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Senate

The Senate met at 9:34 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

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

Dear God, our Father, we are recipients of the impact of the prayers of intercession prayed by millions of Americans around the clock. Help us to remember that You are seeking to answer those prayers as we receive Your wisdom and guidance. May we never feel alone or solely dependent on our own strength. Your mighty power impinges on us here as a result of people's prayers. An unlimited supply of Your supernatural wisdom and strength and vision is ready to be released.

Remind us also that our ability to receive all that You have to give is dependent on our willingness to pray for each other here as we work together in the Senate. We commit ourselves to become channels of prayer power, not only for our friends and those with whom we agree but also for those with whom we might disagree, those we might consider political adversaries, and especially those who test our patience and those whom we need to forgive. So lift our lives from the battle zone of combative words to a caring community where leaders pray for and communicate esteem to each other. Thank you for giving us unity in spirit as we deal with the diversity of ideas.

This morning, gracious Lord, we ask for Your blessing, peace, and healing for our friend, Mike Epstein. Be with him and help him to know that You are indeed Jehovah Shema and Jehovah Shalom.

In Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the time controlled by Senator THOMAS and Senator WELLSTONE. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, with four amendments also in order under the previous agreement. Members can expect votes throughout the day.

For the information of all Senators, the Senate will continue to debate this important education legislation throughout the week. It is hoped that the Senate can make substantial progress on this bill, and that we can continue to debate education-related amendments.

I thank my colleagues for their attention. I yield.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, because we got started a little bit late, both sides have 45 minutes in morning business.

Mr. ALLARD. No objection.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). Under the previous order, there

will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the first 45 minutes is under the control of the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. WELLSTONE, or his designee.

I now recognize the Senator from Minnesota.

MIKE EPSTEIN

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me thank the leadership of both parties for allowing the Senate to talk to a very dear friend, Mike Epstein. I want you to know, Mike, and your family, that a lot of our staff are back here as well with me. I think this is a little unusual, that the Senate stops its business and focuses on an individual in this way. But I think there are some things that many of us want to say to Mike.

I want to start out this way. When I mentioned in the past couple of days to Senators, but also support staff everywhere here, that my friend Mike was struggling with cancer, I just could never have anticipated the reaction. Mike, I want you to know I can think of at least four or five times where someone said to me: Mike? He's an institution.

I know Mike's priorities, so let me be clear about the people who talk about Mike as an institution. And, Mike, I know you; this was real. This was real.

Some of the people who said Mike is an institution were support staff. People said to me: Mike just treats everybody so well. He is such a nice, good person. He is great, just because of the way he treats people.

Mike, that is the best compliment of all.

Then Senators said to me: PAUL, Mike Epstein is an institution in the Senate. Some may have been thinking about history. Some in the Senate—I

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



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do not think that many because we have had a lot of new Senators—know of Mike's role with the Church committee and the important investigative research he has done.

There are others who are familiar, Mike, with the kind of work you have done with Senator KENNEDY. Mike did some of the most important investigative research on HIV infection and AIDS early on when other people in the country did not even want to focus on this.

Then other Senators said to me: PAUL, we are going to come to the floor and talk to Mike today because we have worked with him on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when he was chief counsel to the committee.

Then way down on the list of priorities—because I am talking to you, Mike, about great work that you do—has been the work that Mike and I have done together. Mike, I know you will not like me saying this, but I am going to say it anyway because it is true. I believe from the bottom of my heart that everything I have been able to do as a Senator that has been good for Minnesota and the country is because, Mike, you have been there right by my side, 1 inch away from me.

A lot of the people in the Senate know that. As a matter of fact, I say to my colleagues on the floor, I will never forget one time when I finally learned at least a little bit of the rules and I was able to come to the floor and fight very hard a number of years ago for some assistance for victims of a tornado that hit Chandler, MN, and other small communities. Mike was there as my tutor, as my teacher, teaching me, as you do, Mike.

It worked out well, but afterwards, Alan Simpson, a former Senator from Wyoming, came up to me and said: PAUL?

I said: Yes?

He said: You see those fellows on the other side of the aisle?—pointing to the Republicans, and I think Nancy Kassebaum was there as well.

