

world away from his family and they were never far from his mind. While in Iraq, he had a habit of sending gifts and money back home to provide for them and spoke to them often by phone or through instant messenger on his computer. To make him feel a little closer to home, he also brought a CD-ROM to Iraq, which he spent a good deal of his free time enjoying; it contained over 500 issues of "The Amazing Spiderman" and was never far from his side.

Tragically, Sergeant McGill was killed on July 19 when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle while he was patrolling through the streets of Baghdad. Back in Arkansas, friends and family came to show their respects and bid farewell to their fallen soldier, as his flag-draped coffin was buried at Fayetteville National Cemetery. Kaylee, who had been the love of her father's life, was presented with an American flag and her father's dog tags, as well as the Bronze Star and Purple Heart he had earned through his courageous service to our Nation.

Although her father may no longer be with us, I am hopeful that these items will forever remind her of the courageous and honorable way he lived his life. Words cannot adequately express the sorrow felt in the hearts of the family and loved ones of Arthur Ray McGill, but I pray they can find solace knowing that his spirit will forever live on in the examples he set and the many lives he touched.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise to address Hurricane Katrina—what we have been doing and what we should do next. Much has been said on this floor about good, and bad, responses to Hurricane Katrina.

This morning I would like to reflect on the good responses. I would like to mention a few stories of self-sacrifice and generosity made by some people from my home State of New Mexico. A team from Sandia National Laboratory's and Los Alamos National Laboratory's National Infrastructure Simulation Analysis Center is helping to determine the impact of Hurricane Katrina on electric power infrastructure and oil and gas infrastructure. The Office of Naval Research deployed an Expeditionary Unit for Water Purification from Alamogordo to create potable water from brackish water in Mississippi. Evacuees have been welcomed to our State. In one of the many shows of financial generosity by New Mexicans, the Sandia Pueblo has donated \$1 million to the American Red Cross. As another example, earlier this month two Dona Ana County Commissioners plan to donate their salaries for the rest of this year, totaling almost \$12,000, to Katrina victims.

Many law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders from across the country are aiding in recovery efforts. One such group is

from Bernalillo County, NM. The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office and Fire Department sent 43 individuals to New Orleans, including 3 civilians and my good friend Darren White, who is the Sheriff in Bernalillo County. The Bernalillo County team spent several days on airboats, searching for survivors. At one point, the Sheriff was thrown from the boat into the toxic floodwaters covering New Orleans. He was sent to a decontamination center, but the experience did not deter him from his mission. Instead, he stayed in New Orleans to continue helping with the team's rescue efforts, which saved more than 200 people. Stories like this make me extremely proud of New Mexico's brave law officers.

The list does not end there. The New Mexico Disaster Medical Assistance Team provided medical care in Louisiana. Task Force New Mexico, made up of 412 National Guardsmen, is helping a Louisiana parish get back on its feet. New Mexico Task Force One, an elite search and rescue team, assisted in recovery efforts. This team may sound familiar because New Mexico Task Force One was sent to the Pentagon following the September 11 attacks to help with rescue and recovery efforts there.

Finally, I would like to quote a September 12, 2005 USA Today news clipping I found particularly striking. A "disaster response director for the San Juan County Red Cross watched as two young boys from Farmington emptied their piggy banks . . . the boys were determined to send their money, \$32 total, to victims of Hurricane Katrina." The parents of these two Farmington, New Mexico boys should be very, very proud of their sons. I certainly am.

This, of course, is not an exhaustive list of New Mexico's contributions to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, and I know that these stories are not unique to my home State. Many people across the country have responded with similar acts of courage and kindness. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of the people from New Mexico and from across the country who are helping with Katrina relief and recovery efforts.

I would also like to mention a few of the many Federal actions taken in response to Hurricane Katrina. Mr. President, 50,000 people have been rescued, and 53 million liters of water and 22 million meals have been distributed. U.S. military personnel, Federal law enforcement officers, and other Federal employees have gone to the gulf coast to help people like Sheriff White with rescue, recovery, and security efforts. Federal agencies have provided millions of dollars in grants for emergency energy assistance, agricultural aid, Head Start programs, and job creation. The Federal Government has done much more, including appropriating more than \$62 billion in emergency funding for the gulf coast region.

