

the next ten years. The number will increase by 324,000 in 2000, by 282,000 in 2001, and by 250,000 in 2002—and it will continue on an upward trend in each of the following years.

To meet this urgent need, the Nation faces the challenge of hiring more than 2 million new teachers over the next ten years. According to the Urban Teacher Challenge Report, released by Recruiting New Teachers last January, almost 100 percent of the 40 urban school districts surveyed have an urgent need for teachers in at least one subject area. Ninety-five percent of urban districts report a critical need for math teachers. Ninety-eight percent report a need in science. Ninety-seven percent report a need for special education teachers.

Unfortunately, the need for new teachers in 1998 was met by admitting 50,000 unqualified teachers to the classroom. And nearly 50 percent of those who do enter teaching, leave the profession within 5 years.

Parents, schools, and communities also need special help in providing after-school activities. Each day, 5 million children, many as young as 8 or 9 years old, are left home alone after school. Juvenile delinquent crime peaks in the hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. We know that children left unsupervised are more likely to be involved in anti-social activities and destructive patterns of behavior.

The Nation's schools need more help to meet all of these challenges.

In addition, many families across the Nation are struggling to put their children through college. The burden of education debt is rising. Eight million seven hundred thousand students borrowed \$32 billion in 1999 alone.

Only 53 percent of students with a family income below \$25,000 go on to higher education, and only 26 percent—1 in 4—go on to 4-year colleges. But 90 percent of students with family income above \$74,000 attend college. The opportunity for a college education should not be determined by the level of family income. Any student who has the ability, who works hard, and who wants to attend college should have the opportunity to do so.

We need to do more to fund programs such as GEAR UP that help make college a reality for more young people.

We also need to do more to help American workers who have lost their jobs because of down-sizing or business relocation to find other good jobs in their communities. Companies are doing more hiring and firing simultaneously than ever before. Workers need a new set of skills, and globalization is driving more work abroad. Greater services for dislocated workers will guarantee that workers have the skills they need as we move full speed into the information-based economy. It will also help us respond to employer needs during the current labor shortage by having an efficient labor exchange system and retraining programs.

We must also do more to emphasize keeping young people in school, increasing their enrollment in college, and preparing and placing these young people in good jobs. Only 42 percent of

dropouts participate in the labor force, compared to 65 percent of those with a high school education and 80 percent of those with a college degree.

Next week, when we have the opportunity to address education in the pending Senate appropriations bill, Democrats will offer amendments to address as many of these critical needs as possible.

I intend to offer an amendment to increase funding for title II of the Higher Education Act, to help communities recruit and train prospective teachers and put a qualified teacher in every classroom. In addition, I will offer an amendment to increase funding for skills training programs by \$792 million to ensure that the Nation's workers get the support they need in today's workplace.

Senator MURRAY will offer an amendment to continue the bipartisan commitment we have made over the last two years to help communities reduce class size in the early grades.

Senator HARKIN and Senator ROBB will offer an amendment to ensure that communities get the help they need to meet their most urgent repair and modernization problems.

Senator DODD will offer an amendment to increase funding for the 21st Century Learning Centers program, so that more children will have the opportunity to attend after-school activities.

Senator BINGAMAN will offer an amendment to help states turn around failing schools.

Senator REED will offer an amendment to increase funding for the GEAR UP program, so that more children will be able to attend college.

Other colleagues will offer additional amendments to increase the Nation's investment in education.

The time is now to invest more in education. The Nation's children and families deserve no less.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I will take a few moments on another subject, the issue of our Patients' Bill of Rights.

A short while ago, we had an opportunity to vote on the issues on a Patients' Bill of Rights. This was basically as a result of the fact that the conference in which we are involved had reached a dead end and was going nowhere. It wasn't only my assessment of that development, but the conclusion of a great number of the conferees as well, not just the Democrats, but also those who had supported an effective Patients' Bill of Rights in the House of Representatives, Dr. NORWOOD and Dr. GANSKE. We offered an amendment on the floor, and we failed by one vote.

Now we understand the Republicans have decided that effectively they are not going to participate with the Democrats at all. They are writing their own bill. We had indicated we were still willing to participate. We wanted to get a bill.

It is interesting that the 300 organizations that represent the doctors, the patients, the nurses, the health deliv-

ery community, have all been in support of our position. They have not had a single medical organization that has supported the position taken by the Republican leadership in the Senate.

When we talk about bipartisanship, I think we ought to do what the medical professions, the patient organizations, and common sense tell us to do—to listen to doctors and nurses who have had training and follow their recommendations, rather than accountants for HMOs. That is what this bill is basically about.