I said: Yes.

He said: They have been looking at you.

I said: Yes.

Mike was a ways behind me about where Tinker is sitting right now.

He said: He has been right next to you the whole time. It doesn't look good. It looks like you can't do it yourself. It looks like he is doing it for you. PAUL, the trick is this: You want to have Mike far enough away from you so that it looks like you are doing it yourself but close enough to you in case they throw a whizzer on you, he can be 1 inch away from your side.

That has basically been my methodology as a Senator. I had Mike far enough away so it looked like I was doing it on my own, but Mike was close enough so that always when I needed the advice, I got it.

Mike Epstein, I speak on the floor today in the Senate, and others are coming out to speak, because you are

an institution and I want to make sure you and your family hear these words loudly and clearly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, when I learned Mike was sick, I thought I should come down and say a few words. I thought: What can I say? I do not want to say anything that will not be appropriate. I went to my person who does my floor work in the Senate, Peter Arapis. I said: Tell me about Mike Epstein. What do you know about Mike Epstein?

He said—and I made some notes—he always told us some jokes and he was always funny, always had a smile, and he appears to be Senator WELLSTONE's best friend. Those are the same things I felt about Mike Epstein.

The feelings about Mike are pretty well known in the Senate. He has a great sense of humor. He always had that sly grin on his face when he was in the Senate, which I appreciated a lot.

Mike, I always appreciated your being so courteous to me. I had a lot of dealings with you because as we proceed in the Senate—and I say this through Senator WELLSTONE to Mike—it seems one of my responsibilities is to get the legislation moving. A lot of times Senator WELLSTONE threw a monkey wrench into legislation moving. Who would I go to to find out what really was happening? I would go to the back row and talk to Mike and say: Mike, what is going on here? He would have a grin on his face as he would tell me what was going on. He was always the person I would go to to break through the Wellstone logjam that was created.

I was looking this morning for something to describe you, Mike. I found a quote by James Barrie that is pretty good. I believe it really sizes up what you appear to be to me. Barrie said, "Always be a little kinder than necessary."

Certainly with Mike Epstein, that is the case. Mike was always a little kinder than necessary to me. Always kind. A lot of times I thought to myself: Wow, that is really a nice person. I guess I thought maybe he was a little kinder to me than was necessary.

I never looked at Mike's resume. My staff gave me a little background resume of Mike today. Here is a man who graduated from Brown University. Brown is an Ivy League school. It is a wonderful school; some say the best school in America. It is very hard to get in. It is a small school, and they only take the best people whom they think can academically be a success.

Then, of course, he went to Boston University Law School, which is one of the top law schools in the country.

He had a resume. He could have gone anyplace in the world to work in the legal field. He could have gone anyplace in the legal field in America to work. He decided very early on that he wanted a life in public service, and that is what he did. As soon as he got out of

law school, he served in the Justice Department as staff counsel, prosecuting attorney, special assistant to the Attorney General, and worked in the Criminal Division.

In 1970 or 1971, Mike moved to Capitol Hill where he spent the rest of his career. What a career it was. I repeat, at any juncture of Mike's career, he could have gone anyplace in Washington to make the big bucks as a lobbyist, as an attorney in one of the big law firms, but he decided not to do that.

He decided to be a counsel to the special commission to investigate intelligence activities—Senate counsel on the Intelligence Committee. He was counsel to one of the Senate Democratic leaders. He was chief counsel to the Foreign Relations Committee. And he, of course, for the last 10 years or so has been the legislative director for Senator WELLSTONE.

At any juncture of his career, including any time he worked for Senator WELLSTONE, he could have gone anyplace in town to make a lot of money. He has a great academic background, and of course his experience is tremendous.

So I feel very moved to say nice things about Mike Epstein, things I wish I had said earlier.

So, Mike, I certainly wish you the best. I know your health isn't as good as we would like it. But I certainly hope you have some peace and rest in the next little bit and that you recognize how much we would like to see you in this back row, helping Senator WELLSTONE—kind of the "Mini-Me" of the Wellstone operation.

