

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Senator from Illinois for yielding. Before proceeding to his amendment, I would like to commend the Senator from Michigan and the Senator from Illinois for their comments about the great leadership of Rosa Parks to the civil rights movement, and to associate myself with those comments.

I thank the Senator from Illinois.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3010, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3010) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006 and for other purposes.

Pending:

Specter amendment No. 2197, to reduce administrative costs in the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

AMENDMENT NO. 2197

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I move to vitiate the yeas and nays on amendment No. 2197 and proceed to adopt the amendment by voice vote at this time. I cleared this matter with Senator HARKIN.

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

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2197.

The amendment (No. 2197) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, before Senator DURBIN begins, may I again remind my colleagues at the conclusion of this debate, which I would expect to be somewhere in the nature of 20 minutes, we will proceed to a rollcall vote. We expect it to be 15 and 5, limited to 20 minutes, and then we are anxious to have other amendments offered to proceed at that time.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the chairman yield for a question?

Mr. SPECTER. I do.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to the chairman, I believe this amendment may be non-controversial. I do not know if there will be any time taken in opposition to the amendment. I would certainly be prepared to agree at 10:45 the vote would take place, if that would be appropriate, and then I would explain the amendment.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Senator from Illinois for that statement. Perhaps we ought to just formalize it in a unanimous consent agreement that the vote will occur at 10:45.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2196

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside any pending amendment and call up amendment No. 2196, which is filed at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] proposes an amendment numbered 2196.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to submit to Congress a plan for changing the numerical identifier used to identify medicare beneficiaries under the medicare program)

After section 221, insert the following:

SEC. 222. Not later than June 30, 2006, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall prepare and submit to Congress a report outlining—

(1) a detailed plan for expeditiously changing the numerical identifier used to identify medicare beneficiaries under the medicare program so that a beneficiary's social security account number is no longer displayed on the identification card issued to the beneficiary under such program or on any explanation of medicare benefits mailed to the beneficiary; and

(2) the costs of implementing such plan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, according to the Federal Trade Commission, identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America, striking 27.3 million Americans who have been victims in the last 5 years. Not only is identity theft increasing, it is becoming more expensive.

Several years ago, I received a phone call from a credit agency at my home in Springfield, IL. They said: Richard Durbin, we knew that we would finally catch up with you.

I said: What are you talking about?

They said: It is your credit card charges with a major chain of stores that were incurred in Denver, CO.

I said: I didn't incur any credit card charges.

It turned out my identity had been stolen. It took some time, and I finally got it straightened out, but I was one of the lucky ones.

Today's victims of identity theft spend an average of \$1,400 in out-of-pocket expenses to remedy their situation, an increase of 85 percent from years past.

A recent survey indicates that identity theft cost Americans \$52.6 billion in 2004—much of it accrued by businesses forced to write-off fraudulent charges.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, seniors are more vulnerable to fraud than other demographic groups.

In 2004, consumers over the age of 50 reported \$152 million in fraud losses to the FTC, which is likely only a small fraction of the fraud that took place.

A Social Security number is a key for an identity thief. With it, he or she can open a new credit card or bank account, as well as access existing accounts.

One of the main actions Federal, State and local governments instruct you to take in protecting yourself from identity theft is guarding your Social Security number.

Many States and local governments have gone further to protect their citizens. Twelve States have passed laws restricting the use of Social Security numbers, including Illinois where private insurers are prohibited from using Social Security numbers as patient identifiers.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government continues to print Social Security numbers on Medicare cards, leaving 40 million seniors with their Social Security numbers in plain sight.

Almost one-third of identity thieves get access to your personal information by stealing your wallet, checkbook or credit card.

If a senior's wallet is stolen, access to a Social Security number would be simple. Just look on their Medicare card.

Walter Hornby from Bartlett, IL wrote to me to tell me about what he calls a "Catch-22 situation." After he fell victim to identity theft, he was advised never to carry anything in his wallet that includes his Social Security number.

Mr. Hornby wrote:

All Medicare cards have Social Security numbers emblazoned on them in large print. I am sure many seniors carry their cards with them as proof of insurance, leaving them open to identity theft.

Mr. Hornby called CMS and the Social Security Administration, but was told it would "take an act of Congress to correct this situation." That is why we are here today.

According to a recent poll by the AARP, most seniors agree with Mr. Hornby. What is the percent of adults over the age of 50 who want Social Security numbers to appear on various documents? They asked of these seniors, How about Medicare cards? Yes, 25 percent; no, 70 percent. Seniors get it. They understand their vulnerability, but they don't know which way to turn. You need a Medicare card if you go to a hospital or provider. They want to have easy access, but there sits their Social Security number which could turn out making them vulnerable to identity theft.

A reporter asked a CMS spokesperson about whether the agency plans to change beneficiary identity numbers as a result of the rise of identity theft from seniors, and here is what he said:

We're looking at all sorts of alternatives, but right now our greatest priority is implementing the prescription drug program. We

continue to recommend treating your Social Security card like a credit card.

That is a good recommendation. But if you lose your wallet or your purse, you know what might happen. When seniors write to CMS asking to have their Social Security number removed from Medicare documents, CMS sends a reply:

Medicare is required to protect individual privacy and confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws.

CMS is passing the buck. The buck stops here. It stops in Congress. We are abiding by the current law, they say, and that is good enough. But it really is not good enough.

BOB FILNER is a Congressman from San Diego, and he is a person with whom I worked and respect very much. He was attentive to this issue and raised it in consideration of this appropriations bill in the House. Congressman FILNER said, in very simple and straightforward language: No money can be spent on this bill to further issue these Medicare cards that contain Social Security numbers.

The amendment passed with a strong bipartisan vote. But if you look at it, we are afraid that perhaps it went too far—in the right direction but maybe too far. The CMS said there is no way they could cut off immediately the issuance of these cards. So we are placed in a difficult position. We know the problem, and we want to correct it. Cutting off funds and trying to do it immediately may be something that is just unmanageable and cannot be achieved.

My amendment would require the CMS to send a report to Congress by the end of next June outlining how the agency will expeditiously go about changing the system of patient identifiers and how much it will cost. We put the CMS on notice that this is a problem they need to help us solve. They can't pass the buck off to another year and another year of possible identity theft for so many senior citizens.

