

But today I am here to follow Alex Haley's advice to find the good and praise it. When it comes to teaching American history, some of the best news can be found right here on Capitol Hill.

On January 25, the College Board announced that the House page school ranked first in the Nation among institutions with fewer than 500 pupils for the percentage of the student body who achieve college-level mastery on the advanced placement exam in U.S. history. Twenty-one students, or about one-third of the school's student body, took the exam, and 18 received the required score of 3 or above to demonstrate mastery of the subject.

A number of Senate pages also take the AP U.S. history exam. Madam President, 12 students in the current class of 29 in the Senate page school will take 22 different AP exams this year. Eleven will take the U.S. history exam. But results for the Senate pages are not collectively known in the same way we know them in the House, and that is because the Senate Page School is only half the size of the House school. Senate pages register for the exam under their home high school name, rather than as a student at the page school. But based on what she hears from students, Principal Kathryn Weeden believes Senate pages score very well, but no complete tabulation of scores is available, as is with the House.

House pages attend classes in the attic of the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. They are perched atop one of the largest collections of historical documents about our country. But location alone cannot account for their great success. The House Page School puts a strong emphasis on social studies and American history.

Students take American history with Sebastian Hobson and Ron Weitzel, a House Page School teacher of 21 years who will retire this year. Surely, much of the credit belongs to Mr. Hobson and Mr. Weitzel. But students also find a focus on American history in their work with other teachers. On Saturdays, students participate in the Washington Seminar, a program that explores American Government and history here in the District of Columbia.

Math teacher Barbara Bowen, who is something of an expert on Presidents Jefferson and Washington, takes students to Monticello and Mount Vernon.

Computer and technology teacher Darryl Gonzalez takes students to Fort McHenry and the American History Museum.

Science teacher Walt Cuirle includes the history of U.S. energy policy when he teaches his class on energy. Mr. Cuirle also takes students to Philadelphia for the Benjamin Franklin portion of the school's Washington seminar.

Most students take English teacher Lona Klein's course on American literature, which has to include history as they read literature from the Puritans, the Enlightenment, and the slave

rebellions. She also leads a field trip to Annapolis to see the State house and the Naval Academy.

Principal Linda Miranda has made the teaching of American history a priority at the House Page School, and it shows. It is no wonder the school has received this recognition from the College Board, which administers the advanced placement exams across the country. Ms. Miranda credits the outstanding quality of the students who are selected as House pages and her faculty, whom she calls "Renaissance men and women."

There is no question this has been a team effort at the House Page School, but I know good leadership starts at the top. So I salute Linda Miranda, her faculty, and the students at the House Page School. I hope their success may be an example to schools across the country as to how we can restore the teaching of American history to its rightful place in our schools so our children grow up learning what it means to be an American.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

BIPARTISAN AGENDA FOR OREGON

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, there has been a tumultuous start to this session of Congress with often acrimonious debate about judges, budget, and the tragic situation involving Terri Schiavo and her family. But I rise this morning with my friend and colleague, Senator GORDON SMITH, to speak not of division but of bipartisanship and of the hopes we share for our home State of Oregon and for our country.

This morning marks the fifth time Senator SMITH and I have unveiled what we call our bipartisan agenda for our home State. It has been our privilege and our pleasure at the beginning of each Congress to travel together around Oregon to listen to our fellow Oregonians and to find common ground on issues that matter to our citizens around their dining room tables and in their kitchens.

We suspect that what we hear in our joint townhall meetings is what other Members of the Senate hear as well. Oregonians, and all Americans, now struggle with health care—families and farmers and business owners and health care providers. Oregonians and all Americans are struggling to make ends meet in this economy, and this means workers and employers. Oregonians and all Americans want opportunities—educational opportunities, job opportunities, opportunities so their children have better lives.

Oregon has two U.S. Senators—a Democrat and a Republican—but we realize that for the most part, our citizens are not interested first in Republican solutions or Democratic solutions; they want solutions that work for Oregon and for our country. They want ideas, and they get frustrated

when they see political figures letting petty and partisan differences get in the way of their interests.

In the bipartisan agenda for Oregon in the 109th Congress, we are seeking to expand a number of our shared legislative goals to seek good for our fellow Americans. I was especially pleased to join Senator SMITH as a member of the Senate Finance Committee this year. The committee oversees vital areas of policy, including health care, technology tax, trade policy, and many of the items on our agenda fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee.