I think it is also important that Jonathan and Bob—your two children—recognize the great contributions you have made to Government in America. Things are better because of you. Certainly, I know the many contributions Senator WELLSTONE has made during his career have been directly related to your expertise.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nevada.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I am not sure what the time allocation is, but I will use my leader time to make a few remarks, if I may.

Mr. President, every day—until very recently—if you looked toward the west entrance to the Senate floor, as my colleague from Nevada has just noted, chances are, you would see Mike Epstein—with that wonderful, warm smile—Senator WELLSTONE's learned and much-loved legislative director.

Today, however, as so many of my colleagues have already noted, Mike is not with us. He is at home resting, because he is very, very sick. His absence from this floor, from this Senate he loves so well, is conspicuous. It is being felt in the hearts of every member of the Senate community. Indeed, it is being felt in the very heart of this institution itself.

For Mike Epstein is actually an institution within an institution.

He is a Senate staffer of the old school. He came to the Senate in 1971—before virtually every member of the Senate staff, and before all but seven sitting Senators.

That is not the kind of thing Mike would ever tell you. As a staffer of the old school, he isn't given to boasting or self-promotion. Then again, he doesn't have to: his experience and his ability speak for themselves.

During Mike's tenure here, he has served on the staffs, as I am sure my colleagues have already noted, of some of our most distinguished Senators to serve in my lifetime, including Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, Senator TED KENNEDY, Senator PAUL SARBANES, and now—for the last 9 years—our dear, dear Senator from Minnesota, Mr. PAUL WELLSTONE.

He also served as a member of the staffs of the Committees on Foreign Relations, Ethics, Labor and Human Resources, and Judiciary.

He first came to Washington in 1962 as a young attorney working at the Department of Justice for Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

Along the way he picked up a library full of knowledge, and a mind full of wisdom.

He became—at the elbow of the master, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD—an expert in Senate history, rules, and parliamentary procedure.

He also became a friend, teacher, and mentor to generations of Senate staff.

And he became a valued and trusted counselor to the Senators for whom he worked, and for many others—this Senator included.

What a career. What a remarkable achievement. But then again, what a remarkable man.

What is perhaps most remarkable about Mike is his passion.

Even though all those years of public service tends to wear someone down, Mike is still fiercely, proudly committed to the ideals of a progressive agenda, much like his boss, Senator WELLSTONE.

But "boss" is the wrong term to use in describing the relationship between Mike and PAUL. They are more like family. In fact, Mike says PAUL is like a brother to him. I know PAUL feels exactly the same way about Mike.

Before joining PAUL's staff in 1991, Mike told a friend that his dream job would be to work as Senator PAUL WELLSTONE's legislative director. That dream came true for Mike, and he and PAUL have been inseparable ever since.

So, Mr. President, on behalf of the Democratic Conference, the Democratic staff, and frankly, the entire Democratic Party, not to mention our Senate community, I thank my friend, PAUL WELLSTONE for being here today and for telling this Senate how much Mike Epstein means to this institution and to all of us.

Most of all, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our gallant, courageous colleague, Mike Epstein, for his friendship—and for his inspired

service to the Senate and to the Nation.

Mike, we are keeping you and your family very much in our thoughts and in our prayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, yesterday Senator WELLSTONE told our caucus of the health challenges Mike Epstein has been facing. I am someone who knows Mike. Am I his closest friend? No. But Senator WELLSTONE had his office next to mine in the Hart Building. Every day—during votes, and coming and going in the Senate—I would see Mike Epstein and see my colleague, Senator WELLSTONE, moving back and forth. I watched, with some wonder, at the work he did for Senator WELLSTONE.

I know he is now facing a health challenge that is difficult. I know there are times in this fast-paced world of ours—especially here in the Senate, with the travel and the hearings and the moving about quickly—that it is easy to forget what makes this work and what has real value in our lives.

This is a moment, as Mike faces this challenge, to say to Mike: Our thoughts and prayers are with you today as you face this serious health challenge. But we also want, as we think of you, to say thanks for what you have done here. The people who serve here, especially my colleague, Senator WELLSTONE, know how important personal relationships are.

The only thing we really have, as we try to deal with public policy, is our work. Personal relationships are everything. But it is not just personal relationships between Senators; it is also the relationships that exist around here between Senators and some talented, dedicated people who help make this institution work. One of those is Mike Epstein.

