of Secretary of Agriculture is a tribute to his commitment, and I have no doubt that this commitment will bring distinction to the position of Secretary of Agriculture.

Throughout his professional career, Mike Johanns has been committed to the wellbeing of America's farmers and ranchers. As Governor, Mr. Johanns emphasized the importance of value-added agriculture, renewable fuels such as ethanol, and job creation in rural areas. Additionally, Mr. Johanns has demonstrated a keen knowledge of international trade policy, a subject that will continue to increase in importance as the world moves towards a more globalize economy. I look forward to working with Mr. Johanns to ensure that future trade agreements with the food and fiber industry are treated equitably.

Mr. Johanns has also been an important leader on drought policy, a subject that is very important to many communities in the west. I believe that with his experience in this area, the country can move forward in establishing a concrete and coherent drought policy that provides tangible benefits for those affected by this serious problem.

I know that Mr. Johanns will serve the agriculture community the utmost integrity and fairness and I look forward to working with him in the future.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise to support the nomination of Governor Mike Johanns to lead the Department of Agriculture. I applaud the President for his outstanding choice. The Nebraska Governor enjoys strong support from both sides of the aisle, including from his two home State Senators, CHUCK HAGEL and BEN NELSON. The Governor's nomination was approved unanimously in committee and I expect swift action on his confirmation today.

Governor Johann's story starts in Mitchell County, IA, on his family's dairy farm. Long hours working on the farm taught him the demands of the business, the hard work, discipline and resiliency it takes to succeed in agriculture. It also taught him a deep respect for the land and a sturdy work ethic which he says defines him to this day.

As Governor of Nebraska, Mr. Johanns has been a true friend of America's farmers and ranchers. He has traveled the world to open new markets. Nebraska is the largest beef processing state in the country and the fourth largest exporter of agricultural products. Under Governor Johanns' leadership, Nebraska's exports to China have more than doubled, from $51 million dollars in 1999 to $110 million in 2003.

He has also been a tireless advocate for his State's agricultural workers. As Governor, he developed the Meatpackers Bill or Rights to protect the mostly Hispanic work force from poor working conditions. It was a controversial bill, but the Governor was determined to stand up for the right of his workers to safe working conditions. As he put it, ''people have a right to a safe work environment whether they earn five or fifty dollars per hour.''

As Secretary of Agriculture, he will continue to grow and strengthen our farm economy. There will be challenges, including protecting the food supply, and developing alternative energy sources like ethanol. But Governor Johanns' lifetime of experience and leadership makes him superbly and uniquely qualified to meet these challenges.

Governor Johanns says his father cried when he learned that his son was going to become a lawyer instead of a farmer. I hope today is cause for celebration.

I look forward to the swift confirmation of Governor Johanns, and I look forward to working with him to keep America moving forward.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I know of no other speakers on either side.

I ask that all time be yielded on the nomination of Governor Johanns for Secretary of Agriculture.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. All time is yielded.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Mike Johanns, of Nebraska, to be Secretary of Agriculture?

The nomination was confirmed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. ROBERTS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

THE NOMINATION OF MARGARET SPELLINGS TO BE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Margaret Spellings, of Texas, to be Secretary of Education.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to bring before the Senate the nomination of Margaret Spellings to be the Secretary of Education.

On January 6, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions held a hearing to review the qualifications of Ms. Spellings for the position. As chairman of the committee, I am pleased to note that the committee members found her qualifications to be exemplary and well suited to the Cabinet level position. She has been enthusiastic and well informed.

As the President's domestic policy adviser, Ms. Spellings was instrumental in developing the No Child Left Behind Act, and other important legislative initiatives.

Today I stand with Senator KENNEDY, the ranking member and the former chairman of the HELP Committee, in bipartisan support of her nomination. I thank Senator KENNEDY and his staff for helping us bring this nomination to the floor in a very timely manner.

In addition, I am joined by Senator ALEXANDER, who will be the chair of the HELP Committee's Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development.

We look forward to working with Ms. Spellings in her new position.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I congratulate my friend and colleague, Senator ENZI, on his appointment as the chairman of our committee. He is my favorite chairman to the year 2007. I thank him very much.

I am glad to withhold if the Senator desires. As always, he is very gracious, but I am glad to wait until he has completed his remarks. Then I intend to talk about education.

Mr. ENZI. I concluded my initial statement, and I will see if another is necessary.

I yield to the ranking member if he so desires.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I sincerely look forward to working with my friend from Wyoming. We had a great tribute the other evening from various education groups. Senator ENZI met with more than 95 different groups, and in his typical fashion said he was willing to sit down and listen to each and every group. It was a bold action on his part. It is a clear indication he is going to be an active leader in the field of education as he has been in so many other areas of our committee.

I join with him in the strong support of Margaret Spellings to serve as the Secretary of Education.

There is no more important position in a President's cabinet. And I believe that Margaret Spellings has the knowledge, commitment, and leadership to improve the quality of education across our land.

The strength of America depends on the strength of our public schools.

Education is the key to opportunity and a strong economy. Our schools and teachers prepare young Americans to compete and succeed in a an ever-changing economy.

Education is key to our national security. We cannot protect America and maintain our progress in the world without skilled and well-trained citizens.

Edcuation is the key to good citizenship. Good schools can shape the character of our citizens and train Americans to participate in our democracy, to serve our country and our communities.

In short, our schools are key to the American dream.

From our earliest days as a Nation, our country's founders understood this. John Adams, in drafting the Massachusetts constitution in 1780, affirmed that education of the people was ''necessary for the preservation of their rights and

liberties.'' And many other States since have included similar commitments in their founding documents.

With every new age and each new challenge, part of the genius of America is that we have adapted. We have risen to the challenge. As Thomas Jefferson reminds us, ''Every generation needs a new revolution.'' I believe that the revolution for this generation at this time is to master our own destiny and guide the currents of globalization for our own purposes.

No nation is guaranteed a position of lasting prosperity and security. We have to work for it. We have to fight for it. We have to sacrifice for it. And above all else, we must equip our citizens to use their God-given talents to compete in the global economy, not by lowering their wages but by raising their skills.

The price of failure is enormous. Already, millions of Americans have seen their good jobs shipped overseas. Last year, the new jobs created here at home paid 41 percent less than the jobs lost. And American families are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet—harder and harder to live the American dream.

To restore that dream in a global economy, we must remove every obstacle to our vision and look beyond the horizons of today. Of course, we must strengthen our economy so that it works for everyone. And we must invest in new growth industries that will create the well-paying jobs of the future.

Most of all, we must stand with all Americans to ensure that they have the skills and the opportunities they need for the future. We must encourage the study of math and science, and once again create a culture of innovation and progress in America.

That's the mission of the Department of Education in these times.

It is why I welcome President Bush's nomination of Margaret Spellings to be the next Secretary of Education.

Ms. Spellings has an impressive record on domestic policy. During her 4 years in the White House, she has worked on a range of issues for President Bush, including transportation, housing, health, and labor.