It is time for the Federal Government to step up the fight against identity theft. We have it in our power to make it much harder for identity thieves who hurt our Nation's seniors, and I commend amendment No. 2196, which I have introduced at this point, to all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and ask for their bipartisan support.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, the amendment offered by the Senator from Illinois is a good amendment. What has happened here is that the House-passed version of the bill requires the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services to remove Social Security numbers immediately in order to prevent identity theft. When the Senator from Illinois outlines the problems on identity theft, he is exactly right. The Judiciary Committee, on which both Senator DURBIN and I sit,

has legislation pending now to deal with identity theft in a comprehensive way. But the substance of what Senator DURBIN seeks is very sound.

CMS has advised that it is impossible to administer the House-passed amendment in its present form, which would require immediate removal. The amendment offered by the Senator from Illinois is a compromise to achieve greater protection against identity theft. It essentially calls for a study to give us an opportunity to work it out in a way that CMS can handle. I think the amendment is a good one, and it is agreeable to this side of the aisle as well.

We are going to proceed to a vote—candidly, so we can get some focus of attention on this bill. Our staffs have called around to the offices of all Senators seeking amendments. We have a long list of prospective amendments, but our experience has been that unless we have a vote where Senators come to the well of the Senate, which gives the managers an opportunity to talk to the many Senators who have stated an interest in offering an amendment—unless we proceed in that way, that we have protracted quorum calls without any amendments being offered.

So as previously announced, at 10:45, by the unanimous consent agreement, we will proceed to a vote. Again, I repeat, it will be a 20-minute vote: 15 minutes under the rule, and a limited extension of 5 minutes.

We have 2 minutes until the 10:45 vote is scheduled. In the interim, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE) is necessarily absent.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 267 Leg.]

YEAS—98

Akaka	Bayh	Boxer
Alexander	Bennett	Brownback
Allard	Biden	Bunning
Allen	Bingaman	Burns
Baucus	Bond	Burr

Byrd	Grassley	Murray
Cantwell	Gregg	Nelson (FL)
Carper	Hagel	Nelson (NE)
Chafee	Harkin	Obama
Chambliss	Hatch	Pryor
Clinton	Hutchison	Reed
Coburn	Inhofe	Reid
Cochran	Inouye	Roberts
Coleman	Isakson	Rockefeller
Collins	Jeffords	Salazar
Conrad	Johnson	Santorum
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Craig	Kerry	Schumer
Crapo	Kohl	Sessions
Dayton	Kyl	Smith
DeMint	Landrieu	Snowe
DeWine	Lautenberg	Specter
Dodd	Leahy	Stabenow
Dole	Levin	Stevens
Domenici	Lieberman	Sununu
Dorgan	Lincoln	Talent
Durbin	Lott	Thomas
Ensign	Lugar	Thune
Enzi	Martinez	Vitter
Feingold	McCain	Voinovich
Feinstein	McConnell	Warner
Frist	Mikulski	Wyden
Graham	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—2

Corzine
Shelby

The amendment (No. 2196) was agreed to.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank my colleagues for the promptness on that vote. The report was made to cut off the vote at 1 minute 6 seconds in excess of the 20 minutes, which is pretty good for voting in this Senate. We will hold the votes to 20 minutes.

We have the Senator from Massachusetts lined up to offer an amendment on Pell grants. We anticipate voting on it at 2:15, but they will have time before the customary adjournment at 12:30 for the policy luncheons to start debate on another amendment.

I have talked to a number of Senators about offering an amendment if that opportunity presents itself. We do want to push ahead.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

AMENDMENT NO. 2213

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY] proposes an amendment numbered 2213.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase the maximum Federal Pell Grant award by \$200 to \$4,250)

At the end of title III (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. In addition to amounts otherwise appropriated under this Act, there is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$836,000,000 for carrying out subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070). Such additional appropriation shall be used to increase the maximum Pell Grant for which a student shall be eligible during

award year 2006-2007 by \$200 to \$4,250, notwithstanding the maximum Pell Grant amount provided under the heading "STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE" under this title.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this is a very modest amendment. It is targeted to a program which is a lifeline to millions of hard-working American families in the form of education—the Pell grant. The Pell grant is the major instrument by which the Federal Government provides help and assistance to needy families in this country. The median income among families who benefit from the grant is about \$24,000 a year and the median income of independent students who receive the grant is less than \$13,000 per year. These families need help and assistance in going to college.

This particular amendment will raise the Pell grant from \$4,050 to \$4,250. The cost of the amendment is approximately \$800 million.

I remind our colleagues of one of the great statements made in this country by an American Founding Father, John Adams, whose 270th birthday we celebrate this week. He was the architect of the Massachusetts State Constitution, written in 1780. Many of the ideas from that constitution have been accepted in constitutions all over the country. The one aspect that has been replicated in every State constitution is the State's commitment to educating children. It is said so well in the Massachusetts Constitution:

It will reward its patron and benefactors by shedding its benign influence on the public minds. Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially of the lower class of people, are so extremely wise and useful that to a humane and generous mind no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant.

That is what this amendment says. We are saying this Nation, at this time, cannot afford to lose these young minds. We have 400,000 young Americans who are qualified and would be accepted to 4-year colleges on the basis of their academic records if they had the resources to be able to attend. It is an indictment of our Nation if we fail to provide these young people with an opportunity to receive an education, participate in our society, and give something back to our country. We cannot afford to lose them. The Pell grant is the indispensable link between these families and an education.

This Nation has always responded when challenged in the areas of education. In response to the Industrial Revolution, we made a national commitment to expand access to high schools, and America prospered. It was an extraordinary commitment and has made an extraordinary difference in the success of this Nation, both commercially and militarily.

At the time of World War II, we had 12 to 14 million Americans who served—many for 3, 5, 6, 7 years—in the Armed Forces of our country. When they returned, President Roosevelt offered the GI bill. That would open the doors of opportunity for education. For

all who came back from World War II, who had been out fighting for our Nation, they would have the benefits of an education. By the millions, they took advantage of the GI bill.

In reviewing the investment made by this Government, the figures show for every \$1 invested in education, it was returned seven times by those who received or benefitted from the GI bill. We extended education benefits in the time of the Vietnam war. Also, when challenged technologically in 1957 with the launch of Sputnik—we had a Republican President, Democratic Congress—we recognized the need to dramatically improve math and science achievement in this country. We passed the National Defense Education Act to strengthen both our national security and our global competitiveness, and the Federal investment in education doubled, with a strong focus on math and science education.