Each of us aspired to serve our country in different ways. That is what persuaded us in the Senate to seek public office. It is what inspires some of the most talented, dedicated men and women in our country to want to come and serve and work in these Senate offices.

Mike Epstein has worked with Senator WELLSTONE for many years. I know Senator REID just talked about at the end of considering pieces of legislation. I say to Senator WELLSTONE, at the end of the consideration of pieces of legislation that are long, torturous trials, trying to get all the amendments in, Senator REID and I have always tried to figure out, how do we get these amendments compressed? In almost every case, at the end of the process, it has been Senator WELLSTONE who has had three or four amendments.

The reason: I know Mike Epstein would be sitting behind Senator WELLSTONE, and Senator WELLSTONE would be exhibiting this passion, saying: No, we have to do these. This is

important. It has been because he shares Mike's commitment to give voice to the voiceless, and hope to the hopeless, and to not let the big things obscure things that are important to average Americans and people who are struggling out there every day.

That is the legacy of the service of someone such as Mike Epstein to this Senate. As he struggles with this health challenge, I just wanted to comment, as a member of this caucus, and to say to Senator WELLSTONE, and say directly to Mike Epstein, our thoughts and prayers are with you. This country is better because of your service in this Senate.

We wish you well.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, first of all, I thank my friend and colleague, Senator PAUL WELLSTONE, for having the foresight and the intelligence to have Mike Epstein on his staff for all the years he has been here in the Senate.

I say to you, Mike, you could not have picked a better person to work for in the Senate. PAUL is in the great tradition of those you have worked with before in the Senate.

I also want to thank you, Mike, for all of your work in the Senate over all these years. When I heard the other day that you were home battling cancer, I said, it is impossible; I saw him right back here just the other day, in back of the balustrade over here. Many times I would be sitting here when debate would be going on, and I would go over and say, "Mike, tell me what is happening," or "What is going on here on the floor?" or "What is the amendment? What is our strategy?"

Mike would fill me in. I thank you, Mike, for keeping me up to speed as to what was happening on the floor a lot of times. Mostly, I also want to thank you, Mike, for all the times we rode back and forth on the subway cars together. It seems around here that sometimes you just kind of meet certain people at certain times. It is unplanned and it sort of happens. I don't know why, but you and I, Mike, seemed to be on the same schedule to ride the subway. I don't know what the subway ride is, a couple or 3 minutes. There was always time for me to get a 3-minute briefing from you, Mike, on what we were doing and what we were fighting for. It revolved around I think what I would like to say is the liberal cause.

If there is one thing I would like to really thank both Mike Epstein and PAUL WELLSTONE for, it is for fighting for the liberal cause. I can't think of anyone who embodies more of what I believe is the real face of liberalism in this country than you, Mike. I think of what President Kennedy once said. I may get the words a little wrong because I am reaching into my memory bank now. But President Kennedy was

once asked—I believe when he was running for President—about being a “liberal,” whether he was a liberal or not. President Kennedy responded by saying: Well, if by liberal you mean someone who is soft on defense, someone who is not concerned about ethics and morals, someone who doesn’t believe in responsibility and accountability—if that is what you mean by liberal, that is not me. But if by liberal you mean someone who cares deeply about the health and the welfare and the happiness of our people, and if by liberal you mean someone who fights for the education of all of our kids, even the most disadvantaged, and if by liberal you mean someone who will fight for the elderly and their rights in our society, if that is what you mean by liberal, then I am one, and I am proud to be one.

So, Mike, I think you embody exactly what President Kennedy was talking about. In all the years I have known you, that has really been your mantle. In all the strategies we had here in fighting for legislation, I think you, Mike, really represented those who didn’t have a high paid lobbyist pushing for them, such as children in poverty, working parents who needed some help, and even my people living in rural areas—a lot of times you helped them.

I just wanted to take this time to thank you, Mike, for always fighting for what I believe is in the best traditions of liberalism in this country. It is the liberal attitude that I believe makes us more compassionate and understanding toward one another, and you have embodied that during the entire time I have known you for all these years.