Most impressive is her work on education. Ms. Spellings has been a consistent champion for improving and strengthening public education, from her days as an advisor to Texas Governor Bush to her later role as the President's principal advisor on the No Child Left Behind Act. Over the years, she has worn many different hats in public education—advocate, parent, and policymaker. Her steadfast commitment to children and to the institutions that serve them has never wavered.

I look forward to working with her in the years ahead to strengthen our schools and universities, and forge a national commitment in education.

More than a basic value or a founding belief, education has been a force to move America forward. It has been the engine of the American dream.

During the industrial revolution, we made a national commitment to expand access to high schools and propel America forward.

In the 1940's, the GI Bill opened the doors of college to a great generation and launched a renewal of our economy.

After Sputnik's launch, we passed the National Education Defense Act to ensure our global competitiveness and national security by providing low-interest college loans for students studying math, science and foreign languages.

Again today, we face national and international challenges to achieving the American dream—some new and others familiar.

The destructive forces of poverty and inequality continue to prove obstacles to opportunity and progress. International challenges, such as outsourcing of jobs and the rising investment of other nations in mathematics and science, mark a new global standard to drive the world's economy.

In the face of these changes, we need a national education strategy to assure that America can advance—not retreat—in the days ahead. As President Bush challenged the nation in his Inaugural Address today, we must ''bring the highest standards to our schools.''

To meet this goal, we must do more to see that No Child Left Behind truly means no child.

It's not just a slogan. For us, it's a moral commitment. It's a solemn oath to our children, to parents, and to communities that we will fight for them every single day.

It's a promise that they will see qualified teachers, afterschool interventions, and supplemental services. It's a promise that they will see high academic standards, research-based instruction, and targeted help when they need it.

It's also a promise that every child counts—Black or White, Hispanic or Asian, rich or poor. Our promise to leave no child behind means that children with disabilities receive access to a highly-qualified teacher and to the individualized support that they need to succeed in school and in life. It means that schools are held accountable for their progress, too.

No Child Left Behind is an expression of our basic values that we're willing to make the tough choice and the hard sacrifices to invest in and improve our public schools, because they are the ever widening gateways to opportunity and success for every one of our children.

Our commitment cannot stop there. We must do more to help students prepare for college, afford college, enter college, and complete college.

I point out briefly what has been happening when we look at the costs of college tuition that are effectively out of control. From 2001 to 2004 or 2005, the increase of public college education for 4 years has increased 35 percent.

There has been an effort to recognize everyone has some role in making college affordable. The individual has a role. Some have resources, others do not. If they do not have the resources but have the academic skill, we at the Federal level ought to be able to put together the kind of package so they are able to attend college. We did that in the 1980s.

Twenty years ago in Higher Education Aid, we had almost 60 percent of the assistance in grants and 40 percent in loans; now that has reversed. Now we find 58 percent and 41 percent in grants. As a result of this development and phenomena, there are hundreds of thousands of children in this country who do well and are admitted to the finest schools and colleges and universities of this country who will not attend because they do not have the resources. That is wrong. We have to address this.

A college education means more today than it ever has. Today's demand for highly skilled workers has moved beyond the 1950s, when only 15 percent of jobs required advanced skills. In 2005, more than 60 percent of all jobs require some post-secondary education. Of the fastest growing jobs, half require a college degree and the other half require strong information technology skills.

Despite growing demand, in the future, it is estimated that the number of college degrees earned will slow to one-third of its current rate.

Yet, last year, 400,000 college-ready students didn't attend a 4-year college on a full-time basis because they couldn't afford to do so.

In America, surely we can agree that cost should never be a barrier to a college education.

There is another area I want to mention. I know my colleagues are here and want to speak. I will not take more than my share of the time. One other very important feature I hope we can work with the administration on is early education. I touched briefly on college. I think we have to do a great deal more in the areas of math and science. When you look at what our competition is doing in China, in India, in terms of math and science and engineering and research, we cannot take for granted our own prosperity and our own national security.

The best dollar invested in children is in early education. This chart shows results from the High Scope Perry Preschool Study, in Ypsilanti Michigan, which has been peer reviewed, the Beethoven Early Childhood Program Study, and the Chicago Child/Parent Centers Study in Chicago. They all reached the same conclusions: with early education a young person is more likely to complete school, more likely to get a skilled job, less likely to be held back a grade, and less likely to need special education. The results are dramatic. The results are even more dramatic that they are more likely to complete high school on time.

The wonderful book Jack Shonkoff wrote, ''From Neurons to Neighborhoods,'' brings together three National

Academy of Sciences Studies. All of them reach the same conclusion, that the opportunity to make progress with children in the earliest of months, virtually since the time they are born—even prior to the time they go to Head Start or a preschool program—is immense, and we have the proof.

This is an area Mrs. Bush is interested in. I am very hopeful we can find common ground and work on this area.

I believe that every child in America, upon reaching eighth grade, should be offered a contract. Let students sign it, along with their parents and Uncle Sam. The contract will state that if you work hard, if you finish high school and are admitted to college, we will guarantee you the cost of earning a degree. Surely, we have reached a stage in America where we can say it and mean it—cost must never again be a bar to college education.

We must also inspire a renaissance of math and science in our schools and colleges. Over the last 30 years, America has fallen from 3rd to 15th in producing scientists and engineers. In a major study released last month, we ranked 29th among 40 industrialized nations in math.

This revival begins in our elementary and high school classrooms.

Last week, President Bush called for increased investments in the training of math and science teachers in our middle schools and high schools. This is an important first step.

In addition, the courses that students take—as well as the quality of teaching—matter greatly. We know that the higher the level of math courses that students take in high school, the more likely they are to earn a bachelor's degree.

National standards in math and science have existed for more than a decade. We ensure that those standards are competitive with international norms, and align them with the skills that students need to be successful in college and in the workforce. We should offer incentives and supports for schools to develop and implement rigorous standards and courses. High standards and high-quality curriculum are the pillars of reform in our schools.

We must strengthen the pipeline of math and science into higher education. In the 1950s, after the launch of Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act resulted in a doubling of the federal expenditure in education, and helped secure the advancement and later dominance of the United States in the arms race and in the global economy.

But today, out of 15 million college students, less than 400,000 graduate with a bachelor's degree in math, science, engineering, or technology. Only 75,000 go on to obtain Master's degrees in those fields. We need a new National Defense Education Act.

We can double the number of future American scientists by 2010 if we pursue three key strategies.

First, we need more and better math and science teachers in grade schools. We should make college free—no loans whatsoever—for any student, regardless of their family income, training to become a math or science grade school teacher.

Second, even for those not going into teaching, we should make college and graduate school tuition free for middle class and low-income math and science students. These fields are critical to America's future and we should dedicate resources toward strengthening them in particular.

Third, we should expand the capacity of colleges and universities to educate future scientists and engineers by growing the Tech Talent program at the National Science Foundation. Tech Talent enables colleges to hire additional math and science faculty, develop additional math and science courses, make sure that math and science classes are small and accompanied by up to date lab facilities, and supports paid summer internships for math and science college students.

Finally, we can't expect to maintain a competitive standing in the global economy without paying attention to education in the early years. Learning begins at birth, and research has proven that what we do for our children's early education and development does more to ensure their success later in school and later in life than any other investment.

