

anyone's bureaucratic turf. I'm interested in helping low-income children and their families, not from which building in Washington the program is administered. Since 1965, Head Start programs have provided comprehensive early childhood development, educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to more than 17 million low-income pre-school children and their families. Dr. Edward Zigler, one of Head Start's founders, said in the December 23, 2000 New York Times that the vast majority of three or four-year olds do not have the cognitive ability to "attribute meaning to abstract symbols, like written words." He added that even the few three or four-year olds who do have that ability are better off spending their time in the Head Start learning behaviors needed in school, like listening, taking turns, and getting along with other children.

Dr. Zigler said that what children need to be prepared to succeed in school are good health, the early involvement of their parents, and relief from the complications of poverty. That's exactly what Head Start provides. Of course, literacy is important, and Congress recognized that when we reauthorized Head Start in 1998—which we did in a very bipartisan manner. No one questions the importance of teaching children to read, but it's not as simple as providing more reading classes. A child won't benefit from reading classes alone if she hasn't eaten breakfast, or has an undiagnosed vision problem, or hasn't learned how to socialize with other children. Those kinds of benefits, which Head Start provides, are not "add-ons" to preparing a child to succeed in school, they are essential to it. As Dr. Zigler said, Head Start's job then, is to lay a foundation for literacy. So, I think we need to be cautious about changing a program that does so much good for so many children and families.

But, that said, I have every confidence in Dr. Paige's qualifications and commitment to America's children. President Bush has spoken often of the need for bipartisanship in Washington. I have worked with many of my Republican colleagues for many years on education policy; for example, with Senator DEWINE on the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, with Senator DOMENICI on character education, with Senator JEFFORDS on 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and with Senator SHELBY on commercialism in schools. I hope and expect that Dr. Paige and the Senate will be able to work together to build on the education accomplishments of the past 8 years, and to work toward the goal that we all share—that our children receive the education they need and deserve.

NOMINATION OF PAUL O'NEILL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to comment on the Senate's procedure for consideration of the nomination of Paul O'Neill for Secretary of the Treasury. Under regular order, the nomina-

tion for Secretary of the Treasury, which is under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee would be considered by the committee after referral to the committee. The process usually involves a hearing and a vote on the nomination. In this case, a hearing in anticipation of the nomination was held. The nomination, however, was not fully considered by the committee. The committee agreed to be discharged only because of highly unusual circumstance. The circumstances arise from the fact that all Senate committees, including the Finance Committee, are not yet composed and organized. Moreover, the Secretary of the Treasury is a critical Cabinet position and expeditious consideration of the nomination is in the best interests of the Nation.

Mr. President, I want to make it clear that the Finance Committee will insist on its jurisdictional prerogatives. This nomination presents a highly unusual and compelling procedural exception.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to enthusiastically support the nomination of Mr. Paul Henry O'Neill to be the 72d Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. O'Neill is no stranger to policymaking, having served a number of years at the Office of Management and Budget. He has impressive credentials, both in and out of government, and an unchallenged reputation for hard work, straight talk and tough-mindedness. He is an extremely strong candidate and a very able individual.

I am also pleased that the Senate will vote today to confirm his nomination. I believe it is important for our country to have a Treasury Secretary in place as the new administration takes over. The next administration will inherit the strongest economy in a generation, and the Treasury Department will face extraordinary challenges in keeping the economy going. Eight years ago, the nation's economic growth was low, interest rates and unemployment were high, and Federal budget deficit and national debt was growing at an unfathomable rate.

Today, we have experienced the longest economic expansion in history, with record low unemployment, low interest rates, higher family incomes, and record budget surpluses. Inflation is in check, and we are beginning to pay down the national debt—something I know Mr. O'Neill has advocated. Putting the nation's fiscal house in order didn't happen overnight. Nor did it happen by chance—tough decisions were made and difficult votes taken.