Again, I thank you for that. You have been a great person, a remarkable person. For as long as I am here, I am always going to turn back to the balustrade and look for Mike Epstein to tell me what is going on and what our strategy is and to keep me focused on what really matters around this place, and that is what we do to enhance the lives of people at the bottom of the ladder. That really is the mark of what we are about and should be about as a Senate.

Mike, I thank you, and I thank PAUL for getting us together this morning to pay tribute to you. I know you are struggling right now, and I just want you to know that you are always in my thoughts and you are always in my prayers. I can just tell you that all the things you have fought for and believed in so strongly in the Senate, believe me, we are going to keep on going with them. So take care of yourself and just know that we are with you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join with my other colleagues, first of all, in thanking a very special friend and someone we admire and care so much about, our colleague, PAUL WELLSTONE, as TOM HARKIN has said, for bringing us

together. I thank him for persuading our leaders who have responded positively that we take a few moments from the business of the Senate to give recognition to an individual who has given so much of his life to this institution and, really, to our country.

I am grateful to join with my colleagues in adding a word about this extraordinary individual because, in a very important way, his life has been the U.S. Senate. I was fortunate enough, along that pathway of his, to have the opportunity to work with him, as several of my colleagues did, those who are here now, such as Senator SARBANES, and some who are not with us, Phil Hart and Claiborne Pell, as well as Senator Byrd. So I welcome this chance to join with others in recognizing Mike Epstein’s extraordinary service.

Mike Epstein came to the Senate Judiciary Committee after 9 years at the Department of Justice, where he served as a Federal prosecutor. He used those same skills that made him a top-notch prosecutor to investigate some of the most difficult issues before our country. If there was a lead, he pursued it. If there was a fact to be found, he would find it. He left no stone unturned. He served the committee well, and I am proud that he was a member of my staff.

It was during that period that Mike’s love for this institution grew and matured. Though he left briefly in 1974, he couldn’t stay away for very long. Within months, he was back working for the Senate Intelligence Committee, and later for three additional committees, and then for several of my colleagues.

It is a mark of the man that Mike worked for so many different committees and Senators. His career in the Senate reflects an extraordinary breadth of interests and a genuine love for this institution. He is well-versed on issues ranging from international affairs to education; from health care to drug treatment and prevention. In fact, the country owes Mike a debt of gratitude for his tireless work on the 1988 drug policy legislation. He was an articulate advocate for a more balanced and comprehensive approach to drug policy.

Because of his landmark work, the country began to enhance its enforcement efforts by also considering the importance of drug prevention and treatment, as well as a fairer approach to sentencing.

Mike’s work on each of these issues was guided by a love for national policy and also for the Senate and its procedures. He understands so well the relationship between the rules and the outcome of a legislative debate, which is so key in being a useful and productive and effective Member of this body.

The rules form a framework that ensures the fairness of the debate and an outcome that can be respected. Mike knows that, and it is reflected in his work. In so many instances, his knowledge of the ways of the Senate was

drawn upon by so many of our colleagues in ways to advance the cause of our common humanity and decency.

Mike Epstein’s work in the Senate will be long remembered—the legislative battles he helped us win, and the losing battles he helped us fight so well. But his true legacy will be his commitment to public service, and his dedication to the institution. He is among the ranks of those who choose to give deeply of themselves to make a significant difference in the lives of so many people across this country. That achievement will stand as a shining example to everyone who works in the Senate—Senators and staffers alike.

I grew up in a family where members of the family were taught that they should and they could make a difference, and that each of them should try.

I remember listening to the members of our family who said you do not have to be a United States Senator to make a difference. All you have to do is give of yourself and work towards a purpose.

This country is a better country because of Mike Epstein. Today there are scores of people—there are children who are getting better opportunities, young people who are getting better educations, older people whose lives have been enhanced—who will never know the name of Mike Epstein. But because of Mike, their lives are more graceful and more useful and more productive, and their sense of hope is realized—all because of the extraordinary service of an extraordinary human being.

We love you, Mike, and we always will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. L. CHAFEE). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in expressing appreciation to Senator WELLSTONE for arranging for this period this morning to give us a chance to send a message to Mike, and to talk with him, as it were, long distance for just a few minutes.

