

cannot send kids into crowded classrooms and wonder why test scores are not higher.

As I said before, some of the most wonderful, dedicated people I have met are the teachers in classrooms, spending their days with our children. We can and should make some changes on the question of the teacher certification process. We ought to have alternative certification programs for people who later in life want to go back into a classroom and teach kids. They shouldn't have to go through a teacher's college or a curriculum that is long and difficult.

Let me give an example. There was a rather wonderful major league outfielder who played ball for the Baltimore Orioles who was going to teach physical education at a school in New York. Wouldn't you want your kid being taught how to hit by a major league outfielder? But he didn't have the proper teacher certificate so he wasn't kept in the school system.

What if Bill Gates decided he wanted to come into your school and teach a class on computers? He doesn't have the certification. What if Michael Jordan was willing to teach your child to play basketball in a physical education program? Do you think Michael Jordan and Bill Gates are not qualified? Of course they are.

We can find mechanisms by which we provide alternative certification for professionals and others who want to go into the classroom to help in this country. We can and should do that.

But to those people who spend all of their time beating up on America's schools, I wonder how they think we got to where we are in this world with our education system? How on Earth did we do that? Is there a place in the world anyone wants to trade places with? I don't think so. Do we want to trade our education system for the one in Haiti, Zambia, or Bangladesh? I don't think so. How about Germany? How about France or Italy? Do we want to trade it? I don't think so.

This country has invested a substantial amount of money in something called universal education. We did it because we don't believe in segregating kids and deciding some kids have talent to go here and other kids have the talent to go there. We decided all kids ought to have the opportunity to make the most of their education.

I have two children in school this morning. They are both the most wonderful children in the whole world. I love them to death. I want them to have the best education possible. I don't know what they will be when they grow up. My son, when he was 10 years old and we were going over an English lesson together, that he didn't need to study English because he was going to be a miner. I said: A miner? He said: I'm going to mine gold and I don't need to read and spell. I said: When mining gold, you have to be able to read and sign contracts. Over time, he changed his occupation choice, and he has had several other choices since then. We spend time every night with

our children doing homework because we believe education is a priority for them. I want them to go through a classroom door I am proud of. I want them to go into a school I am proud of. I want them to have teachers I am proud of.

Dating back to my great-grandmother who homesteaded on the prairies of North Dakota and raised children who raised children who raised me, this education system has been a wonderful boon to most Americans, including our family. My father had to quit school in the sixth grade because his mother died and his father was in an institution for tuberculosis. In sixth grade, he quit school in order to go to work to help his uncles raise his sisters. The proudest day of his life, it seems to me, is one day when, without ever having given us a hint, he told us at the supper table that he had, at age 55, just passed the GED test. Then he gave us a big smile. He didn't even tell us he was taking it. This meant a lot to him.

Education has enormous value. Every American family who cares about its kids understands that. This debate is not about two sides, one of which has new ideas and the other which has no ideas. It is a discussion about a range of approaches with respect to the education system and how we make it better.

I don't think our public school system is awful. I disagree with those who do. Go to school. I have been to schools that are awful schools, but do you know why? Because of all the other influences from which those kids come. I have been to schools with metal detectors at the front door. Shortly after I visited one of those schools, a kid was shot at the water fountain because another kid bumped him. The student who shot him got a gun through the metal detector, even though a security guard was sitting there.

That school has a crowd control problem as much as it has education problems. It is not because they are bad people running the school. It is because that school inherits all of the other problems of its surroundings. I think we need to understand that and help change it.

We can do better in education. I am not suggesting everything is great. We can do better in education. But I know my kids do more homework than I did. I graduated from a tiny high school class of nine in Regent, North Dakota. I am enormously proud of the education I received in that school. Are the kids there getting a better education today than I did? Yes, of course they are—more homework, more opportunities, bigger libraries, the Internet. They have access to any library in the world through the Internet.

As we look at what we do to improve our schools, I think the most important thing is to improve those crumbling facilities, reduce class size, and then require accountability. I am all for accountability.