We are also, in this agenda, working to expand our reach not only for Oregonians but for all Americans by working to tackle one of the most important and difficult issues in American health care, and that is providing catastrophic health care coverage so that our citizens do not have to go to bed at night fearing they are going to get wiped out by medical costs. This is a matter about which Democrats and Republicans have been talking for years, and there have been good Democratic and Republican ideas about catastrophic coverage for years. The fact is that if you own a hardware store in Alaska, Oregon, Iowa, or Florida, and you have five or six people and one of them gets sick, everybody gets wiped out in terms of their medical bills.

Senator SMITH and I believe we can develop a plan that will bring this Congress together, give us the opportunity to pass catastrophic health care legislation to be enacted and the President can sign into law.

So ours is a bipartisan agenda for Oregon, but it is also an invitation on the part of the two of us to contribute ideas and good will on issues where we have struck common bipartisan ground.

Our intention for a few minutes this morning is to speak on a number of these items—in effect, one of us speaking for both of us. I am very pleased to yield to my good friend and colleague, Senator SMITH, and to thank him for all of the opportunities to work with him, particularly for his willingness to consistently meet me more than half way in our efforts to try to work for our State. I thank Senator SMITH.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I thank my colleague.

It seems only yesterday but it was over 8 years ago that Senator WYDEN and I engaged in a very hotly contested race for the seat of Bob Packwood, formerly the seat of Wayne Morse. I believe he was called "the tiger of the Senate," a man for whom Senator WYDEN had worked earlier in his college years.

Ours was a campaign that Oregonians will not soon forget because it was so hard fought. It was a special election. RON WYDEN won that race, and I narrowly lost that race. Yet, through a matter of circumstances, it was possible for me to continue running for

the seat of Mark Hatfield with his announced retirement. So a few months later, I was elected to the U.S. Senate to the Hatfield seat, the McNary seat, the Baker seat. I think it was a question on every Oregonian's mind and certainly in the press whether RON WYDEN and I could work together in any fashion because of the difficulty of the race we had run.

What I did the morning after my victory was to call RON WYDEN and invite him to breakfast. No sooner had the orange juice been poured than it was very apparent to both of us that we were similar in nature in terms of our desire to do right by the State of Oregon. And while we would come at two issues from different political perspectives, we quickly recognized that on the matter of one's State, there was a community of interest, indeed, an incredible resource, and if we could find a way to put partisanship aside when it came to the borders of Oregon, we could find many areas where together, as a Republican and a Democrat, we could serve the interests of our Nation but particularly the interests of Oregon.

Senator WYDEN is the most senior elected Democrat, and I am the most senior elected Republican in our State. We understand that to our parties, we owe loyalty on nearly all procedural votes, we owe to our parties support of our nominees, but to each other we owe respect, and we have found that easy to come by. So after once being competitors, we found ourselves colleagues.

In the course of 9 years, we have found a very rich friendship. We do not editorialize on one another's votes. We try to support in every way we can the initiatives of the other. And we have found that the winner is not just our friendship but, much more importantly, the people we serve in the great State of Oregon.

What we do today is announce yet another bipartisan agenda, this one for the 109th Congress, a list of items that are specific, some general, but embark us on an agenda which we think will leave our State better when this Congress goes to sine die.

The common ground we have found in some cases is not on difficult issues, but it includes supporting communities, families, and children. Much work needs to be done to confront Oregon's methamphetamine agenda, including passing the Combating Meth Act and pursuing full funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program.

We will help improve access to higher education by keeping 529 higher education savings tax free.

We will find new ways to alleviate hunger and the causes of hunger for Oregon's economically vulnerable citizens.

A major part of our agenda is aimed at ensuring economic stability and growth. This includes defending Oregon timber producers from unfair trade practices and pressing the administration to work diligently for a new soft

wood agreement with our neighbor, the nation of Canada.

We will support our ports so they can remain vibrant. We need to maintain funding for Oregon's smaller ports and work to ensure that the port of Portland's competitiveness in the future is ensured by dredging the Columbia River channel.

Our agenda includes promoting renewable energy and furthering Oregon's status as the premier State for the development of renewable resources through tax and energy legislation.

We will work with our colleagues in the House and the Senate to protect the county payments legislation that brings over \$200 million to Oregon counties annually. This is a program that was started with our effort to help vulnerable rural places that have lost timber receipts to have sufficient resources so that their schools can remain open, their streets can remain paved, and their neighborhoods can remain safe.

We will also work with the understanding that a strong economy depends upon affordable power rates. We will stand up against any attempts to force BPA to sell its power at market-based rates or restrict its access to capital for infrastructure investments.

