

tools which they need to succeed. Additionally, it provides them with an environment which will equip them with the necessary tools to become true leaders. The goals of Brown were to provide to all children, excellent schools which were as diverse as possible. The greatest gift that we can give our children is to ensure that they receive nothing less.

Fifty years after Brown, its full promise remains unrealized. Public education in our country has become more and more separate. In Washington, DC, public schools, nearly all students are attending segregated, poor schools. For example, 2,455 students are attending 12th grade. Of those, 121 are white, about 1,900 are black and the rest are primarily Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander. Of the white students, 116 attend just three schools with 88 of those at just one school. This scenario is happening not only in our Nation's capital but across the Nation. In my State of Louisiana, public schools in the City of Monroe have 88 percent minority students, while the surrounding rural district has 71 percent white students.

Not only are our schools more separate, but they are also more unequal. Since 1988, the minority achievement gap in our country has continued to grow. Nationally, African American and Latino 17-year-olds demonstrate reading and math skills that are virtually indistinguishable from white 13-year-olds. In my own State of Louisiana, there is a 42.9 point gap between the performance of African American students and their white peers. These statistics can be explained by many different variables. Poor and minority students are one-third more likely to be taught by an unqualified teacher than their peers. Students of color and low-income students do not receive curriculum and instruction that is as challenging or rigorous as other students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, less than a third of students from low-wealth families were enrolled in the college prep track, while two-thirds of students from high-wealth families were in college prep. What is worse, we have put educational funding on its head. In a majority of States, the more students of color you have, the less likely you are to receive State and local funds.

The founding principle of No Child Left Behind was that all children can learn. There are hundreds of examples, many of which you will hear in commemoration of the Brown decision, to demonstrate this fact to be true. Centennial Place Elementary School in Atlanta, GA is 91 percent African American and 79 percent low-income and is in the top 10 percent of the entire State of Georgia in reading. Moreover, Centennial Place Elementary outscored 88 percent of other Georgia schools on the State's math test. In my home State of Louisiana, Claiborne Fundamental Elementary School has an 80 percent minority student body, 60

percent of which are in poverty. Yet they finished in the 94th percentile on LEAP testing and finished in the top 10 percent in closing the achievement gap. These are only a few examples of success in schools which support the principles of No Child Left Behind. For the first time, the Federal Government has rejected the bigotry of lower expectations and has required States and local school districts to do something about the growing gap of opportunity in our schools. If we are to realize the promise of Brown we must ensure that each and every child, regardless of race or income, has an opportunity to realize their potential.

The links between all of these examples of success are accountability, full and equal funding, and teacher quality. If we can set clear, measurable goals for performance and continue to hold schools accountable for results, we can truly measure success and failure. Backlash against No Child Left Behind is in part because people are being forced to face the reality that gaps do exist. Under the old system, schools with huge gaps in the performance of their students were labeled as being successful. Nationally, 4th grade African Americans lag behind their white peers in reading, with 39 percent of white students considered proficient but only 12 percent of black students. Things are similar in 8th grade mathematics, 36 percent of white students are labeled proficient, but only 7 percent of black students fall into the same category.

While we continue to make schools accountable, we must also ensure that they are fully and equally funded. Over the past four years, Title I of No Child Left Behind has been underfunded by the President's Budget by \$22.3 billion. In my State of Louisiana, that means that 135,962 disadvantaged children, 6,029 English-learners, and 62,977 pre-school children are left behind. We cannot continue to expect our schools to perform, if we do not give them the tools they need. This funding must also be equal. In 22 States, the highest poverty school districts receive less per-student funding from State and local sources than the lowest-poverty school districts. This is also true of the Nation as a whole. The top 25 percent of school districts in terms of child poverty nationwide receive less funding than the bottom 25 percent. Similarly, in 28 States the local districts with the highest percentage of minority children receive less funding than districts with the fewest minority children.

These increases in funding will go towards many different aspects of our children's education but also towards recruiting the best and the brightest teachers. The difference between an effective teacher and an ineffective teacher can be a whole grade level in school. In a recent study in Dallas, students who had the added value of a good teacher 3 years in a row were scoring in the 76th percentile; while students who had a bad teacher 3 years

in a row were performing in the 27th percentile. We can help recruit and retain quality teachers by increasing their opportunity for professional development, increasing the pay for teachers who work in high challenge areas, merit pay and bonuses for good teachers, and by increasing administrative and professional support for teachers in schools.

The principles laid out in No Child Left Behind give our Nation the opportunity to fully realize the promise of Brown v. Board of Education. If we can continue to fund initiatives which encourage accountability and excellence for all students we can continue to close the achievement gap that plagues our Nation's schools. In 1960, four black 6-year-old girls were the first to integrate two white schools in my home town of New Orleans. These brave children set out as pioneers to create a school system in this country which was equal for all children regardless of race or religion. We must keep these children in our hearts as we set forth to make their dream truly a reality. On this 50th commemoration of the Brown decision, I hope that my colleagues will join with me in ensuring that every child receives access to the same high quality education.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

(At the request of Mr. DASCHLE, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor children across the Nation who live in foster care and the admirable adults who protect and care for them. Currently, there are over half a million children in foster care in the United States—a number that has doubled since 1987. Coming from every socioeconomic background, these innocent children cannot live at home due to troubling family situations. Luckily, 170,000 foster families have opened their hearts and homes to these disadvantaged children.

Children enter foster care for a number of reasons. For some children, the journey begins at birth. Other children come to the attention of child welfare when a teacher, a social worker, a police officer, or a neighbor reports suspected child maltreatment. Often, these children have experienced physical or sexual abuse at the hands of a loved and trusted adult or have been woefully neglected by their caregivers. On average, children stay in foster care for 33 months.

Foster parents meet a special need in our society by ensuring that foster children receive attention, love, and health and educational services. In doing so, they help to restore a sense of hope and stability in the lives of our country's youth.

In my home State of Illinois, we are doing our part to recognize the selfless

contributions made by foster parents. On April 26, Governor Rod Blagojevich proclaimed May 2004 "Foster Parent Appreciation Month." The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is the Nation's largest child welfare agency accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services.

Illinois DCFS is working to reduce the number of children who require foster care. Through a program called Front End Redesign, early intervention services are provided to families after their needs become apparent to prevent the need for a child to be placed in foster care. For four consecutive years, Illinois has been a national leader in adoptions. With an increasing emphasis on early intervention and adoption, the number of Illinois children in foster care has declined from 51,331 children in 1997 to 19,297 children in 2004.

We still have a great demand—not only in Illinois but in States across the Nation—for additional caring adults to open their homes to foster children. Teenagers, adolescent moms and their babies, children with special needs, and sibling groups are some of the children most in need of foster and adoptive parents.

All children can reach their greatest potential when they live in safe, stable, and nurturing families. Yet far too many children lack this fundamental foundation. Foster parents, as well as the professionals and volunteers working within state child welfare programs, deserve our gratitude and respect for the sacrifices they make every day to ensure that our children—our Nation's future—receive the support they need as they mature into adulthood.●

RECOGNITION OF DR. CHARLES IRVIN HUDSON

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, like so many of the people who were fortunate enough to know him, I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of a dear friend and true leader, Dr. Charles Irvin Hudson. Dr. Hudson, known to many affectionately as "Doc," died unexpectedly May 7, 2004, at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital in Baton Rouge, LA, at the age of 72.

Doc Hudson was an educator and community leader in St. Landry Parish for nearly 50 years. He demonstrated his commitment to education by serving as a high school mathematics teacher for 10 years and later as the principal of two elementary schools, for which he received numerous awards and honors.

But Doc Hudson was equally committed to public service, and served his community as an elected official for nearly 30 years. First elected to the Opelousas City Council in 1974, he was to serve for three consecutive 4-year terms before becoming deputy secretary for the Louisiana State Department of Transportation and Development from 1984-88. Doc Hudson was

then elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1991 where he served till his passing.

