

what happens? The Republican leadership is trying to jam that right down here. What has happened to education in between? Not only are we not reauthorizing it, but we are not funding it. It is 3 weeks late already.

What happened to children in this country? If they hand their homework in 3 weeks late, they would be in the principal's office. They would be getting some kind of discipline in any school in the country. But, nonetheless, we are 3 weeks late. We haven't reauthorized it, and the appropriations have not been finished.

I hope our friends on the other side are going to ease off when they talk about how committed their party is on education. I hope they are going to at least have the decency not to try to say: Oh, yes. We are really interested in education—we really do care about it.

I was here when one of the first things the Republican leadership did in 1995 was to rescind some \$1.7 billion that had been appropriated—the greatest rescission on any single bill that I can remember in my service in 38 years. On what subject? Education. Who offered it? Republicans. How many supported it? Virtually the whole Republican Party.

I was here a few years later after we were able to dull some of those rescissions when they came back and tried to abolish the Department of Education. Who offered it? Republicans. Who supported it? The Republican Party. Who opposed it? We did. Not just because it is an agency, but because many of us believe that any President ought to have in the Cabinet office someone talking about education every time that Cabinet meets.

That is why we need a Department of Education. We have a department for housing. We have a department for the interior lands of this country. Many believe we ought to have a department for education. Not the Republicans. No, they wanted to abolish it.

We have the rescinding of education funding. We have proposals to abolish the Department of Education. We have the refusal to authorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and we have the denying of funding of the existing law—3 weeks late. That happens to be the record.

Now, we watched the other night the Republican candidate for office talking about how concerned they were. I wish he had called up our majority leader and said: Look, I am interested in education; why don't you take that up?

Let's take up our proposals. We know what they are. We are prepared to vote on them. We are prepared to take those to the American people. Why isn't the other side prepared to do it? What are they so frightened of? What are they so scared of?

All we have is silence. We have this empty Chamber where all of these other deals are going on—All these other deals that are not on education. They are on how we can try and get

bankruptcy that will basically undermine families who in many instances are hard pressed, mothers who have not been able to get their alimony or child support and are going into bankruptcy. Half the bankruptcies are a result of health care costs for older workers. We cannot wait in order to draw out the last few dollars from those individuals for the credit card companies and shuffle aside education. That is what is happening. The American people ought to begin to understand it.

The Republican leadership keeps on saying how important education is. On July 10, 2000 the majority leader said:

I, too, would very much like to see us complete the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. . . . I feel strongly about getting it done. . . . We can work day and night for the next 3 weeks.

On July 25, 2000 he said:

We will keep trying to find a way to go back to this legislation this year and get it completed.

Mr. President, SAT scores are the highest in 30 years. They have not moved up greatly, but they are going in the right direction for males and females. Of course, it isn't going in the right direction in the State of Texas. Texas falls below the national average on SAT scores between 1997–2000. The national scores are going up a little bit in the right direction. Texas is going along in the wrong direction for SAT scores.

We have heard a great deal about what happened to the children in the State of Texas, being 48th of 50 for the number of children that are covered by health insurance. The other night, Governor Bush was talking about what a high priority they put on education and what they have done on education.

This tells the story. These are the SAT scores, standard scores. This reflects the national average moving up over the last 3 years, while Texas has been moving down the last 3 years. We don't have any explanation. I know the Vice President didn't want to appear negative, but the fact is, I don't think drawing out what the records are should be considered negative. These are the facts. The American people ought to be able to understand them. The national average has gone up; in Texas the scores have gone down.

I was here 30 years before we ever had a vote on education. We had Democratic chairs and Republican chairs. We had Senator Stafford, the education chairman of our committee; Senator Pell was the chairman. During that period of time, education was never a partisan issue. The American people don't want it to be partisan. But it is now. It is when you refuse to let us debate it and abide by the outcome. That is wrong. We ought to fund the education for the children in this country. The Republican leadership has not done it. We ought to be dealing with the education reauthorization prior to bankruptcy and other priorities, and the Republican leadership refuses to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

EDUCATION

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I listened with interest to my colleague from Massachusetts. I am always interested as he holds forth on these issues about which he feels passionately, and I congratulate him on his passion.