Before I yield to Senator WYDEN, I note for our friends in the media that one of the most significant issues Senator WYDEN has already highlighted on our agenda is our effort to provide for catastrophic insurance. On the issue of health care, our Nation faces a crisis. Certainly the people of Oregon do. I have always believed that in America, and certainly in Oregon, the loss of one's health should not mean the loss of one's home. So what we are going to do together on the Finance Committee is pursue an agenda whereby people in America will have the ability to have in emergency situations health care for catastrophic illnesses so their families are not left destitute and their heirs are not left bankrupted.

I yield now to my colleague, Senator WYDEN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, the Senator has summed it up very well. I pick up on his comments with respect to health care. As my friend knows, this has always been my first love, going back to my days with the Gray Panthers. I have been especially proud that Oregon has been a leader in this area, first essentially in home health care, using dollars that could have gone for institutional care for home care, or the Oregon health plan, which began the debate about tough choices.

I particularly want to note with Senator SMITH on the floor this morning that Oregon again is in a position of leading on health care, and that is because my friend and colleague, through an extraordinary effort, has been able to send a message across this country that those on Medicaid, the most vul-

nerable people in our society, people who always walk an economic tight-rope, balancing their food costs against their fuel costs and their fuel costs against their medical bills—because of Senator SMITH's efforts during the budget, there is an opportunity now to renew the protections those vulnerable people have.

He and I agree completely that there are opportunities to promote reforms in Medicaid and we are committed to that, but because of Senator SMITH's effort we are not going to put budget cuts ahead of reforms. So as we go to this discussion about health care, I particularly want to commend my colleague because his leadership on Medicaid is part of the long tradition of Oregon being first in terms of making judgments about health care. I am proud to be able to assist in his efforts.

My colleagues will see that the Medicaid reform commission Senator SMITH envisions and other reforms we have worked on are a big part of our effort.

With respect to catastrophic care, what is so striking about this debate is that experts have known what to do about this issue for years. One can get an awful lot of protection for a relatively small amount of dollars. For example, on any given day in our country, if somebody gets sick in a small business, it essentially blows the whole premium structure for everybody. If just one of the employees, where there is a little store of five or six people, gets sick, then rates skyrocket for everyone.

What Senator SMITH and I are going to do in our catastrophic care bill is spread the risk, look to a way, for example, where Government might pick up a bit of that risk. Democrats have proposed it. Republicans have proposed it. Once there is that kind of risk spreading, instead of what happens now when one person gets sick and everybody pays higher bills, Government picks up a bit of that risk and the costs go down for everybody.

The two of us are on the Senate Finance Committee and we are going to do everything we can to try to bring the committee and the Senate together around these ideas.

Members of both political parties have had good ideas on this for literally a couple of decades. I remember talking about catastrophic care when I had a full head of hair, and we should have done it then. Senator SMITH and I are going to try to tackle it. We will also look at some other issues that have great implications for our State but also for our country overall. One of them involves equity for health care providers.

Today, at a time when we have this demographic revolution, and we are going to have so many more older people, one would think the Federal Government would try to reward providers for doing the right thing, offering good quality care and holding costs down. Instead, the Federal Government sends

the opposite message. The Federal Government basically says to Oregon and to other States that are doing a good job, well, tough luck, folks. Instead of rewarding you, we are going to actually stick it to you. We are going to penalize you and limit your reimbursement in spite of the fact that you provide higher quality, more efficient health care.

We are going to try to change that reimbursement system. It will obviously help our State, but I would submit, if one looks at the challenges for Medicare, the head of the General Accounting Office, David Walker, has said Medicare is seven times as great a challenge as is Social Security. And we cannot afford not to have the Smith-Wyden reforms with respect to reimbursement for health care providers. I am very hopeful we will be able to win support in the Finance Committee and in the Senate for those reimbursement changes as well. They make sense for our State, but they are absolutely critical for our country as well.

In addition to health care, which will be a prime focus of our work, Senator SMITH and I want to make sure we promote the use of innovative technologies, making sure that they are accessible and affordable so as to capture the opportunity to use technology to grow incomes and strengthen our economy. Depreciation will be a topic we will focus on because right now businesses that need new technologies to keep up in tough global markets take a big tax hit if they change their equipment as frequently as they need to in order to keep up with the competition.

We intend to work together on the Finance Committee to change tax laws and be able to accelerate the depreciation of equipment and end the penalties our businesses pay for staying on the cutting edge of our economy.