Throughout his remarkable career, Doc worked tirelessly for the people of St. Landry Parish and the State of Louisiana. He fought for both decency and accountability in our schools, worked to improve the quality of life for everyone in District 40, and developed warm, quality relationships with all who met him.

It was my privilege to have worked very closely with Doc on a number of occasions and to benefit from the wisdom of his counsel and the breadth of his understanding. I am honored to have known and learned from a man of such high moral character.

Representative Hudson will be remembered for his nearly 30 years of service in public life and 20 years as an educator, and for the great value he placed on developing relationships with people. He rooted his work in his personal experiences with the people affected by the issues. His dedication to people will stand as a legacy from which future generations will learn.

On behalf of the entire State of Louisiana, I pay tribute to this courageous statesman and convey my most respectful condolences to his family and to all who knew him.●

H-2B VISA CRISIS

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, today I would like to discuss my disappointment with the failure to address an issue of critical importance to small businesses around the country—the need to consider legislation temporarily raising the cap on the number of H-2B visas for this fiscal year.

As many of my colleagues know after hearing from their constituents, the limit on the number of H-2B visas that could be issued this fiscal year was reached in early March. The H-2B cap was reached less than halfway through the current fiscal year and has caused critical problems around the country. This is especially true for those small businesses that rely on H-2B visas to completely fill their staffing needs over the summer months. A business may apply for a H-2B visa no sooner than 120 days before the individual is needed for employment, and the cap was reached as businesses were applying for their summer positions.

I quickly heard from many Vermont businesses expressing their concerns about not being able to obtain these needed workers, and I was pleased to join Senator KENNEDY in introducing the Save the Summer Act on March 29, 2004. This commonsense approach would raise the cap on H-2B visas for this fiscal year by 40,000. This is a simple, straightforward, easy-to-understand-and-implement solution to this problem. I was pleased that the bill had bipartisan support when it was introduced and I was hopeful that it could be considered and passed quickly in the Senate. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.

The next day, on March 30, Senator HATCH introduced the Summer Operations and Services Relief and Reform Act that addressed the H-2B cap problem in a different manner. While I felt that this legislation addressed the problem in a less clear, more complicated way, I was very pleased that the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, Senator HATCH, and the Judiciary Committee's Immigration Subcommittee chairman, Senator CHAMBLISS, recognized that there was a problem that had to be immediately addressed.

In the normal legislative process, the next step should have been for the two sides to sit down and try to work through the differences between the bills and then quickly pass legislation to solve this problem. However, in this case, the Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee were not in agreement on how to address the matter and began to negotiate among themselves. Unfortunately, they chose not to negotiate with the supporters of the Save the Summer Act until they had reached a consensus. Supposedly, more than a month after the bill was introduced, the Republicans finally reached an agreement amongst themselves.

Although the majority reached a consensus, the business community and the Department of Homeland Security raised concerns about the Republican agreement. Thus, the Republicans have gone back to the drawing board and are once again negotiating amongst themselves.

It is now the day before the Senate will take its break for the Memorial Day holiday. Many think of Memorial Day weekend as the unofficial beginning of summer. However, almost 2 months after legislation had been introduced, businesses around the country that were counting on the Congress to solve this problem still do not have an answer. Summer may have begun, but for many businesses, this summer season will not be something to celebrate.

Senator KENNEDY and I introduced a simple, easy solution to this problem on March 29 that would have allowed businesses to obtain the employees they desperately need for the summer, while giving the Congress the opportunity to address the long-term issues with the H-2B program. However, the Republican leadership will not allow the Senate to pass this legislation with an overwhelming vote.

It has been almost 2 months since legislation was introduced, almost 3 months since the problem arose, and the Republicans are still debating the issue internally. The Senate should pass the Save the Summer Act immediately and help our Nation's small businesses.●

HONORING RETIRING TEACHERS

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to honor five outstanding