Today, two-thirds of fourth graders are not proficient readers. Less than a third of American students are proficient in math and science. And one-third of students who begin high school fail to earn a diploma.

Early education can change all of that. Students who participate in high-quality, comprehensive early childhood programs are less likely to be held back a grade, and less likely to need special education. Later on, they are more likely to complete high school on time. Later in life, they are more likely to hold a skilled job or a college degree.

It's time that we made early childhood education a priority in America. We need to ensure that every child has access to a high quality early education program.

We need to coordinate the wide variety of programs and services currently available for children. And we must also ensure that all those caring for children have the skills and qualifications necessary. If we are to expect quality care for our children in these settings, then they need quality teachers, who are supported, trained, and adequately compensated to do the job.

America has always dedicated itself to expanding opportunity and embracing the future. These are our highest values, and we must draw upon them to approach the challenges that lie ahead with strength, skill, and confidence.

In short, we must stand ready to embrace the American dream by improving the quality of education in America.

Mr. President, I urge our colleagues and friends to give overwhelming support for this nominee. Margaret Spellings does not always say no. She is not always going to say yes, but she is not always going to say no. We on this side of the aisle are looking forward to working with our chairman to try to make a real difference in enhancing the quality of education for children all over this country.

I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Who yields time?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield such time to the Senator from Tennessee as he might consume.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, while the chairman and Senator KENNEDY and Senator DODD are here, I want to say that I appreciate Senator KENNEDY's remarks and strong support for Margaret Spellings. I appreciate the work he and MIKE ENZI and Senator DODD have done in education and early childhood education, and I hope that is a signal that over the next couple of years we can do more together.

Senator KENNEDY and I worked on legislation that affects American history, and we have another pending bill on that. Senator DODD and I have worked together on legislation that affects premature birth. We have some differences of opinion, and we will make those differences of opinion, but I am confident at least the chairman and I, and I believe Senator KENNEDY and Senator DODD, will work together on Education Committee issues to do our very best to make sure we put children first and our country's competitive position first. I relish the opportunity to work with them. I know of no three more effective Senators than the chairman, Senator KENNEDY, and Senator DODD. I wanted to say that while they were all here.

I once held the same job President George W. Bush hopes Margaret Spellings will hold. I was appointed Secretary of Education by the first President Bush. As I said at the hearing for Ms. Spellings, at my first Cabinet meeting I learned that not everyone in Washington thinks it is the most important job in Washington, because I learned at my first Cabinet meeting that the Secretary of Education sits at the end of the Cabinet table and is the last to be evacuated in the case of a crisis. In fact, I used to tell my friends, if they woke up in the morning when I was in the Cabinet and saw me assuring them that everything was all right, they should know that everything was not all right because that would mean they had worked all the way down to rest of the Government before they got to me.

But I agree with what the Senator from Massachusetts said a little earlier. I do not think there is any more important job in Washington than that of Secretary of Education, who does not manage education. Education is in the homes and communities and

schools, and it is paid for, 93, 94 percent, outside of Washington. But the Education Secretary can help our President put a priority on education.

A lot of improving education is simply valuing education. I used to say down in Tennessee, when I was Governor, trying to get our State to value it more than that, the reason the Minnesota schools are better than the Tennessee schools is that in Minnesota they value education more, that we were valuing fast cars and football games and they were valuing high scores in math and science, and we were getting the fastest cars and they were getting the highest scores in math and science.

So having the President and respective Members of the Senate put this upfront and having a competition for who can have the best ''better schools'' program and the best new initiative, that is the way we should be doing it. I look forward to that.

I believe Margaret Spellings can help President Bush complete 8 years as a genuine education President. Because she knows him. She worked with him in Texas. She helped him introduce one of the strongest accountability programs any State has. She was able to work with the Congress, helping him work in a bipartisan way with the No Child Left Behind bill, in a very strong example of bipartisanship, not just a passive one. But to continue to support it, she worked for the school board association there.

So she knows the President. She knows the subject. She knows politics. She knows the Congress. She knows the White House. And she ought to be good. So I am delighted the President has chosen her. I look forward to working with her.

Now, Senator KENNEDY and Senator ENZI made some mention of a few subjects they believe are important, especially important right now, that they hope the President and his new Secretary will put a focus on. I would like to do the same, in brief.

No. 1, I would like to see this new Secretary and this President establish a point person within the administration for higher education. One of my great regrets, as I left the Secretary of Education's office in 1992—other than I had to leave it because we lost the election—one of my great regrets was I did not go to the first President Bush and say: Let me be the point person for all the Federal Government does on higher education. And why is that? It is because the National Academy of Sciences estimates that one-half of our new jobs since World War II have come from advances in science and technology; in other words, from our brainpower. That is where it has come from. And much of that advance in science and technology has come from about 50 great research universities and the national laboratories we have that are run by the Department of Energy.

No other country in the world has anything that compares with those research universities and those national laboratories. And just as they were for the last 50 years, they will be for the next 5, 10, 50 years the key to our ability to keep our standard of living. We need to remember that we are only 5 to 6 percent of the population in the world, and we may have a third of all the dollars. Now the rest of the world is going to be catching up, and they are already doing that.

India and China are busy keeping their brightest people home. They are busy working on building greater universities. While we may be taking for granted this superior system of higher education we have today, Senator KENNEDY pointed out the rising tuition. I will tell you why the tuition is rising. It is not because the Federal Government is not putting more money in. It is because the State governments are putting in less.

In Tennessee, when I left the Governor's office in 1987, 51 cents out of every State tax dollar was being spent on education, and 14 cents on health care. Today, it is 40 cents on education, and 26 cents on health care; and health care is going up. That same story is true in virtually every State in the country, and the money that was being spent on education and now being spent on health care is coming, for the large part, out of higher education. So if we shortchange higher education, we are shortchanging our ability to keep good jobs in the United States.

We have a number of other issues that have to do with higher education that we need to focus on. Visas for foreign students: The Senator from Minnesota has been as active, perhaps more active, than any other Senator in pointing out there is a dramatic drop in the number of foreign students at our universities. People might say, so what? They do not speak English very well, anyway, when they teach courses in graduate school.

Here is so what. They are among the smartest people in the rest of the world, and they come here, go to our universities, and they create ideas and jobs for us. They help make our universities the best. France, Germany, India and China are trying to keep them home, and we are making it hard for them to get here. We are going to pay the price for that.

The President has made some comments about year-round Pell grants. We have held a hearing about that. Senator KENNEDY talked about the adequacy of Pell grants. We need to look at that. I believe our universities are strong because, first, we recognize their autonomy.

In other words, we don't tell them what to do. We encourage autonomy, and then we give the money to students and let the money follow the students to the academic institution of their choice. We don't say you can't go to Notre Dame or you can't go to Yeshiva or you can't go to Howard. Sixty percent of American college students have a grant or a loan from the Federal Government that follows them to the school of their choice. We ought to continue to respect that autonomy and not restrict it.

Colleges of education, distance learning, community colleges, increased spending for the physical sciences that support our research efforts, political correctness in colleges and universities, the relationship of research universities and the National Laboratories, having an administration-wide inventory of all the Federal Government does in support of higher education would help us put a focus on higher education, and the fact that better schools, colleges, and universities mean better jobs.