I was struck as I listened to my colleagues as they spoke about Mike’s attributes. His kindness, his warmth, which I think everyone who came in contact with him would subscribe to.

I still remember him on the staff back row here in the Chamber with, I guess one might call it, a mischievous smile on his face, and his generosity with his counsel.

Presumably Senator WELLSTONE was aware and gave a special dispensation to all of us to contact Mike, even though he was working for PAUL, for his counsel and advice on matters that were before the Senate.

I took advantage of that opportunity on many an occasion, and always benefited from it.

He has been spoken about by many of my colleagues as an institution in the Senate, and I think that is very true.

But I want to make this point in talking about Mike as an institution, and the impact he had on this body. I

think we are also paying a tribute to all of the loyal and hard-working staff in the Senate who make it possible for this institution to function and to play its proper role in the American constitutional system.

He and Senator WELLSTONE developed a very close relationship. As some have noted, they were like family—like brothers towards one another. But Mike's family is also all of us because he was such a caring friend.

So this is a trying time. Mike, we want you to know that you are very much in our thoughts and in our prayers, and as the Chaplain said this morning when he opened the Senate and pronounced his blessing we also hope that you will derive some peace and harmony from this conversation.

I want to talk for a moment about Mike Epstein as a thoroughly committed fighter for progressive principles.

As others have noted, when he finished law school in 1961 at Boston University where he graduated with honors and was an editor of the Law Review, he came to Washington and went to work for the Justice Department. That was headed at the time by another Kennedy. Mike enlisted in that effort and served with great distinction in the Department of Justice for almost 10 years.

He then came to Capitol Hill and held a number of very significant responsibilities in the Senate: Counsel to Senator KENNEDY; then Counsel to the special committee to investigate intelligence activities, the Church committee. He was counsel to the Select Committee on Intelligence; counsel to the Democratic leader. For more than two years, he was chief counsel to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which is where I got to know him best. I had that wonderful opportunity to work closely with Mike and I still treasure the close relationship we developed.

Consistently throughout all these responsibilities, Mike reflected his abiding commitment to the U.S. Constitution.

He understood the significance of the Constitution in our political system, and Mike, again and again in carrying out your responsibilities, your determination that we should pay appropriate respect and deference to the Constitution constantly came through.

Secondly, I was struck by Mike's commitment to American democracy. It is a complicated business to make American democracy work—We are a very diverse, pluralistic nation. We are now getting up towards 300 million people. Mike understood the importance of opportunity and fairness for the workings of the American political system and was constantly committed to those goals and to those objectives.

He had an abiding commitment to working people. As Senator KENNEDY noted, there are hosts of people across the country who never met Mike Epstein and don't know his name, but

lead better lives today because of the work and the commitment of Mike Epstein here in the Halls of the Congress for now almost three decades.

So Mike, we want to take this opportunity to just talk with you and tell you how much you have meant to all of us.

I want to close with one final observation. Mike, throughout all of this commitment and tough fighting for principle and for causes, you consistently reflected a civility and a decency and a respect for others which I think, explains, why you have come so much into the hearts of so many people.

I join others in expressing my gratitude to you for all you have meant to us, and in wishing you the very best now in this difficult and trying time, and in saying a very heartfelt thank you for being our friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is an honor to be able to talk to Mike for just a couple of minutes and to do so with my friends whom you and I care so much about and to say, particularly to Senator WELLSTONE, thank you for standing up in the caucus and for telling us about Mike's battle and inviting us to speak with him.

The message I want to give you today, Mike, is that you have made a mark in the Senate. It is hard to do that because I am sure you know we have at least 100 fairly large egos around here. To make a mark in such a place is a tribute to you. You have made a mark among so many Senators—by the way, you picked some wonderful ones to work for—and also among staff.

I don't know whether you can see the staff here, Mike, but there are quite a number of them here today. If they could grab a microphone away from us, I know they would. They also send their strong and best wishes to you and their love.

It is kind of unusual for someone to have that kind of amazing respect and admiration from Senators and staffers alike. There is a reason for it. You chose this career for the right reasons—not for the power, not for the influence. In many ways, you have that through the powerful and effective people for whom you work.