At that time the Federal Government was spending 5 cents out of every \$1 on education. Now we are at 1½ cents, and going south. Do we understand that? Only 1½ cents out of every Federal dollar is spent on education, and we are going, effectively, south. I think this is not the kind of priority the American people expect and the American people want. This is a very modest amendment, especially against that background. The amendment raises the maximum Pell grant by \$200.

Let me first show what has happened to the Pell grant over the period of recent years. Some of us remember the great debates we had in the 1960s. One of the principal issues in the 1960 campaign was: Should we provide help and assistance to young people in the form of education? That was heavily debated in the Presidential debates at that time. A judgment and decision was made when the votes were in and President Kennedy won. One of the first things he did was submit a higher education bill, which was eventually passed in 1965.

There was a great debate at that time: Should we provide help and assistance to the child or should we provide help and assistance to the university? The decision was made that we would provide it to the young student so the student would have the flexibility to be able to go to the college of their choice.

In 1965, when the higher education bill was passed, the Federal funding for education was close to 80 percent in grants and 20 percent in loans, for students who qualified for grants. Those were families in the lowest income bracket. The Pell grant was used extensively and benefitted millions of young people.

This chart shows what has happened with the Pell grant between 1985 and 2005. It shows the shrinking buying power of the Pell grant over the past 20 years. We find that during the 1985-1986 school year the maximum Pell grant covered 57 percent of the cost of attendance at a 4-year public institution.

We see, as the cost of education has gone up, that the purchasing power of the Pell grant has steadily declined. In the 2005-2006 school year the maximum grant covers only 33 percent of the cost of college attendance.

Look at this. This is a chart that shows the gap between the maximum Pell grant and the cost of attending college, which continues to increase. This is a reflection of the gradual increase in tuition over the recent years, from 2001 and 2002 up to 2005 and 2006. This shows the gap—now nearly \$8,100. Here, this green line shows the maximum Pell grant which has been effectively stable during that period of time, while the cost of attending a 4-year public college has been going up and up and up, putting enormous pressure on these families who have limited opportunities and resources.

The Federal Government provides Pell grants. It provides Stafford loans. States and local communities also provide help and assistance to students. Here is an indication of what is happening in our States. This chart reflects the State and local funding per full-time student at public institutions, which has declined some 16 percent since 2001.

What all of this says is that the purchasing power of the Pell grant has gone down. There are hundreds of thousands of children who are not going to college because they are unable to afford it. We have seen that the help and assistance given to needy students has dropped at the State and local levels, but the costs have been continuing to go higher and higher.

This amendment requires a judgment and decision about a nation's priorities: whether we believe, as a nation, in the importance of supporting education and making education available to all young people, and for which we are prepared to support this very modest increase.

It is useful to make a judgment based upon what we think we need here in the United States. But it is also relevant to get some idea about what is happening in other countries that are increasingly competing with the American economy. Here is an example. The numbers of engineering graduates in China and India far outpace that of the United States. In China, it is 600,000; in India, 350,000; in the United States, 70,000, and many of these are foreign students who, more likely than not, will be returning to their home countries.

We cannot expect to have a first-rate economy with a second-rate educational system. It does not work that way. Not only will we not have a first-rate economy, but we will not have a first-rate military with a second-rate educational system.

This is not going to be the answer to all of our problems in terms of education. Later in the debate we consider other amendments to increase support for education and to improve math and science achievement. But this amendment is essential to ensuring every

American has an opportunity to go to college.

Fewer and fewer good jobs are available for those without a college education. When I first came to the Senate, the greatest employer down in Quincy, Massachusetts was the Quincy Shipyard. I would say 90 percent of those workers had a high school education. They had a pretty good middle-class life. They worked hard. They got some time off to spend with their families. More often than not, they would be able to take a couple weeks with their children over the course of the summertime. There was a great sense of community. There was great involvement in all of the activities in the community, and people were able to make a very decent and good living, just as their parents had, working at that Quincy Fore River Shipyard.

Generally speaking, if you look back 40 or 45 years ago, an individual had one job. More often than not, they kept that job their whole life. Now we know that workers entering the workforce today will have eight or nine different jobs during their lifetimes. Investing in education and continuing training has to be a lifelong national commitment.

This particular amendment is focused on those who are just entering the educational process after they get out of high school and those who are from low-income families. We need the skills of those young people. We cannot, as a nation, afford to let those skills go untapped. We cannot effectively write off a whole segment of our Nation because it's too expensive to go on into higher education. And too often, that is what is happening.

We have all seen the statistics about the increased cost of gasoline, the increased cost of prescription drugs, the increased cost of energy, particularly in my part of the country. We have talked about that and debated it here in the last few weeks.

But we have also seen at other times that those in the basic middle income, even though they have seen very dramatic increases in productivity, in what they have been able to produce, have not seen a significant increase in their wages or in their family income over the period of these past years. That is a fact. That has been a reality. So there is increasing pressure.

We find out that even for those families who are able to patch together the means to get to college, even with the Pell grants today, more often than not, it takes the average family—even with their limited ability to borrow—over 20 years to pay back those loans that were needed to meet the cost of getting their child into higher education.

We are trying to say to Americans, to children of hard-working American people, that we recognize that education is a key to opportunity in this country. Our chart demonstrates the difference between the lifetime earnings of individuals with college degrees and those without them \$1 million over a lifetime.

A key value in our society is fairness. The reality is, we, as a country, can well afford—in the richest nation in the world—to offer a helping hand to those who have limited incomes in the form of Pell grants. So this is an issue of fairness. It is an issue of opportunity.

It is also a question of competitiveness. If we do not have a solid educational system, we are not going to be a first-rate nation commercially or militarily. At a time when we are feeling the increasing forces of world competition, we see what is happening in other countries. Now we are not just exporting blue-collar jobs out of the heartland of our Nation; we are finding, increasingly, that high-tech jobs are not only moving out, but that many of our high-tech industries are moving out to take advantage of the training and education in other countries, particularly in India, and other places in the world.

So it is about fairness. It is about opportunity. It is about competition.

Finally, as I mentioned, it is about national security. We need to have in our military the best-trained, best-led troops. But they also need the best in terms of technology. This requires well-trained and educated personnel. Unless we have a talented pool of college graduates, our military, our intelligence community, all of our employers, and our Nation are going to suffer. And we won't have that talented pool unless we provide opportunities for our young people. This amendment takes a step in the right direction.