There are two or three other areas I hope the President and the new Secretary will pay attention to, such as finding more ways to involve parents in the education of their children by giving them more choices of educational opportunities. I believe the genius behind our superior system of colleges and universities is because we don't try to run them from here. We respect the autonomy of the universities and we allow students money and allow them to choose the schools. If it helped create the best colleges, I don't know why we don't use more of that to help create the best schools.

A third area is to make sure we are spending Federal dollars for children age 0 to 5 as well as possible. This is an area the Senator from Massachusetts mentioned. It is one in which the Senator from Connecticut is interested. The Federal Government spends $18 to $21 billion a year through 69 different programs that dedicate part of their budget toward early education and care programs that serve children under the age of 5. That is in addition to all the money that goes to children because of the Medicaid Program. The Department of Education administers 34 of those 69 programs. We ought to take a look at the spending of the $18 to $21 billion and find out how well it is being spent.

Head Start is just about a third of it. Head Start is not all we do for early children. We ought to see where the gaps are. We ought to understand what the States are doing, what the cities are doing, and then see what else the Federal Government might need to do additionally or what we might change to do better.

Next, make sure No Child Left Behind is funded, flexible, and working. The President has asked us to expand it to high school, or has indicated his intention to do so. We ought to take a look at what we are already doing first and see if there are some lessons that we need to learn from how No Child Left Behind was implemented in the first 3 years so that we can avoid any mistakes we made when we consider going on into high school.

I am a convert to No Child Left Behind. I am a convert primarily because we have a third of our eighth graders who score below basic on reading and

math, which is disgraceful. At least we need to know that and need to know who is falling behind. But this is a huge program, and there is a lot to look at: Achievement in State standards, what constitutes highly qualified teachers, the choice in supplemental service provisions, how No Child Left Behind affects rural areas as compared to urban, the very important U.S. history subject and learning English subject. And we need to look at funding.

Last time I checked, the President does not appropriate a penny. The Congress might as well give itself some credit for this. Federal funding for K–12 is up 36 percent. That is a lot. It is as much as Senator KENNEDY said tuition was up in the last 4 years. State funding, at least in my State, is up about 11 percent. So Federal funding for kindergarten through the 12th grade is up three times as much in the last 4 years as State funding for kindergarten through the 12th grade. But still we need to take an honest look to see.

We put some new requirements, through No Child Left Behind, on State and local governments. Did we properly fund that? That is an appropriate question. We should ask that question.

Finally, I would like to see more work done on the subject that Senator KENNEDY and I and the new Democratic leader, Senator REID, have worked on. That is restoring the civic mission of our public schools. The President talked about that today in his inaugural address: What does it mean to be an American? He gave the kind of speech I hoped he would give: What are the values in our country? What is important to us? We can get all the programs later. He did that beautifully.

The late Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, once said the reason we have public schools is to teach the three Rs to the immigrant children and teach them what it means to be an American with the hope that they will go home and teach their parents. We should be embarrassed that the lowest score that high school seniors make on the national assessment for educational progress test is in U.S. history, our own history. If we don't know our own history, we don't know why we are in Iraq. We don't know why we say anything is possible. We don't know why we say no child is left behind. We don't know why we debate illegal immigration. We could have no discussion in the Senate Chamber that made any sense at all unless we had some understanding of U.S. history.

Senator REID and I cosponsored legislation that passed last year to help create summer academies, presidential academies for the teachers of American history, and congressional academies for students of American history. Senator KENNEDY and I will introduce again this year legislation that will add State-by-State tests and NEAP tests in U.S. history, giving States that option so they can compare their scores. We are looking for many different ways to restore the civic mission of our public schools.

There is a lot to do. I believe there are three great challenges facing our country: One is terrorism; one is preserving our common culture; and one is keeping our jobs in a competitive world marketplace. And the key to that is brainpower and education. Better schools, colleges, and universities will mean better jobs. And with the experience that we have in this Chamber and the high level of interest we have in education and the history we have had recently of bipartisan cooperation, we ought to be able to make some significant progress.

I look forward to being a part of that, working with Chairman ENZI and Ranking Member KENNEDY.

I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Tennessee for his total enthusiasm on this issue. We are so fortunate to have him as the chair of the Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood. You have just seen a demonstration of the passion that he puts into education. Of course, he has covered it from the perspective of being Governor, of being a college president. Probably more important, he has covered it from the perspective of being the Secretary of Education of the United States. Now as a Senator, he is going to make a difference in policy by pursuing that committee vigorously, as we can tell from his comments.

I also appreciate the earlier comments of Senator KENNEDY and the tremendous cooperation that we have had not only on the hearings that we have had but also on the personal discussions on the workload that we have by September 5, when 28 reauthorizations expire. We have to get those done.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am glad our colleague from Tennessee has remained. People may assume I am fulfilling some collegial courtesy to extend comments about the experiences of the members of the committee, but as Senator ENZI has just said, we are very fortunate to have LAMAR ALEXANDER as a Member of this body and as a member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. The Senator from Wyoming touched on the experiences that Senator ALEXANDER has had, except one, and that was as a Presidential candidate. He spoke eloquently, throughout those months in which he sought the highest office in the land, about the importance of education. So, we are fortunate to have him on our Committee.

I can't tell the Chairman of the Committee how much I look forward to working with him as well. I am optimistic about the work we can do on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

I will support the nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education. The mission of the Department of Education is ''to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence for all Americans.'' If we succeed in making our education system as good as it can be, there is no national priority that will not benefit. If we do not succeed, we leave things to chance. So I believe that the Secretary of Education is one of the most, if not the most, important positions in the President's Cabinet.

Ms. Spellings comes to the Department of Education with strong credentials as a policymaker in the area of education. She currently serves as the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. In that role, she is responsible for the development and implementation of White House policy on education, health, labor and other elements of the President's domestic agenda. Prior to her White House appointment, she worked for 6 years as one of Governor Bush's senior advisers, a role in which she had responsibility for the development and implementation of his education agenda. Many of the initiatives she worked on were incorporated into the No Child Left Behind Act, NCLBA. In fact, Ms. Spellings was one of the administration's primary architects of the No Child Left Behind Act, working with Members of this body, and others, to craft this law.

As Ms. spellings said at her hearing, there is no more important obligation each of us has to the American people than to educate our citizens. Like her, I believe that a high-quality education must be available to each and every American regardless of where they live, their economic status, whether they attend urban, rural or suburban schools, and whether they are a first or fifth generation American. I was impressed at her nomination hearing by the breadth of her knowledge and her ability to respond to a wide range of questions on so many aspects of education policy. Her intimate knowledge of No Child Left Behind will be the key to successful future implementation of this law, and I am hopeful that she is up to the task of working with this body to ensure that a greater degree of reasonableness is taken into account in implementing it.

I do not in the least question this nominee's qualifications or commitment. She is in these respects truly impressive. I do, however, question the policies of the administration she is duty-bound to represent.

I had high hopes when this administration came to office. I supported what is widely touted as this administration's landmark education initiative, the No Child Left Behind Act.