But that is not why you decided to make your career in public service. It is really because inside you, you have this burning feeling that we need to make life better for all the American people. That is reflected in the work you do, as well as the people for whom you chose to work. That is reflected in making life better for families, children, and workers, regardless of who they are or what their status is.

But I want to tell you, Mike, I remember just a couple of weeks ago when I was feeling my oats because we had won an amendment on the floor dealing with sensible gun laws. It had been such a struggle. I found myself in the subway, going back to my office

with you, Mike. Boy, I was feeling good because we don't win a lot around here these days. It was a good feeling. You looked at me and instead of saying, good work—which is of course what I wanted to hear from you—you said: You know, we really have much more to do on this. We have to build on this. We have to take it the next step.

At first, I thought, this was not what I wanted to hear. I wanted to relax and enjoy the moment. When I got back to my office I realized: He is right, we just have to build on our success. We have to keep on working and keep pushing.

That gleam Mike always has in his eye really comes with this message of fighting. That is why I think he and PAUL WELLSTONE are such a great combination. You can't have more of a fighter for the people than PAUL WELLSTONE. It is a great and contagious quality. We need more of it around here. It is easy to give up, whatever side of the aisle you are on, or wherever you stand on the issues. It is tough to get in some of these battles. It is tough to stand and debate and fight for your point of view.

There is a lot at stake, Mike, and you always understand that. I hope you can take that amazing spirit, fight, and spark with your family, engage in this fight you are in right now, and know that a lot of Members, including staff and Senators alike, really care about you and respect you so much.

Thank you.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am pleased that Senator WELLSTONE is on the floor at this point. I want to join my colleagues and speak regarding our good friend, Mike Epstein, and I send my thoughts to Mike as well. This is a wonderful place to work in the Senate and in this community. But it is a tough town. Mike Epstein is one of the warmest, best people I have ever met. For a while, I was a little jealous that he worked for Senator WELLSTONE, until I found out that Senator WELLSTONE, with Mike Epstein, is a team operation. Whenever I needed encouragement out here and Paul wasn't around, or somebody from my office, all I had to do is turn back and look at Mike who would give me a warm smile and good advice. He is a good friend. I am proud to be associated with Mike and to have worked with him over the years.

I thank Paul very much for giving us this opportunity.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, my colleague from Wisconsin sent a wonderful letter that was read to Mike and he loved it. I thank him for that.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank all of the Senators who spoke for Mike and his family. There are other Senators who will be speaking who could not work into this timeframe. It is quite amazing to have so many people come down.

Mike, I want you to know that the Parliamentarian, staff, Republican, Democrat, everybody here has a look on their face, an expression of love and support for you and your family.

I finish this way, Mike. It has not been our friendship—the relationship is not like I hired somebody to be my assistant; it is more like I hired somebody who has been my teacher. Maybe that is why we are joined at the hip.

Sometimes when I come to the floor, probably I make mistakes, maybe get too intense, feel too strongly. I will ask Mike, how have I done? He will be willing to give me quite a bit of constructive criticism. But sometimes I will be down on the floor with other Senators and I will go back to the office and I will go to Mike and look for approval. I will say: Mike, how did I do? And he will say: That was just right.

Mike, I hope you think this was just right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. What is the time status?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:15 is under the control of the Senator from Wyoming or his designee.

Mr. THOMAS. Let me first say how touching and impressive it was for the Senators to come to the floor and make these comments. All of us have Mike in our hearts and prayers.

I yield to the Senator from Idaho as much time as he desires.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor today and speak with regard to the Educational Opportunities Act we will be debating later today. The Educational Opportunities Act represents an opportunity to make a striking change in education in America. I will quickly go over what it is that this act with which we are dealing will do.

Title I of the act is dedicated to helping disadvantaged children meet the high standards of education that we seek to have them achieve.

Title II is dedicated to improving teacher quality throughout the Nation.

Title III contains enrichment initiatives for our schools, including initiatives such as the gifted and talented programs; the advanced placement programs; help for neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students; and help for each school to meet each child's unique educational needs.

Title IV deals with developing safe and drug-free schools.

Title V deals with initiatives for educational opportunities, initiatives that will involve opportunities such as taking maximum advantage of the technology education we need to provide for our children.

