

renewable resources that can help meet the energy demands of a world now numbering six billion people. Ironically, plants and trees are once again being valued as raw material for energy production because they contain an enormous store of energy freely delivered by the sun.

Using nature's renewable raw material for production of needed fuels, chemicals and energy is not a new idea. What is new, however, is a better understanding of chemistry and molecular biology which has led to the development of advanced biotechnologies and processing techniques for efficiently converting plants to energy. With these advances, it is now possible to envisage a future where the world's thirst for additional sources of energy is fueled by biomass.

Biobased fuels are our best means of reducing American dependence on imported oil. Reliance on the unstable states of the Middle East adversely impacts American strategic security, and massive oil imports skew our balance of payments. Fuels and chemicals derived from biomass will reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern oil without necessitating a rebuilding of the existing gasoline infrastructure. With the need for affordable energy rising as population grows, the Middle East will control nearly three-quarters of the world's oil this century. We have stark options: submit to increased influence of foreign oil cartels; wrangle over pipeline routes to new oil supplies at the ends of the Earth, such as the Caspian region; or, support research that could lead to a revolution in the way we produce energy.

In addition to fuels, biobased chemicals have the potential to replace essentially all chemicals currently derived from petroleum, and they are often endowed with superior performance characteristics. The manufacturing of biobased products is generally more environmentally friendly than analogue petrochemical processes.

Fuels, cloth fibers, plastics and adhesives are already produced from corn; the new genetic engineering techniques will make it possible to use entire plants, rather than just the tiny portion of edible grains. With sound land use policies, local crops that enrich the soil, prevent erosion and improve local environmental conditions can be planted and then harvested for co-production of food, fuel, chemicals, electricity and materials. Rural communities will be strengthened through the diversification of marketable agricultural products and farmers will have expanded sources of income.

Before we are able to reap the outstanding benefits offered through utilization of America's sustainable biomass resource, costs of the new conversion technology must be significantly reduced. Research offers the only systematic means for creating the innovations and technical improvements that will lower the costs of biomass processing. Given the relatively short-term

horizon characteristic of private sector investments, and because many benefits of biomass processing are in the public interest, the Federal government has a compelling mandate to fund the necessary innovation-driven research that will result in cost effective technologies for biomass conversion.

Although government sponsored research programs have been largely responsible for demonstrating the potential of biomass conversion technology, coordination among key Federal agencies is disjointed and funding levels are declining. The Biomass Research and Development Act is designed to address these shortcomings. America's leading technical experts from universities, national laboratories and the private sector will be brought together in a dynamic research initiative with the purpose of overcoming technical barriers to low cost biomass conversion.

At a time when political compromise seems elusive and progress on environmental and energy issues often seems slow, I am convinced that the idea of encouraging human ingenuity to create a sustainable resource for clean fuels and chemicals represents a remarkable opportunity for consensus. Working together we can promote research that will improve our national security and balance of payments, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen rural economies.

Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Joseph Michels, my science policy adviser, for the excellent advice he has provided me on this issue. Dr. Michels is leaving my staff to assume an important post at Princeton University. I shall miss him.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### JURISDICTIONAL CLARIFICATION

• Mr. LUGAR. I would like to enter into a colloquy with my distinguished colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I want to inform my colleague that any action taken by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry in relation to S. 935 is not an attempt to encroach on the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Further, the fact that S. 935 was reported from the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry does not affect the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources over energy matters, including biofuels and bioenergy. Specifically, USDA biomass research and development programs remain within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and DOE biomass research and development programs remain within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank my colleague, the Chairman of the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, for addressing this matter and clarifying our understanding that this

legislation does not alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

I would also like to note that the authorization of appropriations contained in section 3 of S. 935 clarifies that money may be appropriated for the biomass research and development activities described in the bill pursuant to the existing general authority of the Secretary of Energy to fund biomass research and development, and does not create a new specific level of authorization for this program.

Mr. LUGAR. I agree and thank the Senator from Alaska. •

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to, the committee substitute, as amended, be agreed to, the bill be read the third time and passed, the amendment to the title be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 2862) was agreed to.

The committee amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 935), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

The title was amended so as to read:

To authorize research to promote the conversion of biomass into biobased industrial products, and for other purposes.

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2000

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the hour of 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 1. I further ask consent that on Wednesday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of the proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate resume debate on the pending Robb amendment to S. 1134, the education savings account bill.

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

#### PROGRAM

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the Senate will resume consideration of the Robb amendment regarding school construction at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow. Following 30 minutes of debate, at approximately 10 a.m., the Senate will proceed to a vote on or in relation to the amendment. Senator ABRAHAM's amendment regarding computers will be introduced following the Robb vote. Other amendments will be offered and debated during tomorrow's session and therefore Senators can expect votes throughout the day.