I supported No Child Left Behind because I care about improving the quality of education in America for all of our children. I believed that this law would help to achieve this goal by establishing more rigorous standards for measuring student achievement, by helping teachers do a better job of instructing students, and by providing

the resources desperately needed by our schools for even the most basic necessities to help put the reforms we passed into place. Regrettably, the high hopes that I and others had for No Child Left Behind have not been realized. The law is being implemented by the administration in a manner that is inflexible, unreasonable, and unhelpful to students.

Worse still, the administration's promise of sufficient resources to implement No Child Left Behind's much-needed reforms is a promise that has yet to be kept. Currently, the law is underfunded by $9.8 billion. As a result of the failures of the administration to fulfill its commitment to our Nation's schoolchildren under the Law, children and their teachers are shouldering new and noteworthy hardships. Students, teachers, administrators, parents, and communities, are struggling to work with requirements that are often confusing, inflexible, and unrealistic. And they are struggling to do so without the additional resources they were promised to put them into place.

As I have said on numerous occasions in the past, resources without reforms are a waste of money. By the same token, reforms without resources are a false promise—a false promise that has left students, their teachers, and taxpayers, grappling with new burdens and little help to bear them.

Just last week, the President announced a new education initiative that would expand No Child Left Behind testing at the high school level. New testing, combined with new requirements already scheduled over the next 2 years—including the deadline for teachers to be highly qualified—will require a great infusion of resources. And yet, we have recently been told that one-third of the States will see a decline in No Child Left behind funds this coming year.

No Child Left Behind is not the only law which remains underfunded. Today, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, IDEA is funded at less than half of the 40 percent we committed to provide when we passed the law 30 years ago. This means that States continue to bear more than their fair share of responsibility for meeting disabled students' needs. States that, mind you, are facing astronomical deficits as a whole. States that often have no choice but to pass these costs on to municipalities which then pass them on to everyday, average American taxpayers through their local property taxes.

Just as disheartening is this administration's lack of support for student financial aid. Since coming into office, it has done little to help the average American taxpayer send their children to college. The maximum Pell Grant award remains frozen at $4,050 for the fourth consecutive year, enough to pay just 34 percent of the average annual cost of attending college. In the meantime, public college tuition has gone up 35 percent over the last 4 years.

A college graduate earns close to double the amount of an individual who has only graduated from high school. Without additional financial aid in the form of loans—and more importantly, grants—many American students may not be able to afford a college education. Prohibitive costs may be keeping some of our best minds from fulfilling their dreams of a higher education. And yet, this administration has done virtually nothing to make college more financial accessible. Qualified students with the will to achieve should be given the change to do so. Until recent announcements of expanding the Pell Grant program, this administration has done little if anything to give these students that chance. And while I am happy to hear that higher education is receiving long over due attention, I am concerned by indications that the administration may pay for new initiatives simply by cutting others.

Outside of funding, I am concerned about President Bush's proposal to move Head Start from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Education and to change the program's focus to reading. I do not object to exploring innovative ways to help children read. However, it is the comprehensive nature of Head Start that makes a difference for poor children. Head Start is just as much about ensuring that children have proper health care, dental care, vision and hearing screening, as well as screening for developmental delays. Head Start is about the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children. To focus only on cognitive development would ignore the other pillars of school readiness. We need to be cautious about changing a program that does so much good for so many children and families. Our focus need to remain in the development of the ''whole'' child.

I sill support Margaret Spellings' nomination because she is well-qualified for the position and has demonstrated seriousness of purpose. However, my concerns about the nominee are not her personal qualifications but the policies of the administration she represents. I pledge my best effort to work with her and others to find common ground. But, by the same token, I will respectfully dissent where this administration pursues policies that I believe are harmful to our Nation's children.

Again, even though I am supportive of this nomination, it does not mean that Ms. Spellings is going to agree with the Senator from Connecticut on everything. I suspect she will not. But I know when I make a call to her, I have somebody on the line who will listen and will consider sound arguments about why or why not we ought to do certain things. I very much look forward to working with her and this committee in the coming months.

I have often quoted Thomas Jefferson who made the comment just over 200 years ago that any nation that ever expects to be ignorant and free expects what never was and what never possibly could be. That was his statement at the beginning of the 19th century. It is just as true today. That is why the nomination before us is of the utmost importance.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I do not want to turn this into a bouquet-tossing process, but I also want to commend our friend from Wyoming. I think he is going to do an excellent job in his new position. At the end of last year, we got a little bit more flexibility in terms of the interpretation of Leave No Child Behind Act because of the efforts with respect to hiring of rural teachers, and I thank him for his work on that, and certainly the bipartisan firm of Senators KENNEDY, DODD, ENZI, and ALEXANDER is a force to contend with, and I am looking forward very much to working with them.

The confirmation of the Secretary of Education by the Senate, important as it is, is not the only important development in American education this week. I am sure many of our colleagues have heard about the remarks made by Harvard President Larry Summers this week, remarks that in effect said women may be underrepresented in math and sciences because of innate differences between men and women.

I spoke with Dr. Summers this morning. He made it clear to me that he is acutely aware that remarks he intended to be thought-provoking crossed the line. He knows that as president of one of America's most distinguished institutions, his views are heard worldwide. I expect he will continue to express his contrition to the Harvard community and educators around the country.

I have devoted a lot of time to this issue myself. In 2002, when I became chairman of the Subcommittee on Science, I pursued this issue on a bipartisan basis, particularly with Senator ALLEN of Virginia. Today I ask my colleagues the question of what ought to be on the table at this point, and that is what is going to be done now, what is going to be done immediately, to create more opportunities for girls and women to advance in science, math, engineering, and related fields?

It is very seldom, when a problem such as this comes up, that there is literally a tool right at our fingertips to solve the problem, but in studying this issue, in holding hearings on this issue, I became convinced that title IX of the Education Act can be the key to ensuring gender equity in critical academic fields for women.

Here is how title IX reads: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

It means any institution receiving Federal funds must make sure that women are treated equitably.

In the Senate, and certainly around the country, there is a common misconception that title IX is about sports. I think very few people are aware that primarily, at its roots, it is an academic statute. Athletics are certainly where we have seen the most progress under title IX. Before title IX, 1 in 17 girls in school played sports. Now it is 1 in 2.5, or 40 percent.

So I ask my colleagues, imagine if those same changes could be seen in math, science, and engineering, from the 20 percent of science undergraduates who are women today, to 40 percent or 50 percent; from the 6 percent of engineering professors who are women today to 40 percent.

The potential of title IX is enormous. Enforcing it in academic fields could revolutionize the study and application of math and science in our country.

Educators of good conscience should not wait for a Federal reprimand to comply with a Federal law that benefits all of us. Title IX ought to be a guiding principle in hiring, tenure, scholarships, and lab space for all scholars on all the academic campuses around our country. Title IX can finally give women studying science a fair shake where they have not gotten one before. It does not sound like a tall order, but it is not happening. Unfortunately, the Federal Government is not taking the lead in terms of tackling the issue.