It should be noted that these billions of dollars are being provided for imme-

diately needs; the monies do not include funds for any long term rehabilitation or reconstruction projects along the gulf coast. However, such sums will be needed soon, as we face the most difficult long-term situation that America has ever confronted on her own soil. Rehabilitating and reconstructing the Gulf Coast will take several years and several billions of dollars. I believe the proper way to organize and coordinate these efforts is by creating an office that will work with leadership in the affected area to coordinate Federal, State, and local actions and report on reconstruction efforts.

I am not asserting that control should be taken away from the States and cities that were directly impacted by Katrina. Nor am I advocating that this person should play any role in reviewing the local, State and Federal responses to Katrina or in recommending any policy changes that may need to be made because of those responses.

However, I do believe we need someone who can oversee the numerous Federal projects and Federal funds that will be associated with the rebuilding efforts.

Creating such an office is not without precedence. I was here in 1972 when the Mid-Atlantic States were flooded by rainfall from Tropical Storm Agnes. These floods caused the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history at the time. President Nixon had the foresight to appoint Frank Carlucci, his Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to serve as his "personal representative" to the disaster area created by Agnes. Mr. Carlucci coordinated the multistate, multi-agency rebuilding efforts associated with Tropical Storm Agnes.

I believe that a similar office is needed now to oversee the long-term, multi-state rebuilding efforts associated with Katrina, and I have urged President Bush to create such an office by Executive Order. We are facing an important time in this country, and we must carefully choose how to proceed. I am convinced that the creation of a central office to coordinate the gulf coast rehabilitation is the proper way to move forward.

BACK TO SCHOOL AND THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, students, teachers, and school personnel across Wisconsin and around the country are settling in for a new school year. Regrettably, thousands of students and teachers in the hurricane-ravaged gulf coast region have no schools to which they can return. According to the Louisiana Department of Education, schools in six parishes have been destroyed or are too damaged to reopen, and more than 240,000 students from that State alone have been displaced as a result. The Federal Department of Education estimates

that a total of more than 370,000 students across the region have been displaced, and many of them will have to spend the entire school year attending a different school.

I commend the school districts around the region and around the county, including in Wisconsin, that have opened their doors to students who have been displaced as a result of Hurricane Katrina and the ongoing devastation left in her wake. While the start of the school year usually means getting new school supplies, renewing friendships that may have lapsed over the summer months, and embarking on new courses of study, for the students displaced by Katrina, starting school may be the first step in restoring a sense of routine and a small measure of normalcy. Many of these students are separated from family members and friends and from familiar teachers, counselors, coaches, and other school personnel as they begin classes in another district or in another State. We should make every effort to assist the schools that are welcoming them with open arms as they work to make this transition as smooth as possible.

For these reasons, last week I sent a letter to the Secretary of Education, which I am pleased was cosigned by the senior Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, asking that the administration request dedicated education funding for schools in the affected areas and for the States and school districts that are enrolling these displaced students. Our letter also requested that the Secretary use her statutory authority to waive for 1 year the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act for the schools in the affected areas and for the school districts that are enrolling the displaced students.

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath also remind us of the importance of the availability of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers. These personnel work with teachers, administrators, and parents to ensure that students have the resources and tools they need to meet the challenges of the classroom and of everyday life. In times of great stress or disaster, such as a hurricane, these professionals are even more important as they help students cope with the tragedy that they and their loved ones and friends—or family members or friends who lived in the affected area—are experiencing.

This natural disaster underscores the need to provide adequate resources to ensure that schools have the ability to recruit and retain school counselors, psychologists, and social workers in numbers that are appropriate to meet the needs of their students. I share the concern expressed by so many around my State that tight budget constraints and new Federal mandates are forcing school districts to make the difficult decision to cut some of these important positions. And many of those districts that are able to maintain these positions are unable to hire enough counselors, psychologists, and social

workers to meet the recommended student to professional ratios for those positions. I will talk more about the importance of providing promised Federal funding for education programs later in my statement, but I just wanted to touch on this issue here.

As we witness the concerted effort by so many local school districts and States to provide education for students displaced by Hurricane Katrina, we are reminded that throughout our Nation's history, the education of our children has been viewed as a largely local and state responsibility, and the Federal Government has wisely left decisions affecting our children's day-to-day classroom experiences up to the schools, districts, school boards, and State education agencies that bear the responsibility for—and most of the cost of—educating our children. Historically, when the Federal Government has stepped in, it has been to ensure that children receive an equal opportunity for a good education by protecting the rights of all children and by providing additional resources for schools and for such related activities as teacher training.