In the Patients' Bill of Rights, we have outlined the various areas where we think patients need protection. We have asked those who have not been supportive of our position to spell out which protections they don't wish to provide for the American people. One, for example, is to make sure all patients are going to be covered. That is a rather basic and fundamental issue. It shouldn't take a long time to debate and discuss that. The House bill provided for comprehensive coverage for all of the patients and holds plans accountable. That seems to be common sense. Again, that was in the bipartisan bill in the House of Representatives.

In the category of access for specialists, we see a situation where a child has cancer; we want to make sure the child will see a pediatric oncologist. They ought to be able to get the specialist. We certainly have that opportunity for Members of the Senate. We ought to be able to understand that. We should guarantee the specialists.

Access to clinical trials. We are in a period of great opportunities for breakthroughs in research. The only way that breakthroughs get from the laboratory to the patient is through clinical trials. We ought to guarantee it. We don't need to study the question of clinical trials.

Access to OB/GYNs. That is common sense.

Prohibition on gag rules. We are going to take the gag off our doctors who have been trained to provide the best in medicine. They shouldn't be gagged by accountants for HMOs.

Emergency room access, another area of importance.

These are some of the points that are guaranteed.

Perhaps some of these are protections that our Republican friends don't want to guarantee. We wish they would state which ones. Why do we have to do it behind closed doors? Why not come out here and say which ones they don't want to guarantee, have some votes in the Senate, and then get legislation passed?

However, we have been buried in the darkness of our offices. We ought to have an opportunity to have matters decided or stated. These protections should be available to every American. Those Members representing our side of the aisle are committed to that. Republicans and Democrats alike in the House of Representatives were in support of it. A third of the Republicans voted for that and a few courageous Republicans in this body supported that position as well.

We should get about the business of closing this legislation down. Every day it delays people are being hurt. It is wrong. We ought to get about doing the people's business and pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights.

To reiterate, the American people have waited more than 3 years for Congress to send the President a Patient's Bill of Rights that protects all patients and holds HMOs and other health plans accountable for their actions.

Every day that the conference on the Patient's Bill of Rights fails to produce agreement on meaningful patient protections, 60,000 more patients endure added pain and suffering. More than 40,000 patients report a worsening of their condition as a result of health plan abuses.

By all accounts, Republicans are working amongst themselves on the Patients' Bill of Rights. They are working in the middle of the night, behind closed doors, to produce a partisan bill that will surely fail the test of true reform. The crocodile tears were flowing from the eyes of the Senate Republican leadership on June 8 when we took the bipartisan, House-passed Managed Care Consensus Act to the floor for its first Senate vote. That legislation, which passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support last year, is a sensible compromise that extends meaningful protections to all patients and guarantees that health plans be held accountable when their abuses result in injury or death.

Democratic conferees sent a letter to Senator NICKLES on June 13. In that letter, we reiterated that we remained ready to negotiate on serious proposals that provide a basis for achieving strong, effective protections. But the assistant majority leader has not responded. The silence is deafening.

We have been forewarned of what to expect from a partisan bill. The Amer-

ican people won't stand for a sham bill, and we won't either.

Make no mistake. We want a bill that can be signed into law this year. There is not much time left. We need to act now.

The Republican leadership continues to refuse to guarantee meaningful protections to all Americans. They continue to delay and deny action on this critical issue. This debate is about real people. It's about women, children, and families.

The gap between the Senate Republican plan and the bipartisan legislation enacted by the House in the Norwood-Dingell bill is wide. And the intransigence of the Republican conferees is preventing adequate progress.

Republican conferees steadfastly refuse to cover all Americans. Their flawed approach leaves out two-thirds of those with private health insurance—more than 120 million Americans.

The Senate Republican leadership says no to farmers, truck drivers, police officers, teachers, home day care providers, fire fighters, and countless others who buy insurance on their own or work for state or local governments.

The bipartisan legislation that we support and which we voted on in the Senate on June 8 covers everyone. But the Republican leadership said no.

The protections in the House-passed bill are urgently needed by patients across the country. Yet, the Republican leadership is adopting the practice of delay and denial that HMOs so often use themselves to delay and deny patients the care they need.

It's just as wrong for Congress to delay and deny these needed reforms, as it is for HMOs to delay and deny needed care.

Congress can pass bipartisan legislation that provides meaningful protections for all patients and guarantees

accountability when health plan abuse results in injury or death. The question is, will we?

The American people are waiting for an answer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. FITZGERALD pertaining to the introduction of S. 2790 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FITZGERALD. I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m., June 27.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:56 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, June 27, 2000, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate June 26, 2000:

THE JUDICIARY

TAMAR MEEKINS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE HENRY F. GREENE, TERM EXPIRED.

GERALD FISHER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE RICHARD A. LEVIE, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAMES A. DALEY, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA, TO GRENADA, AND TO SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES.