

First of all, seniors would get assistance immediately through the prescription drug card. And our neediest seniors would receive an additional \$600 on top of the discounts Medicare will provide through this card.

When the prescription drug program begins in 2006, under the Finance Committee bill, premiums would average \$35 a month.

After a \$275 deductible, the government would cover half of all prescription drug costs up to \$4,500.

Now, critics of this approach will claim that the so-called "doughnut hole" after \$4,500 will be the financial ruin of every senior. The truth is that the vast majority of seniors—80 percent—would never even hit the hole.

As a matter of fact, for 2003, the Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that the average Medicare beneficiary will consume approximately \$2,300 in pharmaceuticals. And should seniors consume over \$5,800 in prescription drugs, the Federal Government would pick up 90 percent of drug costs.

While this benefit will greatly help seniors throughout the Nation, there are still some seniors for whom the \$35 per month premium and additional cost-sharing is too high. For those individuals, the bipartisan Finance Committee bill provides protections that will allow access to prescription drugs.

For those seniors under 135 percent of poverty, \$12,123 for an individual and \$16,362 for a couple, the Finance Committee bill would provide a full subsidy for monthly premiums. In addition, the government would cover 95 percent of their prescription drug costs to the initial benefit limit and 97.5 percent above the stop-loss limit.

And for those seniors between 135 and 160 percent of the poverty level, S. 1 would provide assistance with their monthly premiums on a sliding scale. In addition, these individuals would pay no more than 50 percent of their drug costs once the \$250 deductible has been reached.

When we talk about dollars being spent, we should also point out to seniors that they will receive more bang for their buck under the Finance Committee bill through Medicare Advantage.

Under Medicare Advantage, seniors will not just receive direct assistance from the government to cover their prescription drug bills. Rather, private health plans will have to compete for beneficiaries and will attempt to attract seniors by providing the best health care plan—including prescription drugs and possibly preventive care, disease management, vision and dental services.

To the advantage of both Medicare beneficiaries and the Federal Government, this competition will decrease the price of prescription drugs and permit all parties to stretch their dollars further.

This body has been playing this political posturing game with senior's health care for too long.

I am tired of explaining partisanship as the excuse for the Senate's failure to pass a prescription drug benefit, which has forced the least of our brothers and sisters to choose between food and prescription drugs.

I am pleased that the Senate will have the opportunity to show the American people, especially our nation's seniors and disabled that we are serious about enacting legislation to provide a prescription drug benefit this year.

The bill before us seems to have broad support from both sides of the aisle. The President is ready and willing to sign a bill into law this year. It is time to get the job done.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that today after the consideration of S. 1, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 140, S. 504, and that it be considered under the following limitation: no amendments be in order, and there be 45 minutes equally divided for debate between Senator ALEXANDER and the ranking member or his designee; provided further that at the expiration of that time, the bill be read a third time, and the bill be set aside; provided that the Senate resume consideration of the bill upon convening on Friday, June 20, and that the time until 9:15 be equally divided for debate; further, that at 9:15 a.m. the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of the bill, with no intervening action or debate.

I also ask unanimous consent that following that vote, the Senate resume consideration of S. 1 and Dorgan amendment No. 946, and there then be 4 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the vote in relation to the amendment, with no further amendments in order to the amendment prior to the vote.

Finally, I ask unanimous consent that following the Harkin amendment, the next sequence of Democratic first-degree amendments be the following: Conrad, 2-year fallback; Pryor, reimportation; Kerry, grant program; Clinton, study; and Graham, premium.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic whip.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would ask the Senator to modify the request in this manner: First, I would control the time, rather than the ranking member, on the minority side on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have no objection to the modification.

Mr. REID. Secondly, Mr. President, we have checked with the majority, and they have no problem with the fact that Senator PRYOR would offer his amendment on Monday rather than tomorrow. Even though he is in order following Senator CONRAD, I ask that he be allowed to offer his amendment on Monday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modified request?

Mr. REID. No objection.

Mr. ALEXANDER. No objection.

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

#### AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS EDUCATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate proceed to S. 504, as under the order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 504) to establish academies for teachers and students of American history and civics and a national alliance of teachers of American history and civics, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. President, this week there was a great celebration of National History Day. There were high school students from all over the country in our offices and at the University of Maryland.

Last Friday, when I was sitting where the distinguished Senator from Minnesota now sits, presiding over the Senate, I had the privilege of hearing Senator BYRD deliver an address about Flag Day.

Since 9/11, President Bush has spoken more regularly about the American character. Suddenly, in our country there is a lot of interest in what it means to be an American.

In the mid-1990s, I read a book by Samuel Huntington, a professor at Harvard, called "Clash of Civilizations." A lot of people read that book in terms of understanding in what conflicts the United States, the West, might find in future years. But I read it for a different reason. It made me think that if the new world order was to be a group of civilizations whose differences began with their cultures, their religions, and a variety of other things that made them unique—it made me think if we were moving into that kind of an era, then maybe we ought to have a better understanding of just what made our culture unique. What did it mean to be an American?

I was invited to hold a professorship at Harvard University and taught in the John F. Kennedy School of Government there. And the course I taught was on the American character and on American Government. In that course, the graduate students applied the great principles which unite us as a country to the great controversies which we in the Senate debate—about race-based scholarships, about military tribunals, about faith-based institutions—and the conflicts of those principles. The students were fascinated by that.

And then suddenly I found myself, last year, in a Senate race that I did

not expect to be in. And like most candidates for the Senate, as the Chair well knows, I spoke about a number of different things. Sometimes I spoke about our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Sometimes I spoke about taxes, about judges, about education.

But, Mr. President, there was one sentence I could say during that campaign to any audience, anywhere in my State of Tennessee, that brought the greatest response. I could barely get it out of my mouth before there would be some response from the audience—of heads nodding or some kind of applause—and it was this sentence: It is time to put the teaching of American history and civics back in its rightful place in our schools so our children can grow up learning what it means to be an American.

That is why today I stand before you to support S. 504, the American History and Civics Education Act of 2003, which we will be voting on in the morning as the first order of business.

It will help put the teaching of American history and civics back in its rightful place in our schools. It will set up summer residential academies for students and teachers: 2-week academies for teachers—say, at a university—and 4-week academies for students of American history and civics. And it would join the variety of efforts that the President and this Congress on both sides of the aisle have been acting upon with increasing frequency to underscore American history.

It is modeled after the Governor's Schools which exist in the State of Tennessee and many other States across this country. And it is premised on the idea that if 200 teachers go to the University of Tennessee or a university in Nevada or a university in California, and spend 2 weeks with outstanding leaders, talking about the great principles and the great stories and the key events of our history, that they will be inspired to do an even better job of teaching that during the next year to their students.

I introduced this bill and support it on behalf of 36 Senators, including the Democratic whip, who is the chief cosponsor, and has been from the very first day of its introduction, which I, as a new Senator, greatly appreciate. It also includes Republican and Democratic leaders whom I will mention in just a moment: The majority leader; Senator GREGG, the chairman of the relevant committee; Senator BURNS, the chairman of the relevant Appropriations subcommittee; Senator KENNEDY, the ranking member of our committee; and Senator BYRD, who has been a pioneer in supporting this kind of legislation.

Mr. President, we need this bill, and we need additional attention to American history because, first, when our values are under attack, we need to understand clearly what those values are. And, second, we should understand what unites us as Americans.

Our diversity and variety in this country is an enormous strength. It is

a tremendous strength. We are a nation of immigrants with people from everywhere, but our greater strength—our greatest accomplishment—is we have been able to take all of that variety and diversity and turn it into one country—"e pluribus unum."

We need to understand what those values are. And we need to put into context the terror of the time. I have heard a great many people on television say these are the most dangerous times our country has ever faced. Well, only if you have never had 1 minute of American history would you believe that. We need for our young people to know that there have been struggles from the very beginning.

But our young people do not know the story of this country as well as they should. Too many of our children do not know what makes America exceptional. National exams show that three-quarters of our fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders are not proficient in civics knowledge, and one-third do not even have basic knowledge, making them civics illiterates.

Until the 1960s, civics education, which teaches the duties of citizenship, was a regular part of almost every high school's curriculum.

But today's college graduates probably have less civic knowledge than high school graduates of 50 years ago. Reforms have resulted in the widespread elimination of required classes and curricula in civics education. Today, more than half the States have no requirements for students to take a course even for one semester in American government.

That is not the way it has always been. From the beginning of our Nation, we have generally understood what it means to be an American, and that has been a preoccupation of Americans: Think of our Founders, writing those letters, holding those debates, making sure we knew what it meant to be an American; Thomas Jefferson in his retirement years in Monticello taking his guests through his home and pointing to portraits on the wall of the leaders from whom he had gotten many of his ideas so they would understand what he had in mind when he helped create this country.

When we had a huge wave of immigration more than a century ago, just as we do today, our national response was to teach new Americans what it means to be an American. Because you don't become an American by your color or by your ethnicity or by being born here. You become one because you believe a few things. If you move to Japan, you don't become Japanese. If you move to France, you don't become French. If you move to America and want to be a citizen, you must become an American. That is the way our country works.

We created the common school, today's public schools, to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to immigrant children as well as what it means to be

an American, with the hope that they might go home and teach their parents. That was what Albert Shanker, former president of the American Federation of Teachers, said about the creation of common schools.

Then of course in World War II, President Roosevelt made sure that every GI who stormed the beaches at Normandy understood what the four freedoms are. We have not always been complete in our understanding of what it means to be an American. Sometimes we have gone to excess. We didn't teach the stories of African Americans well. We undervalued the contribution of the Spanish to our culture. And in the 1950s, we were embarrassed, as we look back, by McCarthyism. But that is no excuse for what is going on today: dropping civics, squeezing American history out of the curricula, and when it is in, it is watered down. Too often the textbooks are so dull, nobody would want to study them. All the talk is about victims and never about the heroes. The schools have become politically correct. The teachers are reluctant to teach the great controversies. But what is American history if it is not the story of great controversies and great conflicts of principles and great disappointments with not reaching our great dreams and great stories and great heroic efforts?

Our students need to know that Kunta Kinte came to this country in the belly of a slave ship and that his seventh generation grandson, Alex Haley, wrote the story of *Roots* about the struggle for equality and freedom. They need to know that Thomas Jefferson owned slaves and that he wrote the Declaration of Independence, as it is taught at the Ben Hooks Center at the University of Memphis.

We are a work in progress. We have never been perfect. They need to know about the Pilgrims who were Christians, and they need to know about the Presbyterians, my ancestors, the Scotch Irish who fought a Revolutionary War because they were tired of paying taxes to support the bishop of a church to which they didn't belong. They need to know about the religious character of our country and about the importance of the separation of church and state. They need to know about our love of liberty and about the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II.

The response to putting the teaching of American history and civics back in its rightful place in our schools has been overwhelming. Not just the Democratic whip, Mr. REID, has sponsored this, but 36 Senators from both sides of the aisle, leaders of both sides. And in the House of Representatives, ROGER WICKER of Mississippi is the lead sponsor of the same bill. He called tonight and said they have 160 sponsors in the House, Democratic and Republican leaders.

I offer my special thanks to a few Senators in addition to Mr. WICKER for

his leadership. To Senator FRIST, the majority leader, for scheduling the bill in the midst of a lot of other important business and for cosponsoring it. To Senator GREGG, chairman of our committee, for moving it through. Especially to Senator REID, for his understanding of American history, his leadership, his being here tonight, and his serving as the principal cosponsor of the legislation. To Senator KENNEDY, who has gone out of his way not just to support the bill but to attract other cosponsors. He has had a long interest in this subject. To Senator BURNS, on the Appropriations Committee, for his strong support. And to Senator BYRD, who took the time to come to the hearing and to testify. Senator BYRD is, of course, the author of the Byrd grants which are already being used in many of our schools.

The kind of American history we are talking about is the traditional kind, the study of the key persons, the key events, the key ideas, and the key documents that shape the institutions and democratic heritage of the United States of America. We spell out in our legislation that by key documents, we mean the Constitution and its amendments, and the Declaration of Independence, for example. By key events, we mean the encounter of Native Americans with European settlers and the Civil War and the civil rights movement and the wars. By key ideas, we mean the principles that we almost all agree on in this body: Liberty, equal opportunity, individualism, *laissez-faire*, the rule of law, federalism, *e pluribus unum*, the free exercise of religion, the separation of church and state, a belief in progress. We agree on those principles.

Our politics is about applying those principles. That is what our politics is about. The key persons, the heroes, the men and women of this country from its founding until today, the scientists, inventors, pioneers, the advocates of equal rights, and artists who have made this United States of America.

There are a great many efforts heading in the same direction. This is only one part. The President's efforts, the Library of Congress' efforts, the Byrd grants, the James Madison study, the National Endowment for Humanities which would award these to residential academies, to educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations. All are working hard in this way. We are adding to that.

In conclusion, I will mention two things. I was in a Foreign Relations Committee hearing the other day. We were talking about what we might expect with the reconstruction of Iraq. One witness said that we would be fortunate in our nation building there if the three grand divisions of Iraq, the Kurds, the Sunnis, and the Shiites, the geographical areas, could agree on two things: One would be how to split up the oil money, and two would be on a federation that would basically keep them safe and independent in their own

areas. And maybe we would have some semblance of democracy so they could choose their leaders.

I was thinking about how much we take for granted, how much more we are able to look forward to. There is no chance in Iraq of *e pluribus unum*, not for the foreseeable future. There is no general agreement on those principles I just read.

We have a marvelous country and a great story. We should be teaching it.

The last thing I would like to say is the first thing I mentioned: We need to put the terror in which we find ourselves today in context. Those who say this is the most dangerous time in our history have had no American history. What about the Pilgrims who died in the first winter? What about the soldiers at Valley Forge who walked across the ice with their bare feet? What about the Native Americans and the European settlers killing each other's children? That was terror. What about the African Americans who came in the slave ships? What about the brothers who killed each other in the Civil War? What about the millions who stood in line in the Depression? What about in the 1950s and 1960s, when we all stood within 30 minutes of a nuclear missile from the Soviet Union?

We have had greater terrors face the United States. This is a time of struggle. It is a time when we should stop and think about what it means to be an American so that we can teach our children and so that we can continue our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I can remember when I served in the House of Representatives on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. Kissinger came before the committee. The chairman of the committee, Mr. Solarz from New York, said: I don't know how to refer to you. Dr. Kissinger, is it Mr. Ambassador? Is it Mr. Secretary? Kissinger didn't hesitate a second, and he said: Your Excellency would be fine.

I am reminded of this when I think of Governor ALEXANDER, Secretary ALEXANDER, and Senator ALEXANDER—a man with a great resume who is now a Senator. The background certainly is one where this legislation came, as a matter of fact, from somebody who served our country as the Governor of a very important State, who served as Secretary of Education, and now as a Senator. When this distinguished Senator came forward with this legislation, I knew right away that it was good, based on his experience and background. I felt inclined to move on this legislation to be a prime cosponsor of it. I am happy to do that.

It is important to the point where we are now. Tomorrow we will pass this bill, and it will become law. I think we have such momentum here that this isn't something we are going to just issue a press release on as having authorized this legislation. We have sup-

port so that we are going to appropriate the money. As the Senator from Tennessee has announced, Senator ROBERT BYRD, the ranking member and long-time chairman of the Appropriations Committee, supports this legislation. We are going to move forward and not only authorize but appropriate money for this most important program.

The bill itself, if you look at it—and then read this bill, we have a Medicare bill here that is some 700 pages long—is just a few pages long, seven or eight pages. It may not seem like much, but for me it is very important. For the American people, it will be very important because this little bill will allow as many as 7,200 teachers every summer, every year, to be updated on what they should be teaching their young folks. The 7,200 teachers each were under this legislation—the Chairman of the National Commission on Humanity has the ability to select 12 different academies, 1 for teaching history and civics congressionally, the other with a Presidential background. Each of these academies will be chosen, 12 in each category, and they could have up to 300 teachers to participate. That is 7,200. It adds up quickly. In 10 years, that is 72,000. I think that is remarkable.

It is important because teachers have so many burdens. They have paperwork, and now with Leave No Child Behind, they are so immersed in teaching children how to pass tests that they don't have a lot of time to teach sort of outside the box. This allows them to do that, to be reinvigorated and take a look at what is happening around the world, what has happened that they have missed.

So this little bill that is going to become law very quickly—because the House already has over a hundred cosponsors—is important legislation. I commend and applaud my distinguished friend, the Senator from Tennessee, for his work in this area. I hope this is the first of many pieces of legislation the Senator introduces, based on his experience and background as Secretary of Education for this wonderful country.

As my friend has indicated, the education of America's children has to be one of our priorities. It is one of our priorities. We have to make sure that children are our future. In order for them to be our future, we need to give the people who are teaching them the tools they need to teach them to be good leaders.

Teachers and administrators have many important responsibilities to achieve that end, including providing students with the basis to pursue higher education, helping them develop their individual potential, and preparing them for successful careers.

As has been indicated in the introductory remarks by my friend from Tennessee, America is a nation of immigrants. Our schools have helped instill in our diverse population a sense of what it means to be American, and

we have prepared our youth for the responsibilities of citizenship. But we can do better. That is what this legislation is all about.

We need to reaffirm the importance of learning American history and maintaining the civic understanding, recognizing that diversity and tolerance are at the core of that understanding.

Many individual districts and schools within those districts, such as those in the State of Nevada, have recognized the importance of civics education and have designed curricular programs to highlight students' knowledge of civics and history.

One young man who has the unusual name of Trey Delap, a fine young man from Boulder City, which is right near Hoover Dam—where growth has slowed slightly, unlike the surrounding area—describes himself as an average high school kid from a small town. Boulder City is not too small, but the school isn't really big. He dreamed of doing other things all of his life, but certainly never, ever thought about anything dealing with government, until he participated in a program called *We The People*. It is a program offered through the Center for Civic Education that allows students to study civics and then share their knowledge through competitions such as the one held in Washington. They have State competition and, if they do well there, they can come to Washington.

His first assignment as part of this *We The People* program began with the question: What is the role of a citizen in a democracy? He pondered this question, and he discovered that his true passion was government.

Defining the role of a citizen led him to question his own responsibility as a citizen and the importance of understanding what our Constitution stands for. This is a high school kid.

In this program, Trey was able to celebrate his 18th birthday in our Nation's Capital, while he voiced his opinion about the role of being a citizen in front of lawyers, judges, and congressional staff during a congressional debate. *We The People* is a great program, but only a few are allowed to participate in it.

What we are talking about tonight with this legislation is that schools all over America would have similar programs, in effect, because we would have teachers who are having a shot of adrenaline, updating the education they received going through their educational programs in college. This bill would establish a network of teachers sharing ideas about history and civics programs.

S. 504 would accomplish these goals that I have talked about by creating grants for teachers, and the students would come and participate in the program. With teachers in so many areas not sharing information among themselves, they teach information not consistent with prescribed curriculum. So we should have networks like the one proposed here for all students.

Another reason, frankly, that I jumped aboard this program was that Senator Paul Simon and I—we served as Lieutenant Governors together, served in the House of Representatives together, and we served here together—had the idea that what we needed to work on was to do something about science and math. We lose so many science and math teachers because they cannot make enough money teaching in high school. It has to be for the love of teaching that they stay, because math and science is so acceptable by outside industry. That is the only reason they stay in teaching—they love it.

Senator Simon and I had the idea of creating summer workshop programs so that math and science teachers during the summer, or with year-round school systems, whenever there was a break, had summer workshops to attend to update their skills but be paid for doing so. This would also give them some extra money.

Math and science teachers make the same as somebody who teaches PE. PE is important, and we have good teachers teaching physical education. But realistically, we need more math and science teachers than we do physical education teachers.

Well, Senator Simon and I worked hard, but we could never get the program funded.

This program, while it is not like the program Senator Simon and I sponsored, it is as I feel about this Medicare bill. This Medicare bill is not something I love, but it is, as we heard so many times, the proverbial camel with his nose under the tent. We can make this Medicare bill better.

With this program I am confident we are going to pass and fund, maybe we can go back to what Senator Simon and I wanted to do: to do something to enrich math and science teachers' lives, not only enrich them academically but also monetarily. I hope that is something my friend from Tennessee will take a look at and work with me.

As we work to make sure all schoolchildren—and especially I am concerned about those in Nevada—are connected to the Internet—and we have programs doing that—and are connected to the future, I also want them to be connected to America's past and to know the common values of histories binding together all who live in this great Nation.

We learn from history. I love history. I love to study history, and I want young people also to have a love of history. That can come about with one good teacher. One good teacher can change a young person's life, just like Trey's life in Boulder City. His life was changed by having someone telling him that Government is important. Government is important, history is important, this legislation is important, and I hope we have a resounding vote, which I am confident we will, tomorrow morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nevada for his leadership and for his comments. I look forward to working with him on math and science and other education issues. I especially appreciate his commenting on the teachers.

He noted perhaps 72,000 teachers. Even though this is just a pilot program for a few years, if for 10 years 72,000 teachers of American history and civics went to summer residential academies, called Presidential Academies of American History and Civics, they should be inspired to be even better teachers.

One of the things I most enjoyed doing as Governor was creating the Governor's School for Teachers of Writing which was run by Richard Marius of Harvard. Every summer 200 teachers would gather at the University of Tennessee. He would lead them. He taught Harvard freshmen in their writing program.

What happened was, if you put the teachers together, they taught one another. They became inspired. They developed better lesson plans, and they went back to their classrooms fired up and much better teachers.

I have great confidence in our teachers. I believe if we afford an opportunity for them to come together in many places across the country, and for 2 weeks focus on how to teach the great stories of American history, that by itself will help put it in its rightful place. When we add to that 4-week schools that students of American history and civics will attend, it will double our punch.

I appreciate that sponsorship. I look forward to the Presidential Academies for Teachers of American History and Civics and the Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

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