

explain the legislation he was offering to try to get our arms around the problem of global warming. It was in Senator BYRD's presentation to the Senate that he shared with us that a vast majority of the scientific community in fact has recognized that the Earth's temperature is warming and that, indeed, man is contributing to that warming through the emission of CO₂ into the atmosphere, thus causing a greenhouse effect.

I was so moved by Senator BYRD's presentation, after which he then introduced the legislation, in light of the fact that this present administration had set aside the Kyoto accords and is going about in its own way to try to address the problem.

Senator BYRD offered this legislation, sponsored by himself and cosponsored by Senator STEVENS, as a means to try to accelerate and focus world attention on this phenomenon; to use Senator BYRD's words, that something out there in fact is happening.

I was moved to speak after Senator BYRD's presentation. What I shared was an experience of looking at global warming from the perspective of my past life as the elected insurance commissioner of Florida, recognizing that it would have devastating effects upon a State such as Florida with such an extensive coastline. The rise of the seas would have an immediate effect upon most of our population which is along the coast. The warming of the atmosphere would cause increased frequency and ferociousness of storms, particularly the storms that are a part of our life still in Florida known as hurricanes, and the rising temperature for the tropical and subtropical climes would likewise have the result of increasing pestilence and disease.

I was then moved to remember in my mind's eye the view I had out the window of the spacecraft *Columbia* on the 24th flight of the space shuttle, looking back at planet Earth, how beautiful it is and yet how fragile it looks. It is gorgeous. It is a blue and white ball suspended in the middle of nothing. Space is nothing. It is an airless vacuum that goes on and on for billions and billions of light years. In the midst of that void is this wonderful creation we call home, planet Earth.

I described to Senator BYRD Friday that on the first day, you are looking at nation states. On the second day, you are looking at continents. On the third day, you are looking at the whole planet. That is the perspective you have. The first time you look out, you are looking for home. You are looking for Florida, and then you are looking for America. Then in a few days you are looking for home, and there it is, planet Earth, blue because of the oceans, white because of the clouds.

If you look at the land mass, it is usually a dull brown except in parts where there are the contrasts of colors, such as the Horn of Africa, the bright, almost orange-reddish sands of eastern Africa set off against the bright blue waters of the Indian Ocean.

I am saying all of this because I wanted to add to the comments I made on Friday about global warming. I was struck with the beauty of this creation, but I was also struck with how fragile it looked. I could see how we are not being good stewards. I could see the destruction of the rain forests, and then I could look to the east and see the mouth of the Amazon. The waters of the Atlantic were discolored for hundreds of miles with the silt that resulted from the destruction of the trees hundreds of miles upriver. I would look at the rim of the Earth, a bright blue band. But on closer inspection, you could see the thin film enveloping the Earth that sustains all of our life known as the atmosphere.

I came away from that experience of 6 days in outer space with a profound sense that I needed to be a better steward of what God has given us in this beautiful, colorful planet called Earth.

That is what I was moved to think of when Senator BYRD introduced his legislation concerning global warming; that we better be serious and listen to the scientific community, saying that things are changing, that people in States such as mine along the coast of this country had better be wary of the immediate effects upon the consequences of global warming, and that we should be better stewards of what we have been given by our creator, if, in fact, we are doing what we ought to do.

I have often let my imagination wander with regard to space travel. I firmly believe that in my lifetime, certainly in the lifetime of a lot of our young friends, we will see an international mission from planet Earth to another planet, probably Mars. When we get there, are those dry river beds that we see in our telescopes? And if they are, what happened to that water? And if we find, in fact, that there was water, then there likely was life. And if there was life, to what degree did it develop; was it civilized? And if it was civilized, what happened? What can we learn so that we can be better stewards of our civilization on planet Earth?

Senator BYRD, as he so eloquently expressed his concerns and interest and, therefore, the offering of the legislation to study the problem, was most timely. The President is on his way to Europe tonight to discuss this issue with the many leaders of Europe, their concern that he unilaterally disregarded the Kyoto accords. If we are not going to have the Kyoto accords for the nations of the world to come together to do something about the rise of the greenhouse effect on planet Earth, then we better get together with some other kind of protocol quickly. Senator BYRD and Senator STEVENS are offering that kind of leadership as a way. It is just one suggestion, but it is an important suggestion. It is timely.