Mr. President, \$200 does not sound like a lot when we are talking about the billions of dollars in this budget. But today we know that a \$200 increase in student aid would mean that hundreds of thousands of students would be able to afford college. Two hundred dollars does not sound like a lot, but it is a lot to low-income families. It is a lot for millions of working families, as they are looking at their bills and trying to make adjustments and trying to make college a priority. It is a lot, and it is something we ought to respond to in this particular appropriations bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my friend and colleague, Senator KENNEDY, in offering an amendment to increase the maximum Pell grant award by \$200. If approved, this amendment would result in a \$4,250 maximum Pell grant—an amount well below what is needed, but still important in addressing the crisis of lack of college affordability.

The College Board reports that students in the college class of 2010 will pay more, on average, for their postsecondary education than any other class in American history. The average 4-year private school now costs \$21,235 each year and the average 4-year public institution costs \$5,491 a year. And every year college costs are increasing at a rate faster than inflation. Last year the Consumer Price Index in-

creased by 5.2 percent. But the cost of private 4-year schools went up 5.9 percent and public schools went up 7.1 percent.

A Pell grant increase is a step in the right direction to make college more affordable. Over the last few decades, college financial aid simply hasn't kept up with the rising cost of attendance. Twenty years ago, in the 1985–1986 school year, the maximum Federal Pell grant covered nearly 60 percent of the cost of the tuition, fees, room, and board of a 4-year public university. Today the maximum Pell grant covers less than 40 percent of those costs. More students take out loans and more are falling into debt. Fifty percent of today's college students graduate in debt, owing an average of \$15,500. Many students owe even more. At Pace University in New York, 55 percent of students graduate owing an average \$28,695. At New York University the debtloads are alarmingly similar. And at Hartwick College, nestled in the foothills of the Catskills Mountains, 72 percent of students graduate owing an average of \$31,206, the second heaviest student debt-burden of any liberal arts college in the Nation.

Over the next 6 months, students in America's high school class of 2006 will decide whether or not to go to college. We need to make sure that students can afford college, not frighten them with a mountain of debt.

More and more, a college degree is essential in our modern economy. And helping students pay for college pays for itself. According to the College Board, the average college graduate earns 73 percent more over his or her lifetime than the average high school graduate. College graduates pay 78 percent more in taxes to public coffers, and they are less likely to draw on public resources for programs like unemployment insurance, food stamps, and welfare. College graduates are less likely to be incarcerated, and more likely to volunteer in their communities, more likely to vote, more likely to raise kids ready for school, and more likely to start businesses that create jobs.

We need to make sure every student who wants to go can afford college. It's good social policy to make higher education affordable, it's good economic policy, and it's good budgetary policy. Increasing the maximum Pell grant is an essential part of making college affordable. So, again, I want to thank Senator KENNEDY for raising this critical issue and working with me to offer this amendment and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the Kennedy amendment. I am proud to cosponsor this amendment, which will increase the maximum Pell grant by \$200—increasing the current \$4,050 maximum award to \$4,250. This modest increase is crucial to our efforts to ensure equality of access to higher education for all students.

The Pell Grant program is the largest need-related post-secondary student grant program administered by the Department of Education. However, for three consecutive years the maximum award has remained stagnant, accounting for less than 40 percent of the costs of attending a public, four year institution. Pell grant recipients have a median family income of only \$15,200, so these grants truly target the most needy students. This amendment would provide an additional \$10 million in need based aid to Wisconsin and give 1,360 new students the opportunity to make the dream of higher education a reality. Our Nation's well-being depends on our ability to provide greater access to higher education, regardless of financial means. I hope my colleagues will support this important amendment and provide the funding that our students need to succeed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator yields back.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have listened to the presentation by the Senator from Massachusetts, and I do not disagree with anything he said. When he talks about the need for more education funding, I agree with him. When he talks about the importance for the productivity of the United States on the economics sphere, when he talks about the importance of education for military preparedness, he makes very valid points. And when he talks about fairness, those are very important considerations.

I applaud the work he has done in the field of education over his very distinguished career. He served for many years as chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and now he is the ranking member. He has addressed these issues of education funding year in and year out with logic and passion.

As chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee, the job I have, and our subcommittee does, and that of our excellent staff, is to make allocations, with a budget of \$145 billion, as to where we are going to allocate the money.

The Senator from Massachusetts has asked for an increase of \$836 million, but there is no offset. That means he has not found something in a budget of \$145 billion which would pay for his amendment which would increase Pell grants by \$836 million. I would like to increase Pell grants by \$836 million myself. The fact is, I would like to increase them by more than that, if I could make the allocation. But the subcommittee is limited by what its allocation is and what the budget resolution provides. That is \$145 billion to allocate among all the education programs sponsored by the Federal Government, all of the health programs sponsored by the Federal Government, all of the programs of the Department of Labor, and about \$10, \$11 billion on related agencies.

It is important to note that this budget contains \$812 million over last year's budget. So that in looking at the Pell grants and in coming to a total figure of \$13.177 billion, a very significant increase of \$812 million over last year which is hard to find in this budget. But that is as far as we could stretch to provide the money.

When you talk about Pell grants, this has been a very high priority item for this Senator. I took over the chairmanship of the subcommittee after Republicans took control of the Senate in 1994. In 1995, the Pell grant awards were \$2,340. We have increased them every year: from \$2,340 in 1995 to \$2,470 in 1996; to \$2,700 in 1997; to \$3,000 in 1998; to \$3,125 in 1999; to \$3,300 in the year 2000; \$3,750 in 2001; \$4,000 in 2002, and \$4,050 in 2003. We had to maintain it at the same level in 2004; in 2005, the same. That is where we stand. We had to allocate last year \$4.3 billion to pay off an estimated shortfall in the Pell grants. So we have paid a lot of attention to Pell grants and have put this on a very high priority basis.

There are quite a number of other programs in our education budget which are directed to the same kinds of considerations so eloquently articulated by the Senator from Massachusetts. Student loans are a very big point. This is well known. I think it is worth noting that the new student loan volume for 2006 fiscal year is in excess of \$62 billion, which is \$10 billion over the amount which was available in fiscal year 2004.

It is also important to note that there are a number of other programs which are directed to the same beneficiaries who are recipients of the Pell grants. We have, for example, \$805 million for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program, which is an increase of \$26 million. We have \$66 million for loan cancellations. The Perkins loan program supports more than \$1 billion in low-interest loans to undergraduate students, and there is funding for loan cancellations. We have \$990 million in the Federal Work-Study Program. We have over \$65 million for Leveraging Education Assistant Partnership programs. We have quite a number of programs.