In light of this, I am concerned about how we handle the upcoming debate about the budget and taxes. We should proceed carefully, and make certain that our decisions do not put in jeopardy the accomplishments made over the past 8 years. In any event, with Mr. O'Neill, the President and the country have found the right person for the job. Mr. O'Neill has my support, and he has my vote. I look forward to working

with Secretary O'Neill, and the new administration, to address the many challenges that lie ahead.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the American economy has changed dramatically in the past decade. International economic policy now has a direct effect on our domestic economy. The information age has transformed America's economic future. Budget surpluses now suggest the very real possibility of paying down the national debt. This new economy requires a new kind of Treasury secretary. It requires someone who is experienced and knowledgeable in both the domestic and the international marketplace. It requires someone who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in both government and private enterprise. Experience and leadership Paul O'Neill will bring these vital skills to the Department of Treasury.

Paul O'Neill's outstanding career in both the public and private sectors has clearly demonstrated his ability to serve as our Nation's next Treasury Secretary. In 1967, he stated as a policy analyst for the Office of Management and Budget. However, his skill and intelligence were quickly noted by OMB Director George Shultz, who promoted him to serve as Associate Director with responsibility for social programs. At OMB, Paul O'Neill gained a reputation for his sharp analysis and his keen understanding of a wide variety of issues. In fact, he displayed such strong leadership and gained such respect from both parties that in 1976, President Jimmy Carter asked him to serve as his Deputy Treasury Secretary. However, Paul O'Neill decided to continue his career in the private sector. He went to work for the International Paper Company, a global paper corporation, of which he eventually became President. In 1987, he became the chairman and chief executive of the Alcoa Corporation, where he has worked since.

Paul O'Neill's service to Alcoa is a shining symbol of his outstanding abilities. His vision and hard work transformed the troubled industrial company into a profitable international enterprise. As chief executive, he embraced new technologies and gave Alcoa the ability to prosper in the new economy, even as the national aluminum industry was facing economic troubles. Most importantly, Paul O'Neill demonstrated his leadership at Alcoa by garnering the respect and trust of his employees. In fact, the President of the Untied Steelworkers of America praised his nomination and called him "a man you can trust and believe." I am certain that his integrity and leadership will earn Paul O'Neill the trust of the American people and of the world's economic leaders.

In recent years, Paul O'Neill dedicated his time to leading several commissions on improving health care, education, and the local government of his hometown, Pittsburgh. Our nation

will be fortunate to have a Treasury Secretary with such board and varied expertise, and these experiences will prove vital in leading a progressively diverse economy. I believe that Paul O'Neill will be an exemplary Treasury Secretary. He has already spoken of his dedication to paying down our national debt, fundamentally reforming the tax code, and ensuring that America's industries can compete in the new global economy. I am certain that his experience and leadership will be great assets in achieving these important goals.

Mr. President, it is my great honor to support Paul O'Neill to head the Department of the Treasury.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I would like to take a few brief moments to comment on the nomination of Paul O'Neill to be the Treasury Secretary of the United States. I first want to commend President Bush on choosing such a highly qualified candidate to take over the many responsibilities demanded of the United States Treasury Secretary. I fully support Mr. O'Neill's nomination, and I look forward to working with him in the new administration.

Mr. O'Neill brings to the position of Treasury Secretary a broad range of experience both in the public and private sector. He began his career as an engineer with Morrison-Knudsen, Inc. in Anchorage, Alaska and then went on to serve as Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget under the Ford administration. In 1977, Mr. O'Neill became the vice president of International Paper and in 1985 assumed the position of President. This path ultimately led him to aluminum giant Alcoa where, as chairman, he has been credited with the company's revival in the face of the industry's struggles nationwide. Based on his past accomplishments, I believe Mr. O'Neill will bring valuable insights to the critically important post to which he has been nominated.

I noted with interest Mr. O'Neill's comments during his confirmation hearing about the role tax cuts should play in our economy, namely, that they are not the sole means by which to stimulate a slowing economy. This is an important cautionary note that we all should heed as we move forward on the issue of tax cuts. While I support tax relief and reform, I also believe that our Nation's tax policy should be guided by three main principals. First, it should be fair. Those who need tax relief the most should receive the most relief. Second, any tax reform must be consistent with our commitment to maintain a balanced budget and reduce our national debt. In my opinion, this is the best gift we can give to future generations of Americans. And finally, we must leave room to meet our existing obligations, like defense, education, law enforcement, Medicare, and Social Security, as well as the new challenges that most certainly lie ahead.

