

and Sweden—to comply with their Hague Convention obligations.

In response to these efforts, an American-German working group on child custody issues has been established. While this group has made some progress in handling future cases of child abduction, momentum seems to have slowed, and essentially no progress has been made regarding the open cases, either in the return of children to the United States or in allowing left-behind parents adequate visits with their children.

To that end, I believe we simply must not allow Germany or any signatory nation to ignore their convention obligations and turn blindly against the parents who have suffered unbelievable heartache because of the loss of their children.

Ultimately, we cannot understate nor can we ignore the importance of getting these children returned to their homes in the United States. We must make the return of all internationally abducted children a top foreign policy priority.

This is obviously not a partisan issue. Rather, this is a humanitarian issue, an ethical issue, an issue about children and how we can reunite families. I urge my colleagues to support efforts to bring these children home. Ultimately, the great tragedy is not the loss that these parents feel. The great tragedy is that there are children growing up without a parent who wants to be a loving parent but who, because of illegal action of the other parent, no longer can see that child. That is a tragic loss for the child.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I do note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business. The Senator may proceed.

HISTORICAL CHANGES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this has been a historic week in Washington, DC. For the first time in the history of the Senate there has been a change in the leadership of the Senate because of the decision of one Senator to become an Independent and to join the other side of the aisle in forming a new majority. As a result of the decision of Senator JEFFORDS of Vermont, Senator TOM DASCHLE of South Dakota is now the majority leader. The President pro tempore of the Senate is one of the most venerable Members in the history of the Senate, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia. We have also created

a position of President pro tempore emeritus for Senator STROM THURMOND of South Carolina.

Most are aware of the fact that Senator STROM THURMOND breaks a Senate record every day of service. He is 98 years old. This week he went to Bedford, VA, where they noted the anniversary of the D-day invasion on June 6, 1944. Senator STROM THURMOND, at the age of 41, volunteered to fly a glider behind enemy lines in the D-day invasion. It is a great tribute to him that the President asked him to join in the opening of the new memorial to D-day in Bedford, VA. We are very proud of Senator THURMOND and his service to our country. It is an extraordinary story. A man who was 41 years of age on that day still serves his Nation in the State of South Carolina in the Senate.

If this were just a matter of changing titles and the nameplates on offices, one might say what happened this week in the Senate has little bearing on the families across America and their immediate concerns. However, I believe on this side of the aisle there will be changes of great significance to families across the United States.

We are in the midst of debating an education bill. This could easily be one of the most significant pieces of legislation this year. It is a bipartisan bill, supported by President Bush, as well as the Democratic and Republican congressional leaders.

The object of this bill is to modernize the schools of America to prepare them for the 21st century, to make certain that kids going to school in my home State of Illinois or New Jersey or any State across the Nation have a chance for the very best education.

I was really encouraged this week when the Senate agreed to an amendment I offered to increase the money for math and science education. Sadly, in comparison to many countries around the world, the United States does not do its best when it comes to teaching our kids math and science. When you look at the fields of endeavor where the United States is succeeding, particularly in the areas of science and medical research and high technology, math and science are absolutely essential. So this bill will focus not just on reading skills, which are the bedrock of any good education, but also on improving math and science skills for our kids, making certain the teachers standing in the front of the classroom are really qualified to teach the subject so they can energize and excite young students in the fields of math and science.

This bill also calls for accountability, testing of students to make sure they are making progress, investing back in the schools so they can improve their performance.

This week, in Chicago, IL, Mayor Daley announced that Paul Vallas, who has been the leader of the Chicago public school system and its CEO for more than 5 years, is going to move on. Paul

Vallas leaves an extraordinary record in the city of Chicago. He took what was dubbed the Nation's worst school system and has turned it into arguably one of the best of any major city. They stopped social promotion. They started investing in schools—smaller class sizes, better teachers, a new sense of excitement, testing—and if the kids cannot pass the test, they are offered 6 weeks in summer school to catch up. If they still can't pass it, they repeat the grade so they are not pushed along to the next grade, really creating a fiction, when they are handed the diploma, where many of them in years gone by could not even read.