Tax credits and deductions in 2006 are valued at a savings of \$3.2 billion for students and families through the HOPE Scholarship tax credit; \$2.1 billion under the Lifetime Learning Credit; \$1.8 billion for the above-the-line deduction on higher education expenses; and \$810 million in deductions for interest paid on student loans.

These are a variety of programs which are targeted and directed at people who need help, who have loans, who can't pay their loans. None of that is to say that the Pell grants are not vital and that we wouldn't be in a preferable position nationally if we had the funds to increase the Pell grants.

If the Senator from Massachusetts or anyone has any idea as to how to stretch these dollars further, I am in-

terested to hear. If anybody has an idea of increasing funding in any particular line as a priority over some of the other \$145 billion we have in this bill, I would be interested to hear and weigh that too. But on the basis of this record, we have stretched the dollars as far as we can. As much as I agree with everything the Senator from Massachusetts has said, and as much as I would like to raise the Pell grants, the budget resolution does not give me, as chairman, the discretion to do so.

For the edification of anybody who may be watching on C-SPAN 2, listening to this debate—and I have at least a few relatives listening—the next movement is to raise a point of order, although this may not be the appropriate time with further debate to take place. But I do think it is in order now to propound a unanimous consent request which will formalize the informal agreement which Senator KENNEDY and I arrived at earlier for 2:15 vote.

I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 today, the Senate proceed to a vote in relation to the Kennedy amendment on Pell grants; provided further, that there be 2 minutes equally divided for debate prior to that vote and that no second degree be in order to the amendment prior to the vote.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SPECTER. We may consume all the time until 12:30, but there is a possibility that we may not. So if any other Senator has an amendment to offer, I urge that Senator to come to the floor at this time so that we can utilize all of the floor time for debate on this important bill.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I see the Senator from New Hampshire on the floor. As I understand, he wanted to be able to offer amendments.

Mr. SUNUNU. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. That would not upset the current situation. I am glad to yield to him.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

AMENDMENT NO. 2214

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, as the Senator from Massachusetts indicated, I would like to rise very briefly to offer two amendments and then allow the Senator from Massachusetts to continue with the remarks on his own amendment. I will offer a few remarks, but hopefully we can work out the issues that might exist on these two amendments.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside that I might call up amendment No. 2214.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. SUNUNU] proposes an amendment numbered 2214.

Mr. SUNUNU. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide for the funding of the Low-Vision Rehabilitation Services Demonstration Project)

After section 221, insert the following:

SEC. 222. For carrying out the Low-Vision Rehabilitation Services Demonstration Project by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, an additional \$5,000,000: *Provided*, That funds made available for general department management under the heading General Department Management under the heading Office of the Secretary are reduced by \$5,000,000.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, this amendment calls for \$5 million to be allocated to a vision rehabilitation therapy demonstration program under Medicare. It is an amendment that is fully offset. This is a demonstration program that was established under report language crafted by Chairman SPECTER last year. This is an opportunity to give seniors additional independence by helping to cover some of the cost of vision rehabilitation therapy for those who have vision impairment. It helps them to do the very basic things of getting around their home, getting outside the home, doing errands. By maintaining this independence by dealing with vision problems, we reduce the risk of injury and the costs of injuries associated with vision impairment.

As I indicated, it is offset. It is an existing program. This additional \$5 million in funding would ensure that the demonstration is conducted across a number of States, a number of cities, so that CMS has the data it needs to judge the efficacy of the program.

I encourage my colleagues to support the amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 2215

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set the pending amendments aside, and I call up amendment No. 2215.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. SUNUNU] proposes an amendment numbered 2215.

Mr. SUNUNU. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase funding for community health centers)

At the appropriate place in title II, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Amounts appropriated in this title for community health center programs under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b) shall be increased by \$198,560,000. Notwithstanding any other pro-

vision of this Act, amounts appropriated under this Act shall be reduced on a pro rata basis by \$198,560,000.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, this second amendment deals with community health center funding. Community health centers have been supported broadly in Congress and very broadly by the administration. What this amendment does is bring the appropriate level of funding for community health centers in this bill up to the level requested by the President. Less than 25 percent of the applications for new community health centers were funded last year. That indicates a need for continued significant levels of funding.

Health centers are the first line of defense for those who are served by Medicaid, for those without insurance, and for those who are underinsured. Community health centers provide a very strong, competent, qualified level of service. They are absolutely instrumental in today's health care environment.

This brings the funding up to the President's requested level. It is offset so it is not subject to a point of order. This bill is about setting priorities. I respect the challenges the chairman and the members of the subcommittee have to deal with in setting priorities. It is never easy. I provide a fractional across-the-board reduction to support this additional \$200 million, but I am certainly willing to work with the chairman and members of the subcommittee to find another appropriate offset. I hope he and the Members of the Senate will support my amendment.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for coming to the floor to offer these amendments to move the bill along.

His amendment for \$198.5 million for community health centers is certainly directed to a good program. These are very important health centers which are of great assistance to the American people. In the allocations of the funding, we have allocated for the next fiscal year in excess of \$2 billion, \$2,037,871,000. The figure I gave was the request, but the allocation is \$1,839,311,000, which is an increase of \$105 million over last year. Similar to the considerations on the amendment by the Senator from Massachusetts, the subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee have given deliberation to the various priorities and believe this is the right figure.

It is a customary approach to suggest an across-the-board cut. If you fractionalize it, it comes out to a small figure. But still, it is important. It comes out of the National Institutes of Health. It comes out of the Centers for Disease Control. It comes out of many programs which are, I am at a loss as to whether to say, barely adequately

funded or underfunded or not sufficiently funded, but they can't spare the money. This is a matter of priorities. When the Senator from New Hampshire says he would be glad to consider some other offset, I would be pleased to work with him on another offset. But in order to have another offset from some other allocation, there has to be proof and a showing that adding \$198.5 million for community health centers is more important to America than where we have allocated it. And we have not picked these figures with a dartboard, Mr. President. We haven't pulled them out of the air. There has been laborious effort going through the history of these programs—how many we have, what we can cut, what we can add to. It is balanced off against many factors, including the Pell grants we heard about. So that it is necessary to oppose the amendment, as much as I would like to see more money in community health centers and many other lines.

With respect to the effort to add \$5 million to the rehabilitation vision amendment, that, again, is another good amendment, but, again, it is a matter of allocation and where we will get the money. The Senator from New Hampshire would like to discuss the matter further. I think that is always useful, and I am prepared to undertake that to see if some accommodation can be made short of an outright opposition to the vote. So we will pursue that.