There is a provision in Senator DASCHLE's substitute, which I will also

offer as a separate amendment, to provide parents with a school report card. I get a report card about how my son and daughter are performing. I want a report card for the public school they attend, a report card that every parent and every taxpayer in this country should get, comparing their school to other schools in their district, in their state, and in other States. How is that school doing? Is it passing or failing based on a series of criteria—student performance, graduation and retention rates, professional certification of teachers, average class size, school safety, parental involvement—which is critically important—student dropout rates and student access to technology. How is that school doing? We deserve a school report card as parents and as taxpayers.

That ultimately will provide the accountability we should get. Yes, we ought to hold our education system accountable. We will have an opportunity to vote on school report cards as part of the Bingaman amendment, and if the Bingaman amendment fails, on an amendment I will offer separately.

The secret to education is not such a secret. Successful education comes from teachers who know how to teach, students who want to learn, and parents who are involved in their child's education. When all three of these elements are present, education works and works well.

Evaluate this country—where it has been, where it is now, and where it is going—and ask yourself if we have accomplished things through our education system of which we are proud? You bet we have. We have spliced genes, we have invented plastic silicone and radar, built rockets, and developed vaccines to prevent polio and small pox. Have we done something significant, all of it coming from our education system? You bet your life we have. Can we improve it? Sure. But we will improve it with new ideas—not tired old ideas called block grants.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

AIDS AS A SECURITY ISSUE

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep disappointment in the failure of the conferees to the African Growth and Opportunity Act to accept the Feinstein-Feingold amendment regarding HIV/AIDS drugs in Africa. When the Senate was debating that legislation last year, Senator FEINSTEIN and I offered our amendment, which was accepted by the bill's managers, Senators ROTH and MOYNIHAN, to address a critically important issue—an issue relating to Africa's devastating AIDS crisis; an issue that has cast a dark shadow on U.S.-African relations in the past.

Our amendment was simple. It prohibited the United States Government

or any agent of the United States Government from pressuring African countries to revoke or change laws aimed at increasing access to HIV/AIDS drugs, so long as the laws in question adhere to existing international regulations governing trade. Quite simply, our amendment told the executive branch to stop twisting arms of African countries that are using legal means to improve access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals for their people.

The Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, or TRIPS, allows for compulsory licensing in cases of national emergency. Approximately 13 million African lives have been lost since the onset of the crisis. According to the Rockefeller Foundation's recent report, "on statistics alone, young people from the most affected countries in Africa are more likely than not to perish of AIDS." Consider that: more likely than not to perish. If these do not constitute emergency conditions, then I don't know what does.

This was a very modest amendment to begin with, but the final version of the amendment discussed by the conferees was a true compromise. It was not as strong as I would have liked it to be. But it did push our policy closer to the right thing. I want to take this opportunity to thank Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator MOYNIHAN, Senator ROTH, and their staffs for working so hard on this amendment. Senator FEINSTEIN was a tireless advocate on this issue, and I have no doubt that she will continue to fight, as will I, for the right thing when it comes to access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals. And Senator ROTH, in particular, made it a priority to hammer out this issue, and I thank him for that.

But despite these efforts, despite the concessions that Senator FEINSTEIN and I made, despite the fact that this is the right thing to do, the Feinstein-Feingold amendment was stripped in conference. The opposition to our amendment is baffling. How do the conferees who killed this provision justify pressuring these countries, where in some cases life expectancies have dropped by more than 15 years, not to use all legal means at their disposal to care for their citizens? Without broader access to these drugs in Africa, more people will suffer, more people will die—that is a simple fact.

As I said on this floor not long ago, I cannot imagine that ordinary Americans are urging their representatives to oppose the Feinstein-Feingold amendment. I cannot imagine that anyone would try to prevail upon my colleagues to oppose this measure—except perhaps for pharmaceutical companies. The pharmaceutical industry does not fear losing customers in Africa, because they know that Africans simply cannot afford their prices. But they do fear that taking this modest step in this time of crisis could somehow, in some ill-defined scenario in the future, cut into their bottom line. This

is the same pharmaceutical and medical supplies industry that gave more than \$4 million in PAC money contributions and more than \$6.5 million in soft money contributions in 1997 and 1998.