I have a similar commitment to education but a rather different view of things. Let me review again, as I have in this Chamber before, my own experience with respect to education that causes me to come to a different opinion and a different position than that of the senior Senator from Massachusetts.

As I have related to the Senate before, I was happy in a business career when I received a phone call that asked me to serve as chairman of the Strategic Planning Commission of the Utah State Board of Education. That got me into educational issues and actually started me down the road out of corporate life and into public life, ultimately leading me here to the Senate.

Apropos of the things that the Senator from Massachusetts has said, I share an experience I had that resonated with the comment that Governor Bush made the other night. The Senator from Massachusetts has already referred to the debate between the two Presidential candidates, so I think it is appropriate I should go there, as well.

We started, in my education about what happens in education by talking about the money. That is always a good place to start. Start with the numbers, start with the dollars. The dollars pretty much drive everything else.

I looked at the various things that were being done in the State of Utah, some of which struck me, as a businessman, as being maybe a lesser priority than some other areas. I asked the question: Who sets the priorities? Who determines that we spend more money on topic A than topic C? I was told, that is the Federal Government. The Federal Government puts up matching funds and requires that the States come up with their match, and the Federal Government determines that topic A will be topic A, topic B will be topic B, and so on.

I looked at some of the programs. I said, we would be better off in Utah if we spent that money on something else. Our needs in Utah are different than the needs in other States. Maybe it is nice to have the Federal dollars, but why don't we tell the Feds, sorry, we won't take your dollars for topic A, because for us topic C or topic D should be topic A, so we will forego the Federal dollars, and we will take the money that we have been forced to put up as matching dollars and spend it on our priorities.

The fellow who was briefing me on this kind of smiled at how naive I was, how foolish a notion that was. He said:

You can't do that. The Federal Government will sue you and will win. They have already sued States that tried to do that and won.

So if the Federal Government says this is what you have to spend your money on, then you have no choice but to do that, even if it is not in the best interests of the schoolchildren in your State.

That was a disappointing thing for me to realize, but I thought: OK, we are dealing with 50-cent dollars here, at least. We are putting up matching funds. So the Feds put up 50 cents and we put up 50 cents, so it is not hurting us quite as badly to be spending 50-cent dollars on a project we would not have chosen.

Once again, smiles of indulgence on the part of the fellow who was briefing me. He said:

No, no, you don't understand, BOB. The State doesn't put up 50 cents. The State puts up 80 cents, the State puts up 90 cents. When we say matching dollars, we don't mean matching dollar for dollar; we mean the Feds put up 5 percent or 10 percent or, if they are feeling really generous, 15 percent or 20 percent. But the States are required to put up the rest of it.

I thought: That is really not fair. That is not a good deal. That is controlling the direction of education everywhere with a small amount of money. I thought: There is something wrong with that. I looked into it. I found that the only program where the Federal Government puts up half or more of the money in so-called matching funds is school lunch—which is not an educational program; it is a welfare program. I have nothing against school lunch. Indeed, I recognize that there is a great need for school lunch. I am a supporter of school lunch. But let us not stand here and say that, because the Feds put up more money for school lunch percentagewise than anything else, they are making a major contribution to education.

When Governor Bush was speaking about this the other night, he made this point that went by many people but that I would like to focus on here. He said the Federal Government puts up about 6 percent of the money but they control—if my memory is correct from what the Governor said—60 percent of the strings.

I don't know whether that 60 percent is exactly right, but it is in the ballpark, and I will use that figure because that is what my memory says. Six percent of the money, but they control 60 percent of the strings that are attached to that money. So the people in Utah, Colorado, or Arizona or, yes, Massachusetts, have to jump through the Federal hoops with the 96 cents that they put into every dollar spent on education, jumping through at the dictate of the people who put up the 6 cents.

Here is the fundamental difference we need to confront when we have this debate on education, the fundamental difference between the Republicans and the Democrats, between those who are demanding we put more money into

the present system, as does the Senator from Massachusetts, and those who are saying let's experiment a little bit. The fundamental difference is, Who should be allowed to call the shots? The people closest to the problem, the people facing the children day by day, the people administering the schools on a regular basis in their home communities? Or the people in Washington, DC? Who should make the ultimate decisions about education?