The Federal Government has a long history of supporting local and State governments in their effort to provide a high quality public education for each child. And we have such an opportunity now to support local efforts by providing funding to the states and school districts that have been affected by Hurricane Katrina. I support such efforts, which rightly respect the importance of maintaining local control of education. For that reason, I opposed the No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB, which the President touts as one of his top domestic achievements, going so far as to call it “the most important Federal education reform in history.” I respectfully disagree with the President's assessment of this law, the effects of which are beginning to reverberate throughout Wisconsin and throughout the country.

As I travel around Wisconsin each year to host listening sessions in each of our 72 counties, I hear time and again from frustrated teachers, administrators, parents, and others about the negative effect that NCLB is having on education in Wisconsin. And the people of Wisconsin are not alone in their concern about the consequences of this law. A recent article in the St. Petersburg Times notes that “[i]t's not unusual for states to chafe at federal rules. But the state revolt against the federal law that filled America's classrooms with standardized tests is unprecedented. Forty-seven states are questioning, opposing, or rebelling against the most sweeping education reform in a generation.”

In Utah, for example, the State legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a bill that clarifies that State education policy has precedence over Federal education laws. Colorado is allowing individual school districts to “opt out” of NCLB. And the State of

Connecticut recently filed a lawsuit in Federal court that argues that the law is illegal because it constitutes an unfunded Federal mandate on States and school districts. The National Education Association had previously joined with a number of local affiliates and school districts from around the country in filing a similar lawsuit.

It is important to note that the Department of Education has made some effort to provide flexibility on some areas of this law in response to a flood of requests from States and school districts around the country. But this flexibility has been narrow in scope and has largely ignored the central concerns of States and school districts, including insufficient Federal resources to help schools comply with the law and the likelihood that no State or district—now matter how great their efforts or their educational progress—will be able to keep up with the law's ambitious accountability provisions, including the well-intentioned yet almost wholly unachievable requirement that all students be proficient in reading and math by the 2013–2014 school year.

While I think we all agree that schools should be held accountable for results, I and many Wisconsinites oppose the testing-centered mandates in the NCLB. I support some aspects of this law, such as increased funding for title I and for afterschool programs. I opposed this legislation, however, because it takes decisions regarding the frequency of testing out of the hands of local school districts. As educators, students, and parents across the country know all too well, this law mandates that students be tested in reading and math in grades 3–8 beginning during this, the 2005–2006 school year. Further, the law mandates that students be tested in science at least once in grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12 beginning in the 2007–2008 school year.

This top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to testing is not good for Wisconsin students or schools. Washington does not know best when it comes to making decisions such as this, and states and school districts are rightly concerned about the effect that this additional layer of testing will have on classroom education.

Connecticut, for example, has requested and has been repeatedly denied permission from the Department of Education to continue to test its students every other year instead of every year as is mandated by NCLB.

And it is troubling that the results of these tests are central to determining whether a school, district, or State is considered to be “in need of improvement” or “failing” academically. It is also troubling that the corresponding Federal sanctions for schools deemed to be “in need of improvement” or “failing” will actually take badly needed money from those very schools. And these sanctions are being imposed despite the fact that the Federal Government has not provided the resources

to help these school succeed that were promised as part of NCLB. I am deeply concerned that the President's budget requests for each of the fiscal years since NCLB was enacted have not provided the funding levels promised by that law, and have, in fact, provided no funding for a number of important programs included in that law.

I began to hear concerns from Wisconsinites more than 4 years ago when the President first proposed his education initiative, and these concerns have only increased as my constituents continue to learn first hand what this law means for them and for their students and children. While Wisconsinites support holding schools accountable for results, they are rightly troubled by the focus on testing that is the centerpiece of the President's approach.

In response to these concerns, in past years I introduced with Senator JEFFORDS and others the Student Testing Flexibility Act, which would have allowed States and school districts that are meeting their adequate yearly progress, AYP, goals to waive the additional layer of testing required by NCLB, thus allowing them to maintain their existing testing programs. In addition, this bill would have allowed States to keep the federal money allocated for developing and administering these new tests and to use that money to help those schools and districts that are not meeting their AYP goals. While we have not reintroduced the bill this year, we remain committed to restoring to States and local school districts the decisions over the frequency and magnitude of testing.

