

with the status quo when it comes to educating our children, and should always be looking for better ways to educate.

If something doesn't work, you change it. Fear of improvement or a fresh approach is no reason to continue to shortchange our kids. By requiring the States to test children, this bill maintains another crucial aspect of our educational system—local control.

Some of my colleagues might remember last year when President Clinton took a tour around the country to promote one of his education proposals. Some of the Washington bureaucrats put together a map of his tour that included a stop in Owensboro, KY.

Of course the map and the PR material they put out about the President's trip to Owensboro showed it being in the middle of Tennessee, and actually lopped off the western part of Kentucky and gave it to Illinois.

That is just a funny little mistake, but it demonstrates my point that Washington does not know best.

I definitely trust folks in western Kentucky—who know where Owensboro really is—to educate our Kentucky kids than officials who work here at the Department of Education.

I already talked a little bit about block grants and about how they'll work. I'm also glad that the legislation strengthens the successful ED-Flex Program and I hope it eventually includes the important straight A's Program.

Those are crucial parts of this bill that guarantee local control and the best possible results. Under the President's plan, States test kids in grades 3–8 in reading and math. States are responsible for creating the tests as well as setting performance goals and creating a plan for ensuring that all of their students are proficient on their statewide tests within 10 years. Additionally, States will also administer a national test, called the National Assessment of Educational Progress in grades 4 and 8, to make sure all students across the country are not being cheated out of a good, positive education.

By protecting the role of State boards of education, we help ensure that local communities can play their traditional role in instructing our children. And just to make sure that the work gets done, the Federal Government will foot the bill for these testing procedures by paying for half of the cost of the statewide tests, and the full cost of the national assessment test.

Local education agencies will be held to the same standards of improving student achievement, and will face similar consequences if they fail. Just as students have to pay a penalty if they fail, so should teachers and schools if they fail in their responsibilities. Education is a serious business. There should be real consequences for failing our kids. We trust schools and educators with our kids' futures, and there is no reason why they shouldn't

be called to task for the results. Personally, I think that one of the most effective parts in this bill is the provision that gives children the power to change schools if their school fails them. To sum it up, in this legislation the money follows the kids. If a child escapes a failing school, the money used to help educate them follows them to an institution that works.

I support completely the choice of schools for children. I think it is the best way to give schools an incentive to do a good job. Competition is the way to ensure the best results when it comes to markets and practically every other part of our society. But for some reason, when it comes to education and our kids the opponents of choice say no. I don't know why the opponents of choice think that it won't work for kids and schools. I believe that this cheats our neediest students and takes power away from them. I look forward to this part of the debate. But even if we don't succeed in giving complete freedom of choice to students, the fact that this bill gives students in public institutions the power to change their schools is a dramatic improvement over the status quo.

In conclusion, I urge support for the bill. The legislation before us presents an important choice to us: Do we continue with the status quo, or do we take an important step in improving education for children, and ensuring a bright future for them? Do we listen to those who sing the tired old songs about more money and more money, or do we opt for real reform and accountability? I, for one, will vote to improve education and for a fresh start for our kids. I urge support for this legislation before us today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I was not here when the order came for my 5 minutes in a unanimous consent agreement. I ask unanimous consent I be allowed 5 minutes now, and any time I get be added to the Democratic side. I will be very brief.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator may proceed.

THE BUDGET RESOLUTION AND UNINSURED AMERICANS

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I have come to this Chamber in the past to express my frustration when things have not seemed to be proceeding and we seemed to have been stuck in gridlock. Today is a very real exception to that feeling. I rejoice that we have a budget agreement, and that we are working on education reform that puts serious resources behind serious reform in our educational system.

I am here as well to thank the leaders of the conference committee on the Budget, specifically Senator DOMENICI and Senator LOTT on our side, and oth-

ers in the House and Senate who have, I am told, preserved the one thing I wanted most in this budget, which was a \$28 billion authorization for 3 years to expand health care to the uninsured.

I came to this issue not this year, but from the first year I entered public life as an Oregon State senator and won membership on our health care committee. I was not around when we created the Oregon Health Plan, but I did play a role in obtaining funding for it. The Oregon's Medicaid program, known as the Oregon Health Plan, has dramatically reduced the number of the working uninsured in the State of Oregon.

We have a tradition in our State of trying to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. I express gratitude to my colleagues on the Democrat and Republican side for this budget agreement that will help our State and others do just that.

I believe we need tax reduction and tax reform. I think we are going to do something very significant in our generation with what we will likely adopt very soon in this body and the other, and that President Bush will sign. It will put real dollars into the pockets of working Americans.

But I must say how grateful I am that this budget item has been preserved—\$28 billion for the uninsured—because while we cut taxes for Americans, it is also appropriate that we care for those who cannot care for themselves.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent an editorial from the Washington Post of this morning entitled "Timeout for the Uninsured" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, May 2, 2001]

TIMEOUT FOR THE UNINSURED

House conferees have been fighting with their Senate counterparts to reduce the spending levels in the congressional budget resolution. No doubt some cuts can be made in the Senate totals without the country's suffering harm. But at least one relatively minor Senate proposal deserves to remain.

Oregon Sens. Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden won inclusion in the budget of an additional \$28 billion over three years to reduce the number of Americans without health insurance. The money would mainly be spent on lower-income people. Exactly how would be up to the authorizing committees, but an add-on of some kind to Medicaid and/or the children's health insurance program that Congress enacted several years ago seems most likely. The modest expansion would hardly solve the un-insurance problem, but it would push in the right direction.

About a seventh of the population remains uninsured. Most are poor or near poor. They lack insurance mainly because they can't afford it. The administration has proposed a tax credit to help those whose employers don't offer insurance. But the credit would cover only part of the cost of an average policy, and most uninsured families still would find such a policy beyond their means. Some people think the industry might respond by offering only partial policies, but it's not clear that would be a good result, either.