Let me make it clear, I am not calling for the abolition of the Department of Education. The senior Senator from Massachusetts would seem to be very upset that somebody suggested we abolish the Department of Education. I have never made that suggestion, so I am on his side on that one. I agree there should be a voice at the Cabinet level talking about education. But I do not think the voice at the Cabinet level that is talking to the President about education should be the voice at the school board level, talking to the principal of the school where my grandchildren go about education.

I have to talk about my grandchildren now because all of my children have graduated. All of them are out of school, out of college, raising families, pursuing careers. But there was a time with six children—seven, actually, because we had a foster child in our home for 4 years—when I spent a lot of time at school board meetings. I went to school board meetings and listened to them discuss the budgets. I recognized that there were differences within the school district, between schools. I heard them debate about how they were going to take care of problems in this middle school that were different from problems in that middle school. I recognize that is where the rubber meets the road. That is where the decisions have to be made. That is where the problems really arise.

I do not think there is anybody in Washington who can differentiate between the problems in this middle school in the Las Virgenes School District in California, where my children went, and that middle school in Las Virgenes School District in California where my children went. I don't think there are very many people in Washington who have ever heard of the Las Virgenes School District in California where my children went. That is the issue. That is what we are talking about.

The Senator from Massachusetts says the Republicans don't care about Massachusetts because all they do is block all of our efforts to go forward with a massive Federal program in education. Yes, we do try to block some of those efforts. Not because we are saying the Federal Government should have no role in education, but we are saying the Federal Government should begin to trust people at the local level to make their own decisions. It is a fundamental difference. We saw it in the debates the other night. We are saying it on the floor now.

Whom do you trust? Do you trust the Federal Government and the Federal bureaucracy and the Federal Department of Education as the ultimate authority as to what should be done or do you trust the people who are closest to the problem to decide what should be done? It should be a partnership, not a dictatorship. It seems to me someone who puts up 6 percent of the money, who then controls 60 percent of the decisions, is getting close to dictatorship and not partnership.

At the State level, I found myself resenting it. Now that I have come to the Federal level, I bring that bias with me. I continue to resent it. I continue to think we would be better off if we said those who are putting up 6 percent of the money have an opinion, have a role to play, they have a function they can perform that no one else can perform, but when it comes to the nitty-gritty of the daily decisions, those who are putting up 6 percent of the money should yield to the decisionmaking power of those who are putting up 94 percent of the money and doing virtually 100 percent of the work.

Let's look at this Congress. The Senator from Massachusetts attacked the record of this Congress on education and said we have not done anything. We have. For example, we passed the education savings accounts which would have put more power in the hands of individuals and parents. Once again, the fundamental difference: Whom do you trust?

The education savings account bill, which was cosponsored by the chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. TORRICELLI, would have put more power in the hands of individuals, and the President vetoed it. The President vetoed an education bill on the grounds that it would have taken power away from the Washington establishment and put power in the hands of the parents.

It is not fair to stand here on this floor and say, regardless of the decibel level at which you say it, that this Congress has done nothing about education, because we have passed education bills that the President has vetoed and he has vetoed it on this basic issue.

Straight A's: This is a bill, we call it the Academic Achievements for All Act—Straight A's Act. It was supported by the Senator from Georgia who used to occupy this place on the Senate floor, Mr. Coverdell.

The Democrats blocked it. The Democrats said the President will veto it. The Democrats said: No, we cannot allow this kind of flexibility at the local level. We must continue to dictate to the local people what will happen with respect to education.

Once again, those who put up 6 percent of the money control 60 percent of the strings, and they are using their 6 percent of the money to dictate to the people at the local level how things should be.

I remember the debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have had that debate. I regret that it did not result in the passing of the act, but one of the reasons it did not result in the passing of the act was because of blocking efforts on the part of the Democrats to a Republican proposal that would have given States, on an experimental basis, the opportunity to try something new. There was no dictating in the position of the Senator from Washington, Mr. GORTON, that said States have to try this. His amendment said if a State thinks the present system is wonderful, the State can continue to receive money with the present system. They can continue to accept those 60 percent of the strings. They can continue to do exactly what they are doing.

What if a State does not want to do it quite that way? What if a State wants to experiment in a very tentative fashion with something new? Let's give them the opportunity to try it. The senior Senator from Massachusetts was one of the first to take the floor and roar that we must not allow that kind of experimentation. We must not allow anyone to try anything different.