In addition, earlier this year I sent with some of my colleagues a letter to the chairman and ranking member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee requesting that the committee have a series of hearings on how the ongoing implementation of the NCLB is affecting schools and districts. We asked that these hearings focus on issues that are being raised by our constituents, including: the unique circumstances of rural and smaller school districts; the long-term effects that meeting the one-size-fits-all AYP provisions will have on students, schools, and school districts; the concern and likelihood that nearly all public schools may not be able to meet the goal of 100-percent proficient scores on reading and math tests by the 2013-2014 school year, even if those schools show a steady increase in student achievement each year; the NCLB sanctions structure; the effect that Federal funding that is well below the agreed-upon authorization levels for crucial programs such as title I and special education is having on schools' ability to meet NCLB and State standards; the need for additional Federal funding for professional development, recruitment and retention, and for additional training for paraprofessionals, so that States and school districts can comply with requirements for having highly

qualified teachers and paraprofessionals; the toll that preparation for the new federally mandated tests is having on, and will have on, the ability of teachers to spend time on innovative and exciting approaches to instruction and assessment, the instruction time available for nontested subjects, such as social studies, art, music, and physical education, the strength of State academic standards, and the morale of students and educators; the ongoing efforts to align the NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the unique challenges that the accountability provisions pose for students with limited English proficiency; and the implementation of the supplemental services provisions, including implications for Federal civil rights law.

It is critically important that we understand the practical effect of NCLB on the everyday classroom experiences of students and teachers. I have heard from many educators who are already seeing a narrowing of curricula and increased teaching to the test in preparation for the federally mandated tests in reading and math. One of the purposes of public education is to ensure that students have a well-rounded curriculum that gives them the skills that they need to succeed in life. I remain concerned that the approach encapsulated in NCLB will produce a generation of students who know how to take tests, but who don't have the skills necessary to become successful adults. Test-taking has a place in public education, but it should not be the role of the Federal Government to tell schools how and when to require tests.

I am particularly disturbed that this appears to be only the tip of the testing iceberg. In his fiscal year 2006 budget request, the President proposed expanding this testing program to additional high school grades. We should not expand the NCLB testing mandates through the budget and appropriations process, and I am pleased that neither the House-passed nor the Senate reported Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill includes this funding.

Students, teachers, and schools are more than a test score, and education should be a well-rounded experience that is not narrowly focused on ensuring that students pass a test to help their schools avoid being sanctioned by the Federal Government. Standardized tests measure performance on a particular day under particular circumstances. These tests do not make allowances for outside factors such as test anxiety, illness, worry about a troubled home situation, or even the fact that the child taking the test may not have eaten that day. To measure the performance of a school and its teachers and students on two test scores per grade does a disservice to these same students, teachers, and schools. And to compare the test scores of this year's third graders to those of next year's third graders does not pro-

vide an accurate picture of educational progress.

I will continue to monitor the effect of the No Child Left Behind Act on Wisconsin students, and I hope that the debate on this law, both in my State and nationally, will result in meaningful changes to this deeply flawed law that will ensure that each child is given the opportunity to succeed and that each school has the resources necessary to give these students that opportunity.

PROTECTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, here in the United States we cherish and protect religious freedom. Citizens of this great Nation exercise this freedom in many places—in their homes, in their workplaces and many more. But no place is more commonly the location of reflection and prayer than the house of worship—be it the church or synagogue, mosque or temple. The houses of God are infused with sanctity—not because of their architecture or their art or even holy books housed in them—they are sacred because it is where we men and women go to connect to something larger than themselves. We go there to seek comfort and peace. This is, of course, not only true of houses of worship in this country, but throughout the world. It is thus with a heavy heart that I come to the floor today to describe and to deplore the desecration of synagogues that was perpetrated earlier this week in Gaza.

After painful deliberations in Israel's Cabinet, the government of Israel decided to leave standing nineteen synagogues in its twenty-one communities throughout the Gaza Strip rather than lending a hand to their destruction. Despite official Israeli requests to protect the sanctity and security of the holy sites after it courageously withdrew from Gaza, the Palestinian Authority rejected out of hand any responsibility and refused to protect the structures from arsonists and looters. In fact, a Palestinian police officer, tasked with keeping the peace, shirked his responsibility and allowed the mobs to torch the synagogues, claiming, "The people have a right to do what they're doing."

Those acts should offend all people of good conscience. We know too well that where houses of God are desecrated, threats to man's liberty and life are soon found. As a nation founded by those seeking freedom from religious persecution, we know that governments must actively protect their citizens' religious freedom. And they have a sacred obligation to protect buildings not because they are made of stone, glass and wood but out of respect for the worship of God that occurs inside them.

Houses of worship, central fixtures in any community, are places where people gather to serve and worship God, seek his counsel, and share common religious experiences. As an American