For example, I asked the General Accounting Office to examine whether the Federal Government is following the law and enforcing title IX. What the General Accounting Office found was disappointing at best. They looked at the Department of Education, NASA, the Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation, and they found that little or no efforts were being made to ensure compliance with title IX requirements for grantees getting Federal dollars. Of all the agencies reviewed, the Department of Education was the only Federal agency that conducted any title IX compliance reviews. But they have not conducted a single review—not one—since 1995.

The Federal Government is not doing its part to ensure that title IX is being enforced for women and girls with the ability and the desire to work in math and science. I have asked Secretary of Education Paige and the President that title IX be enforced as intended. But today, colleagues, I formally call on the individual who will shortly be confirmed as the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, to work to ensure that girls and women in our federally funded schools do not suffer discrimination in math and the sciences. I will tell you, it is an issue of economics, and it is also an issue of national security. A report from the Hart-Rudman Commission on National Security to 2025 warned that America's failure to invest in science and to reform math and science education was the second biggest threat to our national security. It warned that only the threat of a weapon of mass destruction in an American city was a greater danger. In fact, the Commission unanimously concluded that the danger from underinvesting in math and science and failing to reform math and science education was greater than the danger from any conceivable conventional war.

I do not see how America can meet its national security needs if it is not giving women a fair shake as it relates to opportunity in math and science. So on this Inauguration Day, I call on the new Education Secretary, the individual we will shortly confirm, to take this message of economic fairness and national security to heart.

The remarks that Dr. Summers has made, which have triggered such debate, have generated a new and important discussion about this issue. As the Senate confirms a new Education Secretary, I believe there is no better time to return our attention to the issue of how this body can advance opportunities for women in math and science, not by writing any new laws but by enforcing the laws on the books.

Colleagues, I would say—our new chair is here—it is one thing if Chairman ENZI has to get together with Senator KENNEDY and Senator ALEXANDER and Senator DODD and write a whole new law. Here we have a law on the books, but the conception is that it is just for sports, and it has been a good sports statute. What I am saying is we can revolutionize opportunities for women in math and science if we use the law as it was originally intended.

Go talk to our former colleague, Senator Birch Bayh. Senator BAYH, who testified before my subcommittee, said this was primarily an academic statute, and he would very much like to see it used for opportunities for women.

The conversation I had with Dr. Summers this morning certainly was not over when we hung up the phones. What began as a controversy this week I hope is going to end with a bipartisan effort, like the one that Senator ALLEN and I launched several years ago, to make sure there are more opportunities for women and girls to enter the math and science fields. That is what I intend to pursue. I intend to do it on a bipartisan basis, working with our new chair and colleagues whom I know share this interest.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 26 minutes and 56 seconds.

Mr. ENZI. I have been requested by the Senator from Tennessee to yield 3 minutes to discuss the issue that has just been brought up.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I am glad I was here to hear the Senator from Oregon. I want to think about what he said and make two comments. It is a noble and good effort for us to think about how can we make certain young girls as well as young boys have the opportunity to learn more about science and math and to make careers of science and math should they choose to do that. I would like to urge some caution in the application of title IX to cause that. We may want to be more selective in our approach.

I watched the good title IX can do. I was president of a university which saw a fantastic women's sports program, as an example, develop because of that—at the University of Tennessee. At least it encouraged that. But it might have some unintended consequences because, in many cases, girls are doing better than boys. Almost every liberal arts college in America today is having a hard time recruiting males, not females. In many of the graduate professional schools across the country we are finding growing numbers of women, which is a wonderful development, and they are in the majority. Were we to begin to apply too strict an application of title IX, we might find it restricting money spent for females because they are doing better than the males.

One of the greatest problems affecting our country is why African-American males are not doing as well in high schools, so I would like to discuss that some more. I appreciate his bringing it up. I am glad I was here to hear it.

Second, I have read the comments about Dr. Summers and his comments. He may wish he said what he said in a little different way, but I am also a little concerned about the controversy. I understand what he said is he raised the question: Is it possible that there is an innate difference between men and women that might contribute to the smaller number of women who study math and science and make careers of it?

If he were a politician on the Senate floor, he might think twice about saying that because he might be misinterpreted. But if you are on the campus of a university, you are supposed to be able to ask questions, even questions that are a little offbeat, even questions that are incorrect. I can guarantee you, having been temporarily on the faculty there at Harvard with an appointment, there are many more bizarre ideas than that that are regularly asked and regularly expressed. So he may be wrong; the answer to the question is no, there are no innate differences between men and women that contribute to the reason why fewer women follow math and science, but I think certainly a faculty member of Harvard or the president of Harvard ought to be free at least to discuss the question without being roundly condemned across the country.

I thank the Senator from Oregon for his thoughtful comments. I would love to talk with him more about whether the application of title IX would actually have some unintended consequences, consequences he might not

intend. I hope on all of our campuses and universities, even presidents are free to ask questions and have a free inquiry. I believe that is why we have those institutions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I will not belabor this. I do believe I have to make a couple of responses with respect to the remarks made by the distinguished Senator from Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Wyoming yield time?

Mr. ENZI. I yield 2 minutes for a quick response. This is a very important topic. Everybody has a common interest in making sure there is a quality in education all the way through. I would appreciate the comments of the Senator from Oregon, briefly.

Mr. WYDEN. I want to say first of all, I am talking about enforcing a law that is on the books. All I am talking about is the original intent of a law that is on the books, which is applied primarily to the academic field—not sports.

I want it understood that I am not talking about anything new. I am talking about enforcing the law that is on the books.

Second, making sure that I am specific with respect to what the Senator from Tennessee has said, all I am talking about is that women would get an equal shot at all of the slots in math and science. We know there can be different results based upon the qualifications of an individual. And universities don't need to have the exact same number of men and women for every position on their faculties. But what I want us to do—and what title IX is all about—is make sure that women have an equal shot at all of the slots that are available. It seems to me, if we don't do that, we are not complying with the law that is on the books.

I will tell you that we are not going to be able to meet the economic and national security needs of our country.

The Senator from Tennessee is always very gracious. I am anxious to work with him in these areas. I want to make sure and emphasize that I am talking about equal opportunity—an equal shot. That is the call that I am making today on the floor of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee reported to the Senate the nomination of Margaret Spellings for confirmation as Secretary of Education. I am very pleased that the nomination was unanimously reported and I intend to vote in support of her confirmation for this important post.

Over the past 4 years since passage of the No Child Left Behind, NCLB, Act, there have been—and continue to be—many questions regarding funding and implementation of the Act. During this period, promises were made to Congress, the education community and parents that adequate funding would be provided to ensure that the various requirements relating to teacher quality and accountability could be implemented without creating an additional financial burden for States and local communities. Additionally, States were assured that sufficient flexibility would be provided to States for the development and implementation of State plans to meet the requirements under NCLB. Regrettably, these two key goals have not been met.