We also intend to promote nanotechnology to continue to work to make Oregon a national leader in the new small science. Americans are not completely sure what this field is all about. A woman came up to me in a small store in Oregon recently and said: RON, I do not know what this nanology is, but I am glad you are working on it.

The science of small stuff is going to be the wave of the future, and unprecedented collaboration between the public and private sectors has made Oregon one of America's leading microtechnology and nanotechnology centers.

Senator SMITH and I joined to be part of an effort in the Senate to provide billions of dollars for nanotechnology that would create regional centers in this exciting field, and we intend to work to make certain that those efforts receive the Federal attention and credit they deserve.

We will also work to build out broadband and the telecommunications technologies. We intend to work again in the Finance Committee to create appropriate tax incentives that will en-

sure broadband gets to the four corners of our State, and, of course, to pick up on our theme that what we are doing makes sense for Oregon and for our country.

I submit that the Smith-Wyden effort, as it relates to broadband, technology, and the Web, will be of great benefit to Alaska as well. We are fortunate to have had a good relationship with Senator STEVENS as well who chairs the Senate Commerce Committee.

The last point I make with respect to technology is as we try to bring all of those folks on to the Web and to be part of our Web-based economy, we should not hit them with a variety of new taxes. The bipartisan Internet tax Freedom Act makes it illegal to level double taxes or discriminatory taxes when one surfs the Web or makes Internet purchases. The two of us will be working on our committees, both the Commerce Committee and the Finance Committee, to make the Internet tax moratorium permanent to preserve Web access and Web commerce for the future.

We want to work together with our colleagues, and we have come today to say we want to promote smart solutions, the kind Oregonians and Americans should expect from the Senate.

I will yield back to Senator SMITH so he can close out our joint presentation, and in yielding tell him that in addition to what we are trying to do for our State and the impact I think our ideas will have for the country in a variety of these areas, technology and health care and the issues we have mentioned, I hope what we are doing in the Senate today will be infectious and will cause other Senators to join in these kinds of efforts.

Very often colleagues have come up to Senator SMITH and me and sort of said, what is in the water out there? What are you guys doing? I have never heard of this. We always respond, try it, you will like it. It is not going to be painful.

I see our friend from Oklahoma, Senator INHOFE, who has always been very kind to me in working on infrastructure and other issues, and I will say that in an acrimonious time, when there are certainly divisions, let us try to find every possible way to come together. We realize it is not always possible to do it, but what is exciting about America is we debate issues in a vigorous way. Certainly Senator SMITH and I do not agree on everything under the Sun, but we certainly agree on a lot of critical matters. Even if we do not, we talk about them in a way that we think is respectful and promotes to our citizens the reality that debate can be thoughtful, it can be contemplative, and it does not always have to be about scorched earth kind of politics. I am very pleased that Senator SMITH will conclude for both of us in our joint presentation. I thank him again for all of his efforts to work with me.

When I had a chance to come to the Congress, and Senator JIM INHOFE and I

were then Members of the House, I dreamed of having this kind of opportunity to work in a bipartisan way in representing our State, and I thank my colleague for doing so much to make that possible.

I yield to him to wrap up not just on behalf of himself but to wrap up on behalf of both of us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I thank the Senator.

I think he said it well. So much can be accomplished if colleagues will focus on the possible instead of the polemic. When we do that, we find that the people's business is moved forward in a positive way and our Nation makes progress.

I conclude with these words: I do not know how long Oregonians will grant me the honor of representing them in the Senate, but I do know for as long as I am in this Chamber and for as long as Senator WYDEN is my colleague, we will continue to look for ways to move beyond partisanship and to continue our partnership for Oregon.

We yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Let me inquire as to what is the regular order?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senators are permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

FOUR PILLARS OF CLIMATE ALARMISM

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I am returning to the floor, as I have many times in the last few years, to further address what I have considered to be probably the greatest single hoax ever perpetrated on the American people, and that is this thing called global warming. As I noted in my last speech, there is a perception, especially among the media and the environmental elitists, that the scientific community has reached a consensus on global warming. As Sir David King, the chief science adviser to the British Government, recently said:

There is a very clear consensus from the scientific community on the problems of global warming and our use of fossil fuels.

Those problems amount to rising sea levels, floods, tsunamis, droughts, hurricanes, disease, and mass extinction of species—all caused by the ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions. The alarmists confidently assert that most scientists agree with this, and they vehemently dispute claims of uncertainty about whether catastrophes will occur.

It is interesting that most of the people who are talking about gloom and