I do thank him for coming to the floor early in this debate and advancing ideas to help us move the bill along, and that inspires me to ask 1 of his 97 colleagues, aside from the 3 of us who are in the Chamber now, to come to the floor with other amendments so we can keep this bill moving.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). The Senator from Massachusetts.

AMENDMENT NO. 2213

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following be added as cosponsors of my amendment: Senators CLINTON, SCHUMER, LIEBERMAN, MIKULSKI, KERRY, REID of Nevada, LAUTENBERG, DAYTON, CANTWELL, KOHL, BINGAMAN, and DURBIN.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania. He has worked hard in terms of prioritizing education, and certainly it has been a priority of his service in the Senate and also on the Appropriations Committee. I appreciate that kind of commitment, but he tells us that we only have a given amount of resources to allocate.

The Senate voted to add \$5.4 billion to the Budget Act. When we voted on that issue earlier this year, it was \$5.4 billion more for education—for education. That was one of the few amendments that passed when we had the debate on the Budget Act—\$5.4 billion more for education. And when the

budget came back, it did not come back with that \$5.4 billion. The House had no increase for this purpose. The conference committee did not split the difference and come back with half. They came back with zero. But a majority of the Members of this body voted for that increase. Now we have another chance, and here we are just asking for \$200 per Pell grant for the neediest students in the country.

The Senate, when it had its opportunity on the budget, supported a very enhanced funding level for higher education, but it went over to the Budget Committees behind closed doors and came out with zero. So he is right. In this particular budget that he has been allocated there is not the flexibility to very substantially enhance support for education; nonetheless, I think this amendment reflects the priorities of the Senate in the earlier part of the year and reflects the priorities of the American people.

I am reminded that it isn't just the families who are affected. It isn't just the education community. The business community also strongly supports increased access to higher education. Business leaders agree that education is essential to our competitiveness. Listen to what the Committee for Economic Development says in a recent report:

Education has been a major source of productivity growth in the United States during the postwar era. Education increases productive human capital, which in turn contributes to overall increases in economic growth. Increases in a country's average level of educational attainment by 1 year can generate sizable increases in the annual economic growth, as much as 6 to 16 percent.

Look at what happens, Mr. President. Low income students enroll in college at less than half the rate of their high-income peers. These are students who are qualified for college—who worked hard, took rigorous courses and prepared for college. And once they enroll, only 6 percent of those low-income students receive a BA compared to 40 percent of those in the higher income levels. We are talking about children with comparable levels of academic achievement. Why is this happening? They are equally qualified students, but they have to leave college because of financial need. That is what this amendment is addressing. It is a question of priorities. We have the vote. If we are able to get the votes on the floor of the Senate, this will happen. This must be a priority.

It certainly is for Natalie from Turners Falls, MA, a single mother enrolled in college for the first time, who always lived below the Federal poverty line. She writes that without Pell grants "I would be stuck in this way of life with no 'light' to look forward to. . . . Knowledge is power and education is key."

It certainly is for Mary Susan from Sacramento, CA, who went to college and became a teacher. She writes: I would not have been able to go to college to become a teacher if I didn't

have a Pell grant. I have been telling students at the low-income school I work at that they can go to college, too, if they study hard and get good grades. But if the Pell grants are not available, many will not be able to go to college.

Sara from Pensacola, FL, received Pell grants when she was a single mother enrolled in community college and later a 4-year college. She received her BA in English and is now employed making four times the income she made before earning her degree.

She writes: The Pell grant saw me through college. Without it, there was no way I could afford to go to school. The Pell grant works.

Yvonne from Port Richey, FL, served in the Air Force, then held a civilian job which she lost after September 11. She is now a single mother back in school. She writes: If it were not for the Pell grants I would not be able to return to school and be retrained for a new career.

Jen from Denver, CO, writes: The only way I was able to attend college was with grants and loans. Sixty thousand dollars later I have a college degree. Obviously, with loans this high I was not fortunate to have parental help. The \$2,000 a year I received from the Pell grant was substantial even though so little. To take this away from students is a tragedy. Cutting funding for education of any kind is wrong.

That is a person with a very modest Pell grant. You see what a difference a few dollars makes.

Scott in Georgia received Pell grants during college, which helped him put himself through college. He writes: Pell grants gave me the ability to focus more on school and work less part-time hours. I am extremely grateful that the Pell grant ensured that I didn't make any rash decisions based on lack of finances.

I am sure the Senator from Pennsylvania has had the same experience I have had. You go to so many of these community colleges where these Pell grants offer the opportunity for students, and during the break time students—instead of talking about their books, instead of talking about lectures—are talking about their next job or where they are going to get the next job and what it is like to be working in that particular job. That is what is happening increasingly as our young gifted, talented people are being constantly squeezed. Our country is becoming more divided between the haves and have-nots. The Pell grant, which has been the key to opportunity, has always been something that has kept the door constantly open for so many young people.

As I say, it is the key to opportunity. It is the key to competitiveness, the key to national security. And it is the real key to fairness. Education ought to have a very special place in our national priorities.

I appreciate what the chairman has done in the area of education, but it

does seem to me that the Senate as a whole should reflect that kind of high priority by ensuring expansive opportunities so our young people who have gifts and talents are able to get into school—public and private universities, community colleges, and others—and they are able to be a part of the American dream.

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

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

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, just by way of a very brief comment as to the contentions raised by the Senator from Massachusetts, I recall his amendment on the budget resolution for \$5 billion. I recall it very well because I voted for it. As I recollect it—we are checking the record now—it was a one-vote margin. There was considerable consternation about not having that amendment go to conference. I stayed with the Senator from Massachusetts on the \$5 billion because I share his concern for education. And then it went to conference, as our procedures moved it through, and it was dropped. So Senator KENNEDY's \$5 billion with which I agreed is not there anymore. And if it were there, we would have a good bit more money to add to the Pell grants. If I could find more money for the Pell grants, I would like to. If we could replay the cards of what happened on the \$5 billion, I would like to do that, too. But I am confronted with a situation where I have an allocation that came through the process of the Senate, and I have to work within that framework. The priorities are established as best we can.

I think it is appropriate now for Senators who have the floor—we are going to vote at 2:15—to raise the point of order so it is on the record.