The nomination of Margate Spellings is an encouraging development regarding our national education policy. Margaret Spellings brings to this office very significant credentials, including her service as the principal education advisor to President Bush during his term as Governor of Texas. She is recognized for her expertise on education reform and has distinguished herself as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. Additionally, Margaret Spellings played a key role in development of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Most importantly, Margaret Spellings nomination represents a wonderful opportunity for the Department of Education to work more closely with Congress, States and the education community in a realistic implementation of NCLB. Congress supports the goals of improving teacher quality and ensuring that students are fully prepared upon graduation to meet the challenges of the 21st century. It's absolutely essential, however, that the Department of Education be a strong and realistic partner in the implementation of the Act. State and local officials and educators must also be assured that they will not be saddled with extraordinary unfunded mandates or regulations to comply with the act.

I commend Margaret Spellings for her commitment to education and am pleased to vote in support of her confirmation as Secretary of Education. I look forward to working with her on critical education issues on a national level and to addressing the very real concerns of educators and school officials in North Dakota on teacher quality, especially the issue of highly qualified teachers and education funding. The No Child Left Behind Act must be an initiative of cooperation and partnership among all parties in the education community and the Federal Government if it is to succeed in improving education for our children.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, today the Senate will consider and vote on the nomination of Margaret Spellings as the new Secretary of Education. I will support her nomination. Ms. Spellings is a capable leader, having been principally involved in shaping education policy on both State and Federal levels for over a decade. Her commitment to working on both sides of the political aisle and alongside our teachers and educators illustrates her dedication to strengthening our schools.

In today's global marketplace, ensuring access to high-quality education—from a continuum that starts in early childhood to grade school, moving on to college and beyond—is central in maintaining America's competitive edge. To meet this goal, adequate funding of our public schools and post-secondary institutions is necessary to keep our students on the path toward achievement. I am confident that Ms. Spellings will uphold this responsibility as the head of the Department.

Meeting the needs of learners at all ages and targeting approaches that prepare them to be successful is a priority. By investing in education, we are empowering our economy. I am eager to work with Ms. Spellings on strengthening our education system, making sure that every student reach his or her full potential and improving the quality of life for all families.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the confirmation of Margaret Spellings to be Secretary of Education. Margaret Spellings has devoted her career to working to improve education for children in Texas and across the Nation. Her experience and dedication make her eminently qualified to serve as Secretary of Education.

Margaret Spellings is the ideal person to work with States and Governors of both parties to achieve the goal of raising student achievement for all students in all schools. As the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, Ms. Spellings has been responsible for the development and implementation of White House policy on education, healthcare, labor, housing and many other elements of President Bush's domestic agenda. She has also served with distinction as the senior advisor to then-Governor George W. Bush in Texas with responsibility for State education policy, and as associate executive director of the Texas Association of School Boards.

Throughout her professional career, Margaret Spellings has had in-depth discussions with teachers, administrators and school board members. She understands about school reform and the Federal role in education. In Texas, she was responsible for developing and implementing the State's strong school accountability system, and she was also instrumental in the State's strong reading and charter school efforts. As a top domestic advisor to the President, she was integral to the development of the No Child Left Behind Act, which is producing solid improvements in reading and math for America's students and is helping students by transforming our public education system.

The fact that President Bush has chosen one of his closest and most trusted advisors to become Education Secretary is a clear sign that education will continue to be a top domestic priority for this administration during the next 4 years. I look forward to working with Margaret Spellings in her new role as Education Secretary to help make public schools great for every child.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, it is my great pleasure and honor to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings to lead the Department of Education.

Ms. Spellings has been a close and trusted adviser to the President for over a decade. She will bring to the post both local and national experience. In Texas, Ms. Spellings led the Texas Association of School Boards and advised two Governors on education policy, including then-Governor Bush. In Washington, she has served as the top domestic policy advisor to the President and was one of the key architects of the historic No Child Left Behind Act.

Ms. Spellings has earned a solid reputation as one of the sharpest minds in education policy. She is passionate about America's schools, and more importantly, passionate about America's school children. Like all of us in this chamber, she believes that every child has the right to learn. Education is the path to achieving the American dream. As a result of her work on the No Child Left Behind Act, students of every background are making strides.

As the Secretary of Education, Ms. Spellings pledge to improve the No Child Left reforms and extend them to the high school level. She is also committed to enhancing college aid to assist older and disadvantaged students. As she told the HELP committee, reforms to No Child Left Behind need to be sensible and workable.

Ms. Spellings' nomination comes to the Senate floor with strong bipartisan support. She was unanimously voted out of committee. Both sides of the aisle recognize and honor her leadership and experience. In Ms. Spellings, America's education system will have a thoughtful, flexible, and effective leader.

Karl Rove once said that Margaret Spellings is the most powerful woman in Washington, whom no one knows. As a key Cabinet Secretary, she will be one of Washington's most luminous stars.

I am pleased to support her nomination. I expect a swift and overwhelmingly bipartisan vote to make Ms. Spellings America's eighth Secretary of Education.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I need to conclude this debate.

We have had a wonderful afternoon talking about some of the basic education policies that we need to be on top of for the kids of this country. I am excited about the bipartisanship that has been shown in this discussion this afternoon.

We have had a pretty good covering of a lot of the different issues that will be coming before the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. But, of course, the real purpose of this discussion was to have a very brief discussion on the approval of the nomination of Mrs. Spellings to be our Secretary of Education. I am pleased there were no adverse comments during the entire time that we allowed, and there were none at the hearing we had for her.

During that hearing, we discussed the President's education agenda and the future of the educational system. We asked Mrs. Spellings a lot of questions about her views on these issues and about her plans to continue to improve our schools. We were all impressed with her answers.

It was evident from the comments of the Members there that Mrs. Spellings enjoys strong bipartisan support. I think that has been shown here today, too.

As her record clearly shows, Mrs. Spellings is no stranger to the issues of education that will affect every child and every schoolroom throughout the United States.

As the President's domestic policy adviser, Mrs. Spellings was the key part of the effort to emphasize the accountability and the importance of getting results in the classroom as part of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Thanks to that important legislation, our Nation's classrooms are more effective. They are more efficient. They are places of learning, and our children are benefiting from that.

Mrs. Spellings believes, as I do, that every school can be a good one, and every student can be a star student.

It is no secret that good skills lead to good jobs. Maintaining those skills through a lifetime of learning will lead to a good career.

That has been my experience as a father of three college graduates, and also the husband of a wife who got a college graduate degree on line from the University of Wyoming while we were here in Washington. There is a little time difference between here and Wyoming. A lot of her classes started pretty late at night. But she stuck with it and got a graduate degree. All of us are proud of her for that.

I am proud of all three of my kids who have their degrees. One of them is a teacher. She has gotten a couple of degrees since she became a teacher. One of those got her a certification to be a principal.

I get comments from that lobby very strongly. I am so pleased with the comments I get.

I would also be remiss if I did not mention my sister, who is a business major for the Sheridan School District, which is one of the big school districts in Wyoming. She is actually the smartest of us two children. She is also an accountant and does an outstanding job of keeping track of every dime of education money and informs me of ways we messed up the law when we were doing that. I get a lot of good advice from there.

But it is also my hope as a grandfather of a little boy who looks at me with trusting eyes certain that his grandpa has it under control—and just looking at him, I can tell that he is counting on his grandpa and the other parents and grandparents of this body to ensure that he receives the kind of education he will need to find a good job, and the constant training and upgrading of skills to ensure that he will be able to keep it.