We want every school district to move forward, not just for the wealthiest but for all of our Nation. That is really the hallmark of American democracy, the commitment to public education, the notion that whether you are rich or poor, black, white, brown, a young boy, a young girl, whether you are native born or immigrant, that you have a chance to get an education and a chance to succeed. It says more about America than anything. That is in the pending bill.

When this bill is finished, we are going to move to the Patients' Bill of Rights. What is that all about? The question of who will make medical decisions, your doctor or your insurance company. If the doctor says the best thing for you or someone in your family is a certain medical procedure, we want that doctor's decision to be the last word, not that of a clerk in an insurance company somewhere who is reading from a manual and looking at the bottom line of the quarterly report for the insurance company. We want somebody who is making that decision in your best interest and your family's best interest.

The Patients' Bill of Rights has been an issue that should have been resolved years ago in the Senate, but it was not. With the new Democratic leadership of Senator TOM DASCHLE and a bipartisan effort involving Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a Republican of Arizona, Senator JOHN EDWARDS, a Democrat of North Carolina, and, of course, Senator TED KENNEDY of Massachusetts, we have a chance to pass this bill. I think that is a step forward.

We also want to increase the minimum wage. This used to be an item that was not even debated on Capitol Hill. Regularly we would take a look at the minimum wage and recognize we have to say to the people who are working at the lowest end of the economic spectrum that they have a chance to keep up with inflation. But our minimum wage has been stuck at \$5.15 for years.

In my home State of Illinois, 400,000 people got up this morning and went to work for \$5.15 an hour, many of them working two and three jobs just to keep their families together. We can improve and increase the minimum wage, and we should.

These issues, whether it is prescription drug benefits under Medicare, Patients' Bill of Rights so doctors make decisions for our health care, an increase in the minimum wage, improvement in education—that will be part of our agenda as we return here next week with the new majority leader, TOM DASCHLE. It is an exciting opportunity.

Having said that, we are still a body of 100 Members where, on a good day, the Democrats can muster a majority of 51 votes. So it is obvious we need bipartisanship; we need cooperation. But I hope this change in the leadership in the Senate will open up our eyes to an array of opportunities that have been missed over the last several years, opportunities to provide better schools, more health care, to give a voice to consumers and families in securing appropriate medical treatment, to give those who are struggling to go to work every day and make a living a chance to succeed in America.

It is a pretty heady agenda; it is pretty challenging; but I think we can rise to that occasion. I look forward to being part of it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak out of order for not to exceed 30 minutes.

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

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SENATE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, seeing the current Presiding Officer, the very distinguished senior Senator from Illinois, in the chair reminds me of the days when I first came to this Chamber. At that time, representing the great State of Illinois was the inimitable Everett Dirksen, with his unruly, one might say unkempt—at least in appearance—hair, his florid and flowery oratory, his mellifluous voice, a master at painting word pictures: Everett Dirksen. I can see him standing there. He was the minority leader. And then on this side of the aisle, in the next row behind me and across the aisle, sat the other Senator from the State of Illinois, Paul Douglas: Learned, also a great orator, very impressive—the two Senators from Illinois.

Illinois is continuing in that tradition of Dirksen and Douglas. It sends to the Senate the Senator who presently presides, RICHARD DURBIN, formerly a Member of the House of Representatives, who served there with distinction on the Appropriations Com-

mittee, who comes to the Senate Chamber very well equipped, indeed, well equipped by experience, well equipped by heredity, a factor never to be overlooked, a factor which in some ways lays out the destiny of each of us ahead of our years, who also is a very fine speaker, one who does his homework, who likes service to the people.