Look at the States that are making progress. And, yes, look at the State of Texas. Look at the progress that has been made among Hispanic students, the progress that has been made among black students—the progress that has been made among minorities generally in the State of Texas. It leads the national average. It is a record of extremely beneficial accomplishment, and it is taking place in the early grades where it needs to take place because if you wait until the time they get to the SAT scores, it is too late.

If you want to look at SAT scores, you are looking at high school students, and the high school students in Texas were cheated by the administrations in Texas that were there prior to the time Governor Bush took over. It is in the lower grades where they are seeing the fruits of the activities in Texas where they are trusting people, trusting the locals, giving the opportunities that need to be given to those who need education the most.

The white middle-class suburban kids do pretty well in this country in almost every State in which they live. The real educational crisis is among the minorities. The real educational crisis is among those people who live in the inner cities and do not have the opportunities that come to the white middle-class suburban kids. Let's be honest and straightforward about that.

It is very interesting. Who has led the fight, which seems to upset the senior Senator from Massachusetts more than any other, for experimentation with vouchers? It has been Polly Williams, an inner-city representative of a minority, a black member of the State legislature. She comes from Milwaukee, and she has led the fight not for the rich, not for the upper 1 per-

cent, not for the other groups that have been demonized in this political campaign. She has led the fight for poor inner-city kids. She has won the fight, and the fight in Milwaukee is over. If you run for an educational position in Milwaukee now, you better be for vouchers because the public has seen it and has embraced it, and it is now the strong majority position.

It comes down to this fundamental question when we talk about money: Do you want to fund the individual or do you want to fund the system? We say let's fund the individual and let the individual take the money wherever he wants to go. They say: Oh, no; that's terrible. He might take it to a—dare we say it?—religious school. He might take the money in such a way that violates the separation of church and State. We can't have that.

In what is considered the most successful social program since the Second World War, we did exactly that. We gave the money to individuals, and we said to them: We don't care what you do with it; just use it to get an education. I am talking, of course, about the GI bill. When we said to the GIs who came home from World War II, "We are going to give you money to go to school," we did not say, "We are going to pick the institutions that will receive this money and then you go petition for it." We just said if they served in the Armed Forces, they have the money under the GI bill of rights. And if they wanted to go to Notre Dame and study to be a Catholic priest, they could do that and nobody was going to claim that was somehow a violation of the separation of church and State.

We said if they want to take the money and go to Oral Roberts University, they could do that. It may well be Oral Roberts University did not exist under the GI bill—I am not sure—but the principle still holds. If they wanted to go to Harvard, if they wanted to go to Wellesley, if they wanted to go to Ohio State University, or if they wanted to go to Baylor or Southern Methodist—they pick the school and the money follows the individual, giving the individual power, and America is the better for it. That is what we are talking about here. The money should go where it will do the individual the most good and not be controlled out of Washington that puts up 6 cents out of every educational dollar and then wants to make 60 percent of every educational decision.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:17 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now begin consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4635, the VA-HUD appropriations bill, notwithstanding the receipt of the papers, and it be considered as having been read and the conference report be considered under the following agreement: 30 minutes under the control of Senator GRAHAM of Florida, 10 minutes equally divided between Senators BOND and MIKULSKI, 20 minutes equally divided between Senators DOMENICI and REID, and 10 minutes equally divided between Senators STEVENS and BYRD. I further ask consent that at the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the conference report without any intervening action, motion, or debate.

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

The Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The report was printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of October 18, 2000.)

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, for the information of all Members, let me point out that at the request of the leadership on both sides of the aisle, we are moving forward and hope to have a vote, certainly no later than 3:30 this afternoon, because we do need to get this measure passed, as well as several others.

I will take just a few minutes of my time now. I am pleased to present to the Senate the conference report to H.R. 4635, the VA-HUD appropriations bill for fiscal year 2001. As I indicated previously, this has been a very unusual year. The conference report represents the compromise agreement reached with Senator MIKULSKI, Congressman WALSH, Congressman MOLLOHAN, and myself, in consultation with the administration.

Certainly it is not a perfect situation. It is not the way I would like to do the bill. I would prefer to proceed