Senators should be aware that an agreement to have all first-degree

amendments offered by 5 p.m. tomorrow is being discussed in an effort to complete action on this legislation as early as possible this week.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator REED of Rhode Island.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REED. I ask to speak pursuant to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

#### EDUCATION

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I will speak this evening on an issue of great importance to the country and every family in America. That is the issue of education.

For the past 4 months, the Republicans and Democrats on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee have been working to come up with a bipartisan approach to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Sadly, those efforts have collapsed and we are being presented with a Republican bill, the Straight A's Act, which is essentially a block granting of critical programs and the amassing of Federal resources to be distributed with little accountability by the States.

This issue is of great importance because education is what I believe is fueling the great economic progress we are making today. The 5-percent growth in productivity in the last quarter recognizes the combination of American technology, which is a product of our ideas, our education, and the skills and talents of the American people that have been forged in the classrooms of America.

Just as importantly, this recognition of the centrality and importance of education is shared by every American because they the mothers and fathers of this country, recognize that the future of their families, the future of their children, are dependent almost exclusively on how well they are educated. As a result, we cannot take lightly the proposals that are before the Senate with regard to the educational policy of the United States.

There are some who do not think the National Government has a role in edu-

cation. I disagree. We recognize, of course, the primacy of States and localities in terms of forging educational policy, but we do have a role at the national level. We have a role of providing both encouragement and support for local innovation and also support to overcome local inertia.

We have seen that played out throughout our history. We have seen a situation where years ago the States were inattentive to the needs of low-income students, particularly minority students. That is one of the primary impulses for the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have seen in the past where States were indifferent to the education of students with disabilities, and we acted properly and appropriately to do that. So we do have this national role and we have to carry it out conscientiously, recognizing that public education is the bulwark of our society and our country.

Ninety percent of our students attend public schools. Public schools offer not only educational benefits but are the devices that bring us together, the common ground, the area in which one can enter and prepare to seize the opportunities of life without regard to race, creed, or ethnicity.

It is this public education system that we must enhance, reform, and reinvigorate. I argue that the approach to do that is not through block grants. The approach is a careful consideration of the appropriate Federal initiatives, both in terms of resources and in terms of programs, that will help stimulate reform at the local level and help overcome the inertia and the political gridlock we see every day at the localities and at the States just as they see on certain issues in Washington.

Again, I yield, as do all my colleagues, that the Federal Government is the junior partner in this partnership for education in America. We supply roughly 7 percent of all the resources; the States, the cities, and the towns supply 93 percent of the resources. However, we can do much, particularly in the area of focusing assistance on the neediest children and also, as I said before, to help invigorate our school system, to help accelerate reform.

Money isn't everything; it is vitally important, but we also need a sense of direction or purpose, of national statements about what is critical to the Nation as well as critical to localities and to States. That, too, is part and parcel to our deliberations about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

We should be providing resources for local communities. One of the problems with the educational policy in the United States is it is tied so closely to property tax that we can witness situations where good school systems, particularly school systems in urban areas that were models of efficiency and expertise decades ago, have fallen on hard times because their property base has evaporated. People have moved to the suburbs; the industries have left the

central city and moved out. We can help, and we do that principally through title I programs.

Again, as we help with resources at the local level, we cannot give up the idea also that we have to provide this spark of innovation, the spark of reform that is so critical to the efforts. I believe also that this is recognized by many people at the State and local level, that our Goals 2000 initiative several years ago helped essentially start a reform process that was inchoate at the State and local level and many places that needed resources, even if there was a sense of reform. This effort, this identification of reform together with resources helped stimulate productive efforts that are improving the quality of education. But I also would say we have a long way to go before we can satisfy ourselves that every student in America, every child in America, has access to excellent public schools. That should be our goal, a goal we must insist upon.

Again, I am disappointed that efforts over the last several months to try to forge bipartisan compromise on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have failed, apparently, for the moment. Tomorrow in the committee we begin to debate a legislative proposal that is simply abdicating the responsibilities of the National Government to the States without any real accountability. That is a wrong approach.

We have seen that because we have seen what the States have done in contrast to what the Federal Government has done in some critical areas of concern. I am not trying to suggest there is any type of nefarious plot at the States, but we all have to recognize they are under very special pressures in terms of allocating funds, in terms of local problems, a host of local issues that complicate their politics, and we have an opportunity sometimes to avoid those internecine fights that go on and provide direction that they welcome and they, in fact, in many cases expect.

One aspect of this debate about Federal versus State perspectives is a report prepared by the General Accounting Office in 1998. It was found Federal aid was seven times more targeted to poor students than State programs overall. It found our effort to reach out and help low-income students was disproportionately greater than State efforts. I think you have to ask yourself, logically, had we not acted in 1965 with title I, and in Congresses subsequent to that date to help out low-income students, both in center-city areas and in rural areas, would they enjoy the limited success they have had to date? I am not suggesting we succeeded in that arena.

I suggest you might find that same proportion of funding, those who are politically powerful in States, those suburban areas, those areas that themselves with property tax can fund schools, would do much better. In fact,