Then there is Senator FITZGERALD. I believe he is the youngest Senator in today's Chamber, who came to the U.S. Senate, I believe, as a former member of the Senate of the State of Illinois. I hope I am correct. If I am not, I hope the Presiding Officer will indicate by nod that I am in error.

In any event, I express appreciation to the Senator who presently presides for his patience in awaiting my tardy arrival.

I sat in the chair earlier today as the President pro tempore of the Senate, having been elected to that honor by my colleagues, first of all, on this side of the aisle, and then all of my colleagues through a Senate resolution.

Senators are not to speak from the chair. If compliments are to be directed to the Chair or criticism is to be directed to the Chair, the Chair is not supposed to respond. The Chair is only to respond when called upon by way of a parliamentary inquiry or, if necessary, to make a ruling on a point of order. And, of course, it is his or her responsibility to maintain order in the chair. The Chair has the responsibility to maintain, or to restore if necessary, order in the galleries, or in the Senate Chamber, without being called upon by a Senator from the floor. It is the Chair's responsibility to maintain order in the Senate, and the Chair should not await a call by a Senator from the floor for order and decorum; the Chair has that responsibility.

As I sat there earlier today—we, of course, can't call attention to visitors in the galleries. But there are visitors in the galleries. And as I sat in the chair earlier today watching the visitors in the galleries, I reflected. It is a good time to reflect when one is in the chair and nothing is going on on the floor at a given moment and when no Senator is speaking. It is an excellent time for reflection. As I reflected on the silent audience that sits every day in these galleries—I reflected upon the fact that there in those galleries sit the people—our auditors—the people who send us here, the people who pay us our salaries. Silently they sit viewing the Senate, pondering what is said by Senators, watching over our shoulders. They are always there.

Sometimes we may be prone to forget that the people are watching, but they are watching. There in the galleries rests the sovereignty of all that is the Government of this Republic.

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this past weekend I noted an article in the

Washington Post that led with these lines:

Administration officials preparing an alternative to the 1997 global warming agreement that President Bush disavowed in March are focusing on voluntary measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions—an approach unacceptable to most U.S. allies in Europe and Japan.

Mr. President, last month, I came to this floor to urge the Bush administration not to abandon the progress of the multiyear international negotiations on global climate change. In particular, I urged this administration not to endanger many of the gains that the United States has made in recent years as it has tried to forge a workable, responsible international climate change agreement. So I welcome the subsequent announcement by administration officials that they intend to participate in talks on the Kyoto Protocol scheduled to take place in Bonn, Germany, in July. But an insistence on the part of the United States strictly on voluntary measures would certainly place in jeopardy such gains and would, I believe, undermine the credibility of our Nation at the bargaining table in the future. I cannot agree with a strategy that abandons consideration of binding commitments in favor of voluntary efforts alone.

I stand here as the chief author of Senate Resolution 98 in 1997, the measure that many on both sides of the debate paint as a fatal blow to ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. I beg to differ with that depiction. S. Res. 98, in 1997, was the voice of the Senate, the vox populi, the voice of the people through their elected Representatives, providing guidance to the previous administration—the administration at that time—as its negotiators labored to hammer out a climate change proposal among various international players. That resolution, which passed by a vote of 95-0, simply stated that any international treaty on climate change must include binding commitments by the developing nations, especially the largest emitters, and also that it must not result in serious harm to the U.S. economy.

It also called upon the administration to inform the legislative branch, which under the Constitution of the United States is required to approve the ratification of treaties, as to the estimated costs of commitments by the United States. We want to know what these will cost. And to date, that information has not been forthcoming. That is what we were saying. Tell us what it will cost. Don't sign it; don't sign that protocol until the major emitters among the developing nations of the world have also signed on and have come into the boat with us. They need to sign on with respect to restricting the emissions of greenhouse gases. It must not be the United States alone; it must not be the United States and the developed nations, the industrial nations, alone. We all have a responsibility.