

where we put our resources and where we might expect the best benefits for society. This great American in our founding days said: You will always get the best interest when you invest in knowledge.

Later in the discussions there will be ample opportunity for Senators to assess the performance of the school systems across America and what is happening to our children—not everywhere but some places; not to all children but to substantial numbers by way of our desire to give them the basic skills with which to perform as students, as growing Americans, and ultimately as adults in our society, which is requiring more and more that people be skilled of mind, their cognitive skills be developed to the highest extent possible.

The President of the United States, in suggesting reform of the educational system, also suggested with that reform there should be a substantial increase in the level of funding by the Federal Government. The President suggested we spend \$44.5 billion for the Department of Education. That is an 11.5-percent increase over last year, but it is also \$1 billion in new funding for a new reading program for young children, tied into the reform measures that we will talk about as the bill proceeds.

It increases special education funding to a Federal share of 17 percent. That is 17 of the 40 percent we have committed. It is the highest proportional share by the Federal Government in the history of the program. It doesn't do justice to our original commitment of 40, but for a 1-year add-on to the program, it is substantial. It provides \$2.6 billion in the area of teacher quality funds. That is a 17-percent increase. It provides a \$½ billion increase for title I grants to serve disadvantaged children.

There is already bipartisan discussion between the committee members and the President. There will be a lot of discussion as to how to change the underlying laws we have had on the books for a long time, the bill that provides most of the funding for education and how that will be changed.

The Senate will begin debate on a new act which is going to be called the Better Education For Students and Teachers Act. I will take a few moments to talk about my specific input which I will offer to the Senate.

Americans and New Mexicans are concerned. Their highest priority is education. Second, most Americans and most New Mexicans are worried about what is happening to the character and the morals of our society, of our culture. That seems to be almost the second most important issue around. I will be offering on the floor what will be called the Strong Character for Strong Schools Act.

It is important to note that reform does not only apply to math, science, and reading. While the current debate is centered on reform, our bill simply

encourages the creation of character education programs at the State and local level by providing grants to eligible entities. The bill builds upon a highly successful demonstration program to increase character education contained in last year's ESEA bill.

Since 1994, the Department of Education has granted seed money to some of our school systems to develop character education programs. Currently, there are 36 States that have either received some Federal funding or on their own have enacted laws encouraging or mandating character education. Thus, the time is now to ensure that there will be a permanent and dedicated funding source made available for character education programs.

When we first look at character education, questions are asked. What is it? Will it work? Will teachers want to do it? I will cite an example of how it is being done in my State under a program called the Six Pillars of Good Character. I will read the words that equate to the six pillars and discuss it. The words are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. These were developed a few years ago when a large group of Americans, under the leadership of a foundation in the United States that brought them together to talk about good character, the Josephsen Institute for Ethics, essentially a foundation that promoted ethics, was specific in coming up with six pillars of character.

In my State, we have the largest number of public schools at the grade school level, junior high level, of any State in the Union that has incorporated these six pillars into the daily education of our children. The teachers love it. It empowers them to do some things they have always wanted to do. There are lesson plans that help them get across these six pillars as part of the normal education of our children.

It is a joy to go to a school and see what is occurring in the hallways of the school. They chose one of the pillars of character for each month. If you go to the school when they chose "responsibility," you will see the hallways laden with posters that contain ideas and events about responsibility. At the end of the month, they get together and talk about that pillar. You will see the most enthusiastic group of teachers and young people discussing what happened during that month with respect to encouraging responsibility and understanding of it and actions based upon it.

Without telling the Senate how that got started, it is a glimpse of what can happen across America if we continue to encourage this kind of character education and ask more and more of our States to get involved and encourage them but not order them to do this.

I thank Senator DODD for his leadership. Since the departure of Senator Nunn, he has joined with me in promoting the encouraging startup funding for character education in the United States.

In addition to that measure, Senator KENNEDY will join me in a bill which will address itself to mental health needs in our schools. Essentially, it will say the mental health resources not in the school but which are in the community and are public should be used in collaboration with the schools for the counselors and for the young people. I think that bill will find general acceptance in the Senate and is something we ought to encourage.

The third amendment I will introduce with a number of cosponsors has to do with the recruitment and retention of teachers. Rather than detailing this, I will do so when I introduce the amendment. It is obvious we need teacher recruitment and teacher development. We will promote this idea by advocating teacher recruitment and development retention centers within our States for the exchange of names to provide a program in the country on a purely voluntary grant basis where there would be internships by budding teachers with senior teachers known for their quality and competency, thus permitting a number of young Americans to have a half year or year service as an intern with an educator before they are placed in the classroom.

I think it is going to be a worthwhile debate. There are many participating from the committee in the Senate. I do not happen to be on that committee, but I will participate to the maximum extent so these three amendments and ideas will be incorporated in amendments that will be offered on the floor.

I know Senator SMITH is waiting and I have exceeded my time, so I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, under the time allotted to Senator THOMAS I yield myself 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

#### HONORING THOSE LOST IN THE JOINT TASK FORCE FOR FULL ACCOUNTING HELICOPTER CRASH

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, in early April, April 6 to be exact, the Senate recessed. The following day, April 7, a Saturday, a helicopter, in the fog, crashed into the side of a mountain in Vietnam. In that crash, seven American military personnel were killed as were nine Vietnamese. It is a grim yet a vivid reminder of the fact that every day American servicemen throughout the world are serving their country in harm's way. Even though the Nation is not at war, we sometimes forget these men and women put their lives on the line for us.

I want to share with the Senate what these men were doing. These men were searching for the remains of American missing personnel, MIAs from the Vietnam war. These young men volunteered for this job and put their lives

on the line to find answers for the families of those who are missing.