Mr. President, in anticipation of the vote at 2:15 for purposes of the record, I do raise a point of order under section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended, that the amendment provides budget authority and outlays in excess of the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation under the fiscal year 2006 concurrent resolution on the budget and therefore is not in order.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, pursuant to section 904 of the Budget Act of 1974 I move to waive the applicable section of the Budget Act in reference to the pending amendment, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second. The yeas and nays are ordered.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, we have 33 minutes between now and the time of our policy luncheons when it is our practice to adjourn, so I would encourage my colleagues to come to the

floor to offer an amendment. In the absence of any other Senator in the Chamber seeking recognition, 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. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TIMEFRAME FOR U.S. MILITARY MISSION IN IRAQ

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I had the opportunity to give three speeches on the floor so far about issues concerning the fight against terrorism globally and the relationship of the Iraq war to that struggle and that battle.

Today, I come to the floor to talk about why I think we need a timeframe for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. I do not mean a rigid timetable, nor do I mean a timetable that is not connected to clear and achievable benchmarks. But what we do need is a public, flexible, realistic timetable that will tell people when and how we expect to finish the military mission in Iraq.

As my colleagues may know, I have suggested a target date of December 31, 2006, the end of next year, for the completion of our military mission. Today, I want to talk a little bit about why a flexible timetable for withdrawal will help make the U.S. stronger and our enemies weaker.

Some have argued that a timetable is designed to appeal to the American public, that it has no relationship to our security or to our achieving policy goals in Iraq. Actually, it is just the opposite. I proposed a timeframe because I think it has everything to do with improving our national security strategy.

Our fundamental national security goal must be to combat the global terrorist networks that attacked and continue to threaten the United States. An increasing number of military experts and members of the public have concluded that our military presence in Iraq is not consistent with that goal and that it is, in fact, undermining that goal. I think it has become increasingly clear that we have created a breeding ground for terrorism in Iraq and that the apparent indefinite presence of tens of thousands of U.S. troops is often fueling, not dampening, the insurgency in that country.

Melvin Laird, a former Republican Congressman from my State of Wisconsin, who was the Defense Secretary under Richard Nixon, said:

We owe it to the rest of the people back home to let them know there is an exit strategy. And more important, we owe it to the Iraqi people. Our presence is what feeds the insurgency. And our gradual withdrawal would feed the confidence and the ability of average Iraqis to stand up to the insurgents.

GEN George Casey, the commanding general of the allied forces in Iraq,

made a similar point in testimony to Congress last month. He testified that:

... getting Iraqis into leading the counter-insurgency effort as they are capable will allow us to gradually reduce the visibility of coalition forces across Iraq and, ultimately, as conditions warrant, to begin to reduce our presence in Iraq, taking away an element that fuels the insurgency; that is, the perception of occupation.

He went on to call reducing the visibility and presence of coalition forces a key element of our overall counter-insurgency strategy.

Melvin Laird and General Casey know that our presence has fed this insurgency, making it easy for the insurgents to convince new recruits that we are there to stay.

Mr. President, I know, you know—we all know—that is not the fault of our men and women in uniform who are serving courageously; it is the fault of the administration for sending them into battle without a clearly defined or well-thought-out mission.

In February, I asked one of the top allied commanders in Iraq when I was there in the Green Zone what would happen if we suggested to the world that there is a timeframe for achieving our military mission. This is what I asked him. His response to me, which of course was off the record, was that, “nothing would take the wind out of the sails of the insurgents more” than providing a clear public plan and timeframe for a remaining U.S. mission.

The President himself in June told the Nation that he did not support putting more troops into Iraq because, he said, “sending more Americans would suggest that we intend to stay forever.”

Even the President has acknowledged the problem with feeding the insurgency if it appears our presence there is permanent, or ever expanding. I think that same logic applies to the President's refusal to issue a public timetable.

To the extent that we do not explain what our military goals in Iraq are and when we hope to achieve them, we are playing into the hands of the insurgents. The insurgents are motivated by our presence and they feed off conspiracy theories and suspicions regarding American intentions. And, of course, our brave service-members and their families deserve some clarity about how long they are likely to remain in Iraq.

The President is one of an ever-narrowing group of people who believe that a timetable works against our goals in Iraq. Military experts, people I talked to in Iraq, and the American people increasingly agree that the administration's refusal to even suggest a timetable for meeting our military goals in Iraq is feeding the insurgency.

The lack of a timetable doesn't just feed the insurgency, it also discourages Iraqi ownership of their own political process. By making it clear that the U.S. will not be there indefinitely, we will help the Iraqis move toward the

real political independence they need and dispel some of the cynicism about American intentions that empowers some of the more extreme elements of Iraqi society.

Finally, a timetable is important because it enables us to devote more resources to the other national security issues that demand our attention. To fight the global terrorist networks that threaten the U.S., we need to focus energy and resources on countering emerging terrorist tactics, dealing with the threat of “loose nukes,” and repairing the damage to our Army, to name just a few urgent priorities. Drawing down U.S. troops in Iraq will allow us to focus on these priorities. It is time to make sure that our Iraq policy is advancing, not undermining, our national security goals.

The administration and its allies have offered various arguments as to why they can't or won't come up with a clear plan and timeline for military success in Iraq.

One argument has been that the U.S. pullouts from Somalia in the 1990s and Lebanon in the 1980s emboldened terrorists and others who oppose American interests. To pull out of Iraq without having put down the Iraqi insurgency once and for all would supposedly be another sign of American weakness.

But our decisions about national security shouldn't be made based on conjecture about the “message” that some might perceive. No one, including the Bush administration, can know how the insurgents in Iraq might feel about the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. We do know, however, that right now we are making the insurgency stronger with our indefinite presence in Iraq, and our failure to articulate a timetable for military withdrawal. We also know that our commitment of resources—money, troops, time—to Iraq is detracting from our ability to focus on our most pressing national security goals and stretching our military to the breaking point. Terrorists will not feel particularly emboldened about us putting our Iraq policy on track so that we can focus our attention on eliminating them. The President suggests that if he issues a timetable for how long he expects U.S. troops to remain in Iraq, our enemies will think that we are weak. But without a plan to finish our military mission, our enemies will know that we have fallen into a trap and we can't figure out how to get out. That is what they will know if we do not apply some common sense to this situation.

When I pressed Secretary Rice on the need for a timetable last week, she responded that “we'd like our discussions of withdrawal and of bringing down the numbers of forces to be results-based rather than time-based.” But of course a timetable should be results-based. As I have said over and over, any timetable needs to be flexible and needs to be tied to achievable benchmarks. The point is to have some idea of when

those benchmarks, those results, can be achieved. Without such a timetable, and without clear, realistic benchmarks, we cannot hold ourselves accountable for meeting our goals. Nor can we give our troops and the American people the clarity they deserve about their mission.