I took this moment to offer those thoughts and, again, to say my profound appreciation to the great Senator from the State of West Virginia for what he has offered.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. NELSON of Florida assumed the chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

EDUCATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what has taken place in the Senate over the past few weeks, the change from a Republican majority to a Democrat majority, is really not about which party is in charge or which party is the majority. I believe the history books will be written that it is about the truly important issues to the citizens of Nevada, Florida, and citizens all over the country.

The education of our children, for example, is at the top of any list. Three of my grandchildren are of school age. As I stand here today, Mattie, Savannah, and Ryan are in school—one of them here in a suburb of Washington; two of them in Las Vegas. They are each sitting in their classrooms. They are so fortunate that they have great teachers. They have teachers who are dedicated to putting information in their heads and making them feel good about themselves.

As a grandfather, I want to do all I can to ensure that they receive the best education possible and that my other seven grandchildren—and I have two additional ones on the way, so that is 12 grandchildren—will also have the same opportunities and maybe even better opportunities than my three grandchildren who are in school today.

As a Senator representing the State of Nevada, I want to do everything I can as a Member of this national legislative body to make sure that not only my grandchildren but every child in America has an opportunity to be educated in the best way they can. We all have that obligation.

Millions of children across the country are, at this very moment, acquiring a foundation that will provide them with enormous opportunities. They are acquiring an education. There are also lots of children in America who are not being educated in the way they should be educated.

Nevada is an interesting example. We have one school district, Clark County School District, where Las Vegas is.

It is the sixth largest school district in America and fast approaching the fifth largest. There are 240,000 children in that school district. We have to build, to keep up with the growth, one new school every month. This year, we will dedicate about 15 schools. We hold the record in America. One year, we dedicated 18 new schools. The superintendent of schools has said he is not a superintendent of "instruction," but a superintendent of "construction."

We need help in this very large school district. We need help. There are a number of ways we have tried to get aid to school districts for construction, not only to build new schools but to rehabilitate old schools.

The average school in the U.S. today is about 45 years old. We need to do

better in helping large school districts such as Las Vegas. Also, we have schools in Nevada that are one-room schools. I went to school in a two-room school. There are schools in Nevada today that have one room, with five or six students. They also have to be part of what we are trying to do to improve education. Millions of children across the country may not realize it, but their parents and friends realize, and we realize, that there is nothing more important in their lives than to be educated.

So it is with fitting coincidence that the change in the leadership in the United States Senate occurs at the very time we are debating the education bill. Whether you are a Republican, or a Democrat, or an Independent, education is a nonpartisan issue. It should be a nonpartisan issue. If it is partisan, it is too bad. The education bill is an example of what Senators can accomplish when we work for the good of the country in a nonpartisan manner, joining together to ensure that every student has a chance to succeed. This bill is a true example of a nonpartisan success story. We hope it ends successfully this week. It began as the President's bill, was honestly and openly debated under Senator LOTT and the Republican majority, and now it will be completed under the leadership of Senator DASCHLE and the Democratic majority.

We all have to work together. I work together with my Republican colleague from Nevada, JOHN ENSIGN, in a way that I hope will serve as a model for the rest of this Chamber. In 1998, JOHN ENSIGN and I were involved in a historically close race. I won by 428 votes. People thought that JOHN ENSIGN—when Senator Bryan retired and he ran for the Senate—and I would be in a very bitter relationship here in the Senate. But we decided for our own well-being, for the well-being of the State of Nevada, and for this country, that we should join together and show people that Democrats and Republicans from States evenly divided as ours is—no matter how the State is divided—can work together to set an example. JOHN and I don't have to vote alike on everything, but we can work together so that we have a harmonious relationship. We are doing that. We are going to get better. We are pretty good now, but we are going to get better.