I was just reading a book called ''The Jobs Revolution.'' A child starting school today probably will not be able to do like his parents or grandparents did, starting one job and continuing that for 30 years and then retiring. The average child starting school today will have 14 different careers. Here is the key part: Ten of those haven't even been invented yet, which means the level of education that we have now has to have the flexibility to teach them to get the continuing education to get the new jobs so that the best jobs are maintained in the United States.

Someday my grandson will take his place in the workplace, and we must make available to him, and to every worker who will give our workforce an advantage, a lifetime of learning to ensure that the United States retains its competitive edge in the global market.

Mrs. Spellings understands this—the fact that the workplace isn't what it used to be.

In this global, technology-driven economy, school can never be out. Today's workplace demands an ever-changing workforce that can adapt to the requirements and skills of the new high-tech jobs that are in such high demand.

Keeping workers' abilities current will be vital if they are to continue to find every job they will need to support their families and maintain consistently higher standards of living.

As chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, I am looking forward to working with Mrs. Spellings on these issues and many more—such as the importance of using advanced technology to improve our rural schools.

As we work to address this and the other challenges of rural school systems, we must continue to be flexible in our approach.

That is the only way we can ensure every child has access to a quality education and that our school systems are run in a manner that makes more sense for the population they serve.

Having spoken with Mrs. Spellings, I am certain she shares my concern about rural education and that she will work together with this Congress to continue to make the changes that will be needed to keep our educational system and the lifetime of learning it must provide moving forward.

As committee chairman, I am honored to be able to join the distinguished ranking member of the committee, Senator KENNEDY, in supporting the confirmation of Mrs. Margaret Spellings to be the next Secretary of Education.

I am extremely pleased that we worked in a bipartisan manner in order to have Mrs. Spellings confirmed by the date of the President's second inauguration.

Today, this body has the opportunity to confirm an excellent nominee with the skills, with the experience, and the character to help bring our students of all ages and backgrounds along the pathway to fulfill their own version of the American dream. I am confident we can do so, and provide our children and students of all ages with an effective advocate at the Department of Education.

Thank you, Mr. President. I think all Members who wish to speak on this have spoken.

I ask unanimous consent that all time remaining on both sides be yielded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. I ask the Senate to proceed to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Margaret Spellings, of Texas, to be Secretary of Education?

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DURBIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if there is no further business under any unanimous consent, I ask to be recognized to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, first, let me congratulate the new chairman of the HELP Committee, the Senator from Wyoming, for his leadership. I wish him the same level of success for everything he brings to the floor—that it be both bipartisan and moved through so quickly. I think our decision to move the Secretary of Education so quickly was the right decision. I was happy to join in that vote.

I wish the chairman the very best in his new assignment on the committee.

There are several nominations that are likely to move through with equal dispatch—if not today, within the next few days.

It has been my honor to meet with the new Secretary of Commerce-Designate, Carlos Gutierrez, who was formerly the CEO of Kellogg, and is now taking on this post. He is new to Government but he brings an amazing perspective to the Department of Commerce. I am certain his nomination will move through very quickly. I am certain he will do a very good job.

The same thing can be said of the Governor of Nebraska, Mike Johanns, who has been tapped by the President to serve as the new Secretary of Agriculture. He and I had a very positive conversation and dialog yesterday. He is from Iowa originally. He went to law school in Nebraska and made it his home. He was elected Governor. Having grown up on a dairy farm in Iowa, he understands farming first hand. We had a very positive conversation. He succeeds an excellent Secretary, Ann Veneman, who now will go on to be the head of UNICEF.

Mike Johanns was an excellent choice by President Bush and was confirmed without any debate or controversy. I say that because many people think when it comes to the Senate floor it is nothing but a fistfight every single day. That is not a fact. We will disagree, but in many instances the President's recommendations are approved without controversy and without debate. Every White House prays that every recommendation, every nomination, and every bill will have the same outcome. That is never the case. We will do our best to work with this President. Coming together today, in this session, immediately after the inauguration, is an indication of our efforts to do so.

INAUGURATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will speak for a moment about the inauguration we just attended. First, I address an issue of style which was brought to my attention earlier this week in Chicago. One of my acquaintances is a columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times. His name is Neil Steinberg. Mr. Steinberg recently wrote ''Hatless Jack.'' It is the story about men wearing hats in America. It was a good conversation we had about his book.

It starts with the premise that some 44 years ago today with the inauguration of John Kennedy, there was a change in fashion in America and men stopped wearing hats. Mr. Steinberg debunks that notion but goes into a very interesting history of not only John Kennedy wearing a hat but also hats in America.

People remember that inauguration 44 years ago. Seven inches of snow fell the day before. Some 3,000 soldiers were on the street overnight shoveling the snow, using flamethrowers to try to melt the snow to make way for the inauguration the next day.

The inauguration started an hour late. Senator Kennedy, of course, became the President and gave his famous speech: Ask not what America can do for you but what you can do for your country. Robert Frost was at that occasion. People seem to remember there were no hats there, that John Kennedy did not wear a hat. They mistakenly blame him for killing an industry.

I wish those same people could have been out today for the inauguration and seen my colleagues in the House and Senate. There were some amazing hats being worn. There are very few other times my colleagues would wear one. We had Senator BAUCUS and Senator HATCH in cowboy hats, Senator DEWINE in his bowler, Alan Greenspan with his Yankees baseball hat—quite an array, not to mention Justice Scalia's hat, which I cannot describe.

I say this by way of introduction. There is a style issue here that someone should report. I thank Mr. Steinberg for bringing this historical notion to our attention, that the inauguration today raises questions which I am sure an enterprising journalist will follow up on.

Let's go to the substance of the speech and what happened today. Clearly, there were disappointments on the Democratic side of the aisle. Many Members worked long and hard for our colleagues JOHN KERRY and Senator John Edwards on their candidacy. I served as vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee and traveled to many of the battleground States on their behalf. I saw an outpouring of volunteer support for that campaign that I had never seen before in any previous campaign. There was also an outpouring of small donations, an indication of the interest the American people had in that campaign.

Of course, there was a bitter disappointment among those on the Democratic side with the outcome on November 2. I am glad Senator KERRY came forward on November 3 and said, clearly, that he was conceding the election and that America should move on with its new President, President George Bush, who was then reelected.

Many people contacted me and expressed the sadness and bitterness and disappointment, as you might expect, after a hotly contested election. It is a fact of life that America is very closely divided politically. Had one State, the State of Ohio, gone the other way and the electors pledged to JOHN KERRY rather than to President Bush, we would have sworn in JOHN KERRY today as President of the United States. The margin in Ohio was 118,000 votes. So still we see our Nation divided, blue States and red States, though there is a lot of commonality within those States on issues of importance.

I listened to the President's speech today. It was a good one. Many people mistakenly believe the inaugural address is the State of the Union. It is not. Most Presidents use the inaugural address to make a statement that will stand the test of time, that will last through history. It does not address the morning paper so much as the summation of what has happened in America over the last year, two, three, or four. That is what President Bush did in his speech today.

I thought the direction of that speech toward freedom was an important point. It is one that every American and every American President would share—not only that we value our own