The Bush administration, with all these arguments, has succeeded in one thing: in intimidating people into not uttering the words "timetable," or "timeframe," or "target date" for finishing the military mission. But with the words of Republicans like Melvin Laird and military leaders like General Casey, more and more people understand that having a flexible timetable will strengthen our national security. This is not a timetable where the objective is troop withdrawal, the objective is to focus on our national security needs and the timetable is one step towards that goal. A timetable is not about domestic politics—it's about undercutting insurgency recruiting and unity, encouraging more Iraqi ownership and responsibility, and creating space for other important U.S. national security efforts.

I again emphasize that the timeframe I have proposed is a flexible one—not a drop-dead date, not a deadline, not a formula for "cut and run." It is linked with a call for more clarity about what we want the U.S. military to achieve in Iraq.

Please note that I am only referring to a timeframe for the military mission in Iraq, not for our broader political and other missions in Iraq. We all understand that our engagement in Iraq will not end with the U.S. military mission. We will still have a great deal of tough diplomatic work to do in Iraq well after the bulk of U.S. troops leave, and probably some serious security cooperation as well.

We will continue to devote resources to Iraq, without a doubt. But as it stands today, we have focused on Iraq to the exclusion of critically important national security priorities. And we have done so at great cost to the outstanding men and women of the U.S. military, and to their families. When I speak to service men and women in Wisconsin and in Iraq, and when I speak to their families, their pride in their service is evident and it is well earned. But their frustration with this open-ended commitment, with the stop-loss orders and the multiple deployments, with the extensions and the uncertainties, is equally evident, and it is very painful. We can do better by them, by insisting on clarity, by insisting on accountability, and by assuring them that we have a plan with clear and achievable goals.

We must stop feeding the insurgency in Iraq, and focus on the fight against the terrorist networks that threaten the security of the American people. A timetable can make us stronger, and our enemies weaker. That is the strategy we must pursue, and I look forward to working with colleagues here in the

Senate to move such a proposal forward. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending business.

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

Mr. DAYTON. I ask unanimous consent, the previous order notwithstanding, that I might speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business to eulogize my former colleague, Senator Paul Wellstone.

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

HONORING THE LATE SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, 3 years ago today a chartered plane crashed in northeastern Minnesota killing Minnesota's senior Senator, Paul Wellstone, his wife Sheila, and their daughter Marcia. Also on board were Mary McEvoy, our State Democratic Party's associate chair; Tom Lopic, a long-time Senate staffer; a young aide, Will McLaughlin; and two pilots. There were no survivors.

They were flying to Minnesota's famed Iron Range to attend a friend's father's funeral when the plane crashed just before landing and before Senator Wellstone's reelection just 11 days away.

Paul and I were political allies and personal friends for over 20 years, and he was my colleague and mentor during my first 2 years in the Senate. In 1982, Paul was the Democratic Farmer-Labor or DFL candidate for State auditor in Minnesota, while I was its candidate for the Senate. We both lost.

Eight years later, we switched. Paul ran for the Senate; I ran for auditor. We both won. In between, we officed and worked together on energy and economic development programs for the Governor of Minnesota and became good friends. When Paul ran for reelection to the Senate in 1996, I agreed to be his finance chair. Paul hated fundraising as much as I did, so we made quite a team. Fortunately, Paul's great popularity in Minnesota and his nationwide reputation as champion for important, progressive causes prevailed, and he won a decisive reelection victory. Four years later, Paul helped me win my election to the Senate.

Everyone who knew Paul and Sheila Wellstone knows that they were extraordinary, unmatched, and irreplaceable. Marcia, Mary, Tom, and Will were very accomplished and special people in their own rights, and their losses were as searing to their families and friends as Paul's and Sheila's.

Senator Paul Wellstone was unique. He was the leader, the heart, and the soul of Minnesota's Democratic Party. He had more passionately devoted followers, supporters, and political organizers than anyone else in Minnesota, perhaps more than anyone in our

State's political history, for Paul Wellstone was truly a man of, by, and for the people, especially, as he jokingly referred to himself and to them, the little fellers. He stood for, spoke for, and worked for the many against the powerful, the wealthy, and the narrow special interests.

In 1990, he pulled one of the greatest political upsets ever by defeating a well-entrenched Republican incumbent, despite being outspent by 7 to 1 and being 40 percent behind in the polls at Labor Day. He came to Washington, immersed himself in the work of the Senate, and over his 12 years, won respect and friendships on both sides of the aisle.

Whether they agreed or disagreed with Paul, everyone knew that he truly believed his position was right, that he passionately cared about the people he was trying to help, and that he had the unflinching courage of his convictions. He also had the oratory eloquence to win skeptics to his side and the genuine good humor to keep even his opponents his friends.

He used his skills, his terrific mind always absorbing new ideas, his nationwide network of friends and advisers, his growing seniority in the Senate, and his passion and persistence to accomplish much more than time permits me to recount. During his first term, he authored and passed the landmark "gift ban" legislation that virtually eliminated all lobbyist gifts to Members of Congress and staffers. He was an original cosponsor of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. In Paul's own words, he said:

I am proud to be a politician because I believe strongly in democracy. My father, a Jewish immigrant from Russia whose family had to move from town to town because of czarist persecution, taught me to cherish free elections and the idea of "government of, by, and for the people." But I am not proud of the current state of campaigns and politics in our country.

The ethical issue in our time is that money has come to dominate politics and the democracy my father so deeply believed in is so severely compromised. Campaigns match image-makers against image-makers, pollsters against pollsters, and millions of dollars against millions of dollars. It is a superficial, trivialized politics of attack ads, manipulated advertising and 9 second sound bites. Most importantly, money corrupts the process. This is a much more serious corruption than the wrongdoing of a single individual. This is the kind of corruption which results in too few people having too much wealth, power, and say and too many people being denied a voice. It is the politics of democracy for the few, not democracy for the many.

Paul also worked tirelessly for years in partnership with Senator DOMENICI to enact mental health parity, requiring that mental illness be treated similar to any other illness. This important cause pitted Senators WELLSTONE and DOMENICI against very powerful and profitable special interests—insurance companies and for-profit health providers, whose profits increased by not providing or not paying for needed health care services.