We have sent the President the judges that JOHN ENSIGN nominated, and I say "we" because I appreciate JOHN ENSIGN submitting those names to me. He has agreed to give me 25 percent of the judges we get in Nevada. I told him that is one more than I deserve. I appreciate that. It is an act of generosity on his part and also an act that depicts our relationship. So the mere fact that people have bitter battles on this floor does not mean they can't work together tomorrow for the common good.

So I believe that from the 240,000 students in Clark County to the one-room

schoolhouse in Nye County, all students deserve a quality education. We need to work together to finish this bill in a nonpartisan way for the children of Nevada. If we get in here in the next couple of days and there are difficult issues we have to resolve, we have to understand that we can take these issues by issue.

The overall responsibility we have is to come up with a good education bill. Now, I am personally disappointed that we are not going to have as much money as I think we should. We have to work with the tools we have, and we are going to do that. The education bill is legislation about which each Member of this Chamber should leave feeling good about. So it is my hope and that of Majority Leader DASCHLE that this legislation is the first of many written not by one party, but by Republicans and Democrats.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed using as much time as I may consume.

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

EDUCATION

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, later this afternoon we will turn to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

I wish to take just a couple of minutes to talk about a couple of amendments to the education bill that I have offered with colleagues. These amendments have not yet been voted on but I expect both will be approved.

Education is very important. I am pleased it appears we will now finish this bill. This Congress has a responsibility to address the issue of education in a thoughtful way. We understand there are plenty of challenges in our educational system. We have schools that don't do as well as we would like. At the same time, I want to be sure to say there are a lot of wonderful schools in this country and a lot of great teachers who are educating our children.

More Americans have completed a high school education today than at any other time in history. At a time when we talk about the deficiencies in education, 84 percent of the American people are now completing a high school education. In France, only 52 percent of adults have a high school education. In the United Kingdom, 68 percent. In Japan, 70 percent.

With respect to virtually every aspect of life in this country, one can take something and hold it to a light and say, isn't this ugly, and one can find a perfection that is ugly. But generally with respect to education, I ask this question: If public education in this country has not worked, how is it we have reached this position in our lives? The United States has done so much for so many over so long a period of time. The progress that has been made is remarkable.

I came to the Congress many years ago to initially serve in the House of Representatives. I have told my colleagues a story about going into the office of the oldest Member of the House at the time named Claude Pepper, a great public servant. He was then in his eighties, and his office was virtually a museum of posters and photographs. Two pictures in particular that were hanging behind his desk in his office stuck out to me. One was a picture of Orville and Wilbur Wright making the first airplane flight. It was autographed to Congressman Claude Pepper by Orville Wright before he died. It was autographed to Claude Pepper: With deep admiration, signed Orville Wright. Beneath that picture was a picture of Neil Armstrong stepping on the Moon, and it was autographed by Neil Armstrong to Congressman Claude Pepper.

I was struck by that. Here are two pictures: Of the first Americans to fly and then the first American to fly to the Moon. I thought about the relatively short timeframe that is represented by those pictures. What a breathtaking advance in technology and learning that allowed us to build aircraft that not only left the ground in airplanes that were primitive, but also flew all the way to the Moon for a lunar landing.

What is that about? It is about education. We achieved these advancements in America's classrooms. Those young scientists and engineers and mathematicians, the young talents all across this country, starting 1st grade someplace, went through high school, and went to college. They created progress in so many areas. Yes, in space, but also in medicine and so many areas this country has progressed.

Education is critically important. I wanted to say it at the front end. Those who somehow criticize our public educational system as a system that has failed America, in my judgment, are dreadfully wrong. This public system of education has empowered every young child in this country to be the best he or she can be. We have challenges, no doubt about it, and we should deal with those challenges.

I propose a couple of things to deal with some challenges. I propose we have school report cards. Every young person in school occasionally comes home with a report card; that child's school and the teachers evaluate how students are doing and they grade them and give them a report card. Parents and taxpayers get no such report card that evaluates how the school is doing. What is their tax money buying? What is the level of achievement of that school? What kind of progress are those students making? How effective is this school at promoting learning among its students?

My proposal is to give parents a school report card that provides the opportunity to understand how a school is doing versus a neighboring school, how a school in this county is doing