How could this irresponsible and callous decision to strip the Feinstein-Feingold amendment from the conference have been made? I have some idea. Some may have bowed to the pressure of the pharmaceutical industry. And some members just don't get it.

In particular, some of the public comments about this issue made over the weekend by a leading Member of this body demonstrated such a misunderstanding of the problem that they cannot go unanswered.

Over the weekend, some troubling remarks were made about the administration's recognition that HIV/AIDS, an infectious disease that currently affects 34 million people worldwide, is a security issue.

First, a leader of this body disputed the fact that AIDS is a security issue. He is wrong. Anyone who believes that a dramatic drop in population, a massive reversal in economic growth, a societal disruption of unprecedented proportions, an entire generation of orphans growing up on the streets—anyone who believes that those things are not destabilizing is terribly misguided. Anyone who does not understand that the U.S. will be profoundly affected by the terrible consequences of AIDS in the developing world had better think again.

But it didn't stop there. It went further. It was suggested that the administration is using the issue cynically to appeal to "certain groups" who were not identified.

Is it pandering to "certain groups" to stand up and say that a disease that infects more than 15,000 young people each day is an issue of grave concern? Is it political posturing to get serious about the massive destabilization that can occur when the most productive segment of a society is wiped out by disease? Is it only some mysterious narrow constituency that is concerned about the prospect of millions of orphans growing up on the streets, without any guidance or education? After witnessing the shocking violence that resulted, in large part, from the masterful manipulation of disenfranchised youth in West Africa over the last decade, I think we all have to take this threat seriously, and acknowledge that the threat is fueled each day by the withering scourge of AIDS that today is galloping through so much of the developing world.

Let me just paint a portrait of the region most affected by AIDS—sub-Saharan Africa. As the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Africa, I have always felt very strongly about the issue of AIDS in Africa. I have raised it in meetings with African heads of state. I applauded the U.N. Security Council's decision to address the crisis earlier

this year. I support the administration's call to increase the resources directed at the crisis, and I am glad that the U.S. is finally getting serious about this threat.

Thirteen million Africans have been killed by AIDS since the onset of the crisis, and according to World Bank President James Wolfensohn, the disease has left 10 million orphaned African children in its wake.

In Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, 25 percent of the people between the ages of 15 and 19 are HIV positive.

By 2010, sub-Saharan Africa will have 71 million fewer people than it would have had if there had been no AIDS epidemic. That is why we must acknowledge that the AIDS epidemic is becoming a crucial part of the context for all that happens in Africa and for all of our policy decisions about Africa.

Until this week this Senate has been moving in the right direction on these issues. I have been pleased to work with many of my colleagues in a bipartisan effort to raise the profile of the epidemic and to work toward a comprehensive package aimed at addressing this crisis. It disturbs me a great deal to think that Members of this body have somehow failed to hear us, or perhaps refused to listen.

This is not a partisan issue. It is deadly serious. I plead with all of my colleagues to look again at the AIDS epidemic in Africa and to consider its global implications.

Those implications are fast becoming strategic and economic realities that will kill millions and drag down all of our efforts on international development and the promotion of freedom and stability around the world. We need to get our heads out of the sand right now, resist the impulse to gain partisan advantage, and join together to seek solutions to the AIDS crisis before we reap global disaster.

U.S. policy on access to HIV/AIDS drugs will come up again in this body. All of the complex issues relating to this crisis—prevention strategies, care for orphans, mother to child transmission—none of these issues is going away. And while this Congress fails to do the right thing, while some fail to grasp the magnitude of the epidemic and its consequences, AIDS will continue to take its terrible toll on families and communities, on economies, and on stability around the world.

I yield the floor.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). Who yields time?

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, as I understand it, our leader, or his designee, has balancing time to that which is used on the other side. I believe Senator SESSIONS' name was even evoked, that he would utilize some portion of that. How much time does the leader have?