing for the time and attention of a teacher, and they are looking to us for support.

I am frustrated to say this, but as this session of Congress draws to a close, this Congress has done very little to support those children across this country. This Congress, for the first time in 30 years, has failed to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That is a disservice to students who are trying to learn in overcrowded classrooms, to students who are stuck in crumbling schools, and to students who do not feel safe at school.

We can't pass ESEA reauthorization; it is too late. But we do have one place to make it up: in the final funding plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

There are kids out there counting on us to do the right thing, and we need to pass a budget that addresses their needs. That is why I have come to the floor today, to urge my colleagues to do just that.

As I look back on this session of Congress, I am frustrated by the way this process has broken down. We have been updating our national education policy for about 30 years. It has always been a bipartisan and productive process—but not this year. This year, the ESEA reauthorization was stalled by sharp partisanship. We had a chance to make a lot of progress, but this Congress failed.

We weren't able to update our Nation's education policy to meet the needs of today's classrooms. As a parent, as a former educator and a former school board member, that is discouraging. What is even more discouraging is some of the talk that we have heard on the campaign trail this year. Not long ago, Governor Bush said that our country is experiencing a "recession in education." I have thought a lot about that statement. To the teachers who are working harder than ever, it certainly doesn't feel like a recession. In fact, I think Governor Bush has it exactly backward. A recession is where there is a slowdown in economic activity, when production and employment decline, when there isn't much demand, when workers are idle and factories are slow. That is a recession.

But that is not what is happening in education today at all. Our schools are not slowing down; they are working harder than ever. Our classrooms aren't empty; they are overcrowded. Our teachers aren't being idle because they are not needed; they are needed more now than ever. It is not that demand has slowed. The demands on our schools are higher than ever. The problem is our investment has not kept up.

Any enterprise or business that wants to stay in business invests in its people, invests in the latest equipment, invests in capital projects, so that the capacity will keep up with the demand. That is what we have to do. But for some reason, when it comes to our schools, we have not made those investments. We have let schools that were built 40 or 50 years ago simply decline. We have let great educators leave the classroom because they are frustrated by a system that doesn't give them the support or respect they deserve.

Governor Bush, we are not in an education recession; we are in a period of explosive growth and growing demand in the classroom, and we need to make the investment to meet that growing demand. Governor Bush has the problem backward and that is why he has come up with the wrong solution. As a parent of two students who went to public school, I can tell you I don't want our next President to close down my school; I want him to make my school better. You don't do that by bashing public schools. You do it by investing in the things that we know work in the classroom.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Our schools are facing overwhelming challenges with inadequate resources. Our public schools are not failing, but by failing to invest in them this Congress is failing our public schools. We need to give our schools the resources, the tools, and the support to meet today's challenges.

There are important needs in my home State in classrooms. Sitting here in the Chamber, it is easy to forget the challenges that schools face across the country. If this Chamber is about to go into recess without making an investment in education, it needs to hear directly from people on the front line. So I decided to read a few letters I have received from students and teachers in my home State of Washington.

Kristen Jensen Story is a parent and a teacher at White Center Heights Elementary School in the Highline School District. At her school, the majority of the students live in public housing and come from homes where English is not the first language.

She tells me:

We have been working hard to make sure these children succeed and become contributing citizens to our great Nation. The need for Federal public education funding is greater now than ever before.

We have the money. The Federal budget is forecasted to have a \$1.9 trillion surplus over the next decade. Make the funding of public education a national priority.

Let me read another letter. This one is from Becky Scheiderer, a teacher from the Bethel School District in Washington State.

She writes:

Children cannot wait another session.

She goes on to explain some of the challenges her school is facing:

Our students need to continue the successful programs, such as Title I, special education, and smaller class sizes to work with these students inclusively.