The administration proposal has some interesting features and would do limited good, but limited is the operative word. The spending programs for the lower-income uninsured have shown themselves to be efficient ways of increasing coverage. Whatever the fate of the tax credit, they should be expanded. Much attention has lately been paid to the health care problems of the already insured. The elderly lack a drug benefit; people enrolled in managed care complain that care is sometimes sacrificed to cost. But at least these people have insurance. More than 40 million don't. The budget argument this year has been mainly about how large a tax cut to give the better-off. What about a timeout to pay a little heed to those who can't afford to get sick?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. The Washington Post editorial states:

House conferees have been fighting with their Senate counterparts to reduce the spending levels in the congressional budget resolution. No doubt some cuts can be made in the Senate totals without the country's suffering harm. But at least one relatively minor Senate proposal deserves to remain.

They are referring to this \$28 billion that we can use to reduce the ranks of the uninsured. Currently that is about 17 percent of our fellow citizens, over 43 million Americans.

Senator WYDEN and I, when we came up with this idea, hoped we could cut this number in half. It is now up to the Finance Committee to achieve that. They have the money now authorized to accomplish that.

Good programs do exist for providing health care to the uninsured. Medicaid, as we all know, is working. It needs more resources. There is also the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, which has also reduced the number of uninsured children in this country.

One of the things I was most grateful to have been a part of when I first came to the Senate was a compromise between Senator HATCH and Senator KENNEDY for the CHIP program, which became the pivot point for the balanced budget agreement. Oregon's Children's Health Insurance Assistance Program has enrolled 13,000 children in our State. But there are more than 61,000 eligible children without coverage because of the limited amount of money budgeted for this purpose. Senator WYDEN and I hope the Finance Committee will expand this program to include their parents.

What we are doing is providing access to health care for low-income Americans. This is the No. 1 bipartisan agenda item we have. We have started on that plan and will build on its past successes.

I believe expanding coverage can be done in a way that will promote State flexibility, avoid new bureaucracies, and protect the employer-based coverage system, while providing a meaningful, affordable benefit to millions of Americans.

Our first component that we will propose to the Finance Committee will be to give businesses incentives to make quality health insurance more affordable for their low-income workers. Our

plan will give businesses a tax credit if they chip in more to offer quality health care to their low-income employees. Many low-wage employees are working hard but are having trouble paying the full amount for health insurance.

Second, our plan will extend Medicaid coverage to more low-income Americans. Many low-income adults who cannot afford or are not offered health insurance will be eligible for Medicaid coverage. As I indicated, we want to expand the CHIP program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

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

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. We believe that expanding health insurance to millions of hard working low-income Americans will relieve the uncertainty and fear many people face, knowing that they are one illness away from losing their life savings or their home. It is the right thing to do. It is the right time to do it.

As the editorial in the Washington Post says:

What about a timeout to pay a little heed to those who can't afford to get sick?

I thank my colleagues on the budget conference committee for preserving this critical line item for the uninsured. I urge all my colleagues to vote for it when it comes out of this conference and then later when it is crafted into final form by the Finance Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, yesterday the President of the United States gave a very broad outline of a new national security strategy that moves away from the reliance on deterrence and arms control towards missile defenses and unilateral arms reductions.

Frankly, the President's brief remarks raise more questions than they answer. I wanted to take a few minutes to address in this Chamber some of the key issues he touched on yesterday.

First, the President stressed that we must move away from our reliance on deterrence to keep our citizens and our allies safe from aggression or from nuclear blackmail. While I agree that in principle we want to find alternative methods of being able to protect ourselves from the potential of nuclear blackmail or terrorism, the hard reality is that there will always be a measure of deterrence in any approach we find with respect to the prevention

of attack or maintaining the security of the United States of America.

If there is a real potential of a rogue nation—and I underscore "if" there is a real potential of a rogue nation—firing a few missiles at any city in the United States, responsible leadership requires the most thoughtful steps possible to prevent losses as a consequence thereof.

The same is true of accidental launch. If at some point in time, God forbid, there were to be an accidental launch of a nuclear missile, the notion that any country in the world, if technology were available, should be subject to that possibility would be unacceptable. All of us in the civilized world need to take steps to try to protect ourselves against the potential of that ever happening.

Let me make it clear. The rogue missile rationale that has been offered on many occasions really merits much greater analysis than many people have given it. For a state to develop a missile capacity, it would require some measure of testing, some measure of actual deployment, such as we have seen in North Korea with its Taepo Dong 2. It would also require a launch site and capacity, all of which are detectable by the United States, all of which are traceable over a period of time.

If, indeed, a state is to such a degree a rogue state that we think its leadership might be in a position of firing one or two rogue missiles at the United States, we ought to also think beyond that as to what they would be inviting as a response. Clearly, one or two missiles clearly traceable, obviously coming from a particular rogue state, would invite their annihilation.

So when we measure threats, we don't just measure capacity to be able to do something. We measure the intent to do something. We measure the consequences of somebody doing something. Indeed, Saddam Hussein, who possessed weapons of mass destruction, saw fit not to use those weapons of mass destruction when we went to war against him, even when he was losing the war. The reason that he didn't was because, Secretary Baker made it patently clear what would happen to them if they did.

Even the most unreasonable, most demonized of leaders still calculates risk and still calculates the repercussions of his actions.

Indeed, our military, in making a judgment about the different tiers of threat we face, places the threat of a rogue missile attack at the very bottom of threats the United States might face.

Here we are in a debate about education and we are being told we are not sure we have enough money for education; we are not sure we have enough money for alternative and renewable fuels; we are not sure we have enough money for a prescription drug program for seniors; we are not sure we have