The goal of this new Congress and administration must be to maintain and

build upon the prosperity achieved over the past eight years. We now have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. The national poverty rate is at its lowest mark in 20 years. The economy has created 22 million new jobs since 1993. We have moved from record deficits to record surpluses. And October 2000 marked this country's 115th consecutive month of economic expansion—the longest period of economic growth in our nation's history. Our future policy decisions should reflect a commitment to foster this progress and growth in the coming years.

And while Mr. O'Neill will be inheriting a strong economy, there still remain a number of challenges that I believe will deserve special attention so as to keep our economy moving in a positive direction. One of the most critical tasks to be faced is the aging of America, and specifically, the stability of Social Security. As new levels of demand are placed on Social Security, we must look to reasonable and balanced proposals that will ensure a financially secure foundation for current and future retirees.

We must also strive to maintain the United States position as a trade leader in an ever-increasing global marketplace. It is in our best long-term economic interests to remain an active trading partner with our allies and to be open to the opportunities that exist in emerging markets. At the same time, we must remain aware of the needs and job security of American workers and the goods they produce. Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on maintaining the competitiveness of our financial institutions.

And one of the biggest challenges will be how to expand our nation's prosperity to more Americans—Americans who have yet to reap the benefits of our dynamic economy and who strive to achieve more financial security for themselves and their families.

In closing, I once again wish to express my support for Mr. O'Neill's nomination. He has presented himself as a fair and honest candidate who has expressed a willingness to work with all Members of Congress on our nation's most important priorities. I remain hopeful that we will be able to do so, and urge my colleagues to support this nominee.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

FAREWELL TO THE FALL PAGES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I rise today to say goodbye to those young men and women who served in the United States Senate as pages during the fall of 2000. When they arrived in Washington in September, no one would have guessed that their term as a Senate page would be at such a historical time in the history of the

United States. These dedicated young people were eyewitnesses to a presidential election which remained undecided for weeks after the votes were cast. In addition, they saw the Senate become an evenly divided body for the first time in decades.

As I have mentioned on numerous occasions when saluting the young people who serve as Senate pages, the life of a page is quite challenging. The school day begins at 6 a.m. After classes, the pages report to work at the U.S. Senate. When the Senate convenes, the pages are at their post and ready for the day's activities. Pages are called upon to assist Senators and staff in the daily operations of the Senate. Their tasks include providing Senators with copies of the appropriate bills and resolutions under consideration. They may be asked to secure documents from a Senator's office and rush over to the Senate floor for that Senator's use in debate on an issue. During rollcall votes, pages are often asked to notify relevant staff of the arrival of Senators to the floor.

Throughout the day, the page is called upon to perform any number of duties vital to the smooth operation of the Senate. They do so with a smile. This group of young men and women have had an extraordinary opportunity to serve as a Senate page. They are among a very select group to do so, and they did a great job. It is my hope that their experience here has served them well as they return home. Public service is an admirable profession. These young people are our public servants and leaders of tomorrow. Perhaps in the not too distant future, some of these young pages will return to Washington to serve as a Congressman or a Senator, or perhaps even as President of the United States.

I know all of my colleagues join me in wishing the pages well and good luck as they continue with their education, and I hope that they now have a greater understanding of our Government and its importance to all the people of the United States. Mr. President, at this time, I ask unanimous consent that the names of those young people who served as fall pages be printed in the RECORD.

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

FALL PAGES DEMOCRATIC PAGES

Ashley Alvarado (Montana); Mathew Mandel (Wisconsin); Amber Lopez (Vermont); Christina Kielsmeier (Minnesota); Kyle Sapkiewicz (Michigan); Bram Geller (Massachusetts); Peter Koziol (Illinois); Milena Caraballo (New Jersey); and Andrea Halverson (South Dakota).

REPUBLICAN PAGES

Sabrina Byrd (Arkansas); Kenneth Donahue (Vermont); Grant Gibson (Idaho); Sam Gladney (Missouri); Frances Griffin (Alabama); Travis Kavulla (Montana); Emily Nuse (Missouri); Laila Ouhamou (Virginia); Amy Pennington (Washington); Mathew Wigginton (Virginia); and Daniel Zoller (Indiana).