In a statement issued April 7 by the National Alliance of Families expressing their sympathy to the families, the National Alliance of Families said:

We extend our sincere condolences to the families of these service members and hope they will be comforted by the fact that their loved ones will always be remembered for their commitment to finding our loved ones.

I just came back about 45 minutes ago from a memorial service at Fort Myer for those seven Americans and their nine Vietnamese counterparts. To sit there with some of the families of those missing was difficult. But, again, it is a reminder of what these men and women in uniform do, all across the world. I honor them today in the Senate by letting the American people know who they are. These are not anonymous people; these are real people with, now, real grieving widows, real grieving mothers and fathers.

The members on board were members of the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy. To be specific, there were three members of the U.S. Army, three members of the U.S. Air Force, and one Navy personnel. They were black, they were Hispanic, they were Caucasian—they were Americans. They were American military. They were: Army LTC Rennie Melville Cory, Jr., of Oklahoma City, OK; LTC George D. Martin III of Hopkins, SC; and SFC Tommy James Murphy of Georgia—hometown not available; they were Air Force MAJ Charles E. Lewis of Las Cruces, NM; MSG Steven L. Moser of San Diego, CA; and TSgt Robert M. Flynn of Huntsville, AL; they were Navy CPO Pedro Juan Gonzalez of Buckeye, AZ—real people, real Americans.

I used to teach high school, and oftentimes I would be amazed at the heroes some of our young people sought out—many in the athletic world, some in the world of entertainment, some whom I might not have picked as heroes. But if you are looking for heroes to admire, here they are, seven of them, who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty to search for the remains of American men and women missing from the Vietnam war. What an honor to serve your country in that capacity.

At least five times that I can recall, I as a Member of either the Congress or the Senate had the opportunity to visit Vietnam—indeed, fly on maybe the same helicopter, but certainly similar helicopters with Vietnamese pilots. We flew all over Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, flying these missions, trying to find answers for POWs and MIAs. These wonderful people who make these sacrifices—long days, weeks away from their families, on the ground, sifting through dirt, trying to find remains, looking at wreckage, digging into the files and the archives—whatever it takes, they are out there doing it day in and day out with very few accolades.

I honor them today by simply saying thank you. Thank you for caring enough to search for your colleagues

and comrades in arms who are missing. Thank you for serving your country. Thank you for making the ultimate sacrifice doing it. I also thank the families, those who survive, who will now endure this pain.

It is special with me because I have also endured it. When I was 3 years old my father, who served in World War II, died in the service of his country in a military aircraft accident. My mother, as a widow, raised me and my brother for all those years.

These are heroes. These were members of what is called the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting. I ask all of us, my colleagues in the Senate and the American people who are listening, tonight, when you put your head down, you might just remember these men in your prayers and say thank you from a grateful nation for your service.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### THE EDUCATION BILL

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I know there have been a number, more or less, of opening statements or statements with regard to education in America in the hope that we can move forward on a very important education reform bill that has been requested by President Bush and has been worked on in our Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. The bill was reported out overwhelmingly some months ago.

At that point, negotiations began between Republicans on the committee, Democrats on the committee, and the administration. I had the impression that good progress had been made. That is as it should be. Education is a very high priority in America with the President and with the Congress but, most importantly, with the American people.

I have stated in this Chamber many times before how importantly I view education. In my State of Mississippi, we are struggling mightily to improve the quality of our education to make sure that quality education is available to all of our students. We are truly working on the idea that no child should be left behind.

We had a \$100 million contribution from Jim and Sally Barksdale for fourth grade reading only in my State.

We are now at a point where we have 50 schools that have been approved for the Power-Up Program where students from the fifth grade to the eighth grade have access to privately donated computers with specifically trained teachers on how to teach these children to use them to learn to read. This pro-

gram allows them to become computer literate and improve their reading skills.

Now we have unique programs in my State for fourth graders, and fifth through the eighth grade for reading alone. We are focusing on where there is a tremendous need. That story can be replicated all across America.

In addition to that, I am a son of a schoolteacher. She taught for 19 years before she got into bookkeeping and eventually into radio announcing. So I care a lot about education.

I worked for the University of Mississippi in placement and in the financial office for the alumni association and for the law school placement bureau. I have been involved in working with guidance counselors and teachers and promoting education generally. I care mightily about this.

As a Member of Congress for 29 years, I have watched us try to have a constructive role from the Federal level with the States and local school officials. We have put billions of dollars into trying to be helpful from the Federal level. The number is well over \$130-plus billion for title I since I think 1965.

As we poured more and more money from the Federal level into local education, the test scores have continued to slide downward. There is something missing. Money alone is not the answer. Money is part of the answer. We need to put more funds at the local, State, and Federal level into education, but we need more than that. We need fundamental reform. We need flexibility. We need accountability. We need to make sure the children are learning to read and to do math. We need to know we are getting results for the efforts that are put into this important area of education.

We need to make sure teachers have the training they need to do the job, and that there are more and better programs to make sure we have teachers who have been taught how to teach the use of computers. We have computers in backs of classrooms and in hallways that aren't being used because they do not have teachers who are trained or qualified to teach their usage. We need more progress for our teachers. We need accountability for teachers.

Testing is something I have struggled with a little bit. We need to have a way to know how our students are doing. I worry about a national testing system. But the President has convinced me that there must be some sort of testing mechanism with a lot of local discretion, and it must occur regularly, not just sporadically.

There is much we can do in this area. I had been prepared to and have been under the impression that we were going to be able to move on the education reform package on Monday of this week. But there was an objection to the motion to proceed. My attitude was, fine, we will begin talking about the issue and emphasize its importance, and surely we can go to the bill