Title VI involves innovative education where we give flexibility and power to the local teachers and parents to create innovative educational programs in their communities that will help empower students.

Title VII deals with bilingual education and language enhancement ac-

quisition so those who need to develop the necessary skills to speak English can be given the assistance to do so.

Title VIII deals with impact aid, a form of aid critically important for those areas where the Federal Government creates an additional burden through its use of Federal property. And Title VIII deals with Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Alaskan Native education, dealing with specific needs throughout the Nation where we need focused efforts.

I thank the chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator JEFFORDS for his leadership on this bill. I also like to thank the ranking member, Senator KENNEDY, and all the members of the committee for their time and efforts to bring forth a bill that invests in public schools and offers our children an unparalleled opportunity for education reform and a better education. I commend all for your endeavors in tackling the tough decisions that face our schools and our children.

The pending ESEA bill offers students and parents a tremendous opportunity for better schools and a better education. Perhaps our greatest accomplishment in this bill is the reduction of Federal regulations. While the Federal financial contribution is approximately 7 percent of total education costs, the requirements currently placed on States represent a disproportionate burden in redtape and Federal control.

Granting waivers to States, and allowing them to bypass complex, confusing, and time consuming mandates, is one of the most important things S. 2 does to help schools reach their full potential.

In exchange for increased State and local flexibility, the Education Opportunities Act requires greater accountability for improving student performance. By establishing high standards and demanding accountability, this bill represents a great step toward ensuring the academic success of all students.

Senator GORTON's Straight A's proposal also allows interested States to consolidate up to twelve Federal formula grant programs in exchange for flexible approaches that boost student achievement. The Straight A's program gives States more flexibility in the use of Federal funds, so long as it can be demonstrated that the flexibility is used to achieve higher academic results for students.

Senator GREGG's efforts to promote portability should also be commended. This child-centered approach establishes per-pupil amounts to be used for supplemental services, such as tutoring. This change, would for the first time, ensure that the money follows the student. No longer will a school with title I students go without receiving funding for the very students it is asked to educate.

As I have looked through this bill and reviewed the various provisions, I am particularly pleased to see a number of measures I introduced earlier

this year in separate legislation have been included. These bills focused on the growing needs of education in our rural communities. Earlier this year, I introduced an education bill—now title VI part B, the Rural Education Initiative—that would allow school districts to combine the small amounts of funding they may receive for specified programs, to accumulate a book of funds large enough to address local priorities. The committee recognized the unique challenges facing rural school districts by incorporating this important provision into the bill before us today. The students, parents, teachers, and administrators in Idaho appreciate your commitment to small, and sometimes poor, rural school districts.

Regarding title VIII and the Impact Aid Program, I am pleased to see legislation I authored earlier this year included in the bill. My legislation recommended changing the formulas by which Impact Aid funds are distributed to schools. This change, and other important changes in the bill before us, reaffirm our commitment to those children in schools where the loss of local property taxes due to a large Federal presence has placed an extra burden on local taxpayers.

The Educational Opportunities Act also ensures that teachers are an integral part of the effort to improve public education. The bill recognizes that strong professional development for our teachers is the foundation of our effort to facilitate improved student achievement. Whether professional development is emphasized through technology training, quality mentoring, or programs to recruit, hire, and train certified teachers, all which I proposed in legislation earlier this year, under this bill schools will have the flexibility to influence education based on local principles and local successes. Nothing can replace qualified teachers with high standards and a desire to teach. Coupled with professional development opportunities, our teachers must be equipped to positively influence and inspire every child in their classroom, and ultimately accelerate student achievement.

As I close, I would like to clarify one position that I have heard misstated, not only during this debate, but in various forums on education reform. Some have expressed the unwillingness of Republicans to adequately fund education initiatives like many of those we are debating today. Some individuals have gone so far as to say that we have proposed significant cuts. This is far from the truth. Last year's consolidated appropriations bill included significant funding increases for education. In fact, education was funded at \$990 million above the President's budget request and \$2.4 billion more than fiscal year 1999 levels. While there is a clear disagreement on how to spend education funds, I hope that we can proceed with an honest and accurate discussion about the support for adequate funding.