

This bipartisan legislation comes in response to the recent warnings issued by the Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA, and the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy about highly addictive and dangerous drugs being colored, packaged, and flavored in ways that appear to be designed to attract use by children. As cochairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, I can tell you that the most at-risk population for drug abuse is our young people. Research has shown time and again that if you can keep a child drug free until they turn 20, chances are very slim that they will ever try or become addicted to drugs. Unfortunately, unscrupulous drug dealers are all too aware of statistics like these and have developed new techniques and marketing gimmicks to lure in younger users. As a parent and now grandparent, this is extremely troubling.

These drug dealers are flavoring drugs with additives to make them taste like candy. For instance, some drugs that have been recovered by the DEA and local law enforcement have been flavored to taste like strawberry and are known as "Strawberry Quick." Other flavors, such as lemon, coconut, cinnamon and chocolate are clearly being used to make highly addictive drugs like meth and cocaine seem less harmful and more appealing. These flavored drugs are also being marketed in smaller amounts, making them cheaper and more accessible to children. According to an article in USA Today, at least eight States have reported instances involving candy flavored drugs, and many law enforcement officials are expecting these deadly substances to infiltrate their States in the near future.

The DEA recently arrested three men in an undercover operation in California where candy flavored cocaine was being distributed. The DEA seized at least four different flavors of cocaine along with other dangerous substances. The estimated street value of the flavored cocaine seized in this operation was \$272,400. The DEA also arrested 12 people in connection to a marijuana-laced candy and soft drink operation in 2006. The marijuana-laced candy that was seized in this operation was packaged to look like well known brand name candy bars. These drug busts further illustrate the fact that drug dealers will stop at nothing to hook a new generation on these deadly substances.

Currently, Federal law enhances the criminal penalties that apply when a person sells drugs to anyone under the age of 21. When this occurs, the Federal penalties are doubled—or tripled for a repeat offense—and a mandatory minimum of at least 1 year must also apply. However, this penalty applies only to someone who actually sells drugs to someone under 21.

The Saving Kids from Dangerous Drugs Act would expand the circumstances under which these en-

hanced penalties apply to cover the entire operation. Under our bill, the enhanced penalties that already exist would also apply to anyone who knowingly or intentionally manufactures, creates, distributes, dispenses or possesses with the intent to distribute a controlled substance that has been flavored, colored, packaged or otherwise altered in a way that is designed to make it more appealing to a person under 21 years of age. The DEA busts are prime examples of why we need this bipartisan bill to keep drug dealers from peddling their poison to our children. I am pleased that the National Narcotics Officers Association Coalition is strongly supporting this measure. This organization represents 69,000 law enforcement officers who encounter these terrible substances on a daily basis and work endlessly to keep our children and communities safe.

The fight against deadly drugs is an ongoing struggle. We must do all we can to protect the most vulnerable among us. We must send a clear message to those wishing to prey on our youth that you risk serious prison time when you target our future.

Although this bill was passed out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously last year, the Senate never passed the bill in the 110th Congress. I ask that my colleagues join us in support of this important legislation and pass the Saving Kids from Dangerous Drugs Act.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I began my career as a preschool teacher back in my home State of Washington. That background has given me valuable insight into how important early childhood education is throughout a person's life.

As a preschool teacher, I could tell from the first day which kids in my class had parents at home who read to them. At 4 years old, those kids were already ahead of their classmates because they had been introduced to words and books, and they were interested in learning.

I have been proud to work here in the Senate to support education programs like Head Start that help more kids get an equal start in school. So I rise today to talk about two bills I reintroduced this week with my colleague on the other side of the aisle, Senator BOND, as well as Senator CLINTON.

The bills—the Education Begins at Home Act and the Ready to Learn Act—are a pair designed to help prepare children for school by focusing on their learning at home and at preschool and childcare programs.

Both of these bills are based on research, and they expand on programs and efforts we already know work. They also have one component I especially like—they don't just focus on teachers—they support parents learning how to give their kids a healthy start. So I would like to spend a moment describing them.

The first—the Education Begins at Home Act—would create the first Federal stream of money to help teach parents how to care for their kids, starting at birth.

The bill would enable State and local governments to create programs that teach parents about healthy parent-child relationships, about boosting child development, about the demands and stress associated with caring for babies, about how to deal with difficult behavior, and about how to recognize postpartum depression.

Most of us here know how difficult it is to be a new parent—especially when you are under stress because of work or military service. The programs this bill would create will help prevent child abuse and teach parents about how their children grow and develop emotionally and intellectually.

I know how important the Parents as Teachers Program is to families in Washington State with young children, and I believe we need to expand on the success of this program and others around the country.

The second bill builds on the first by creating a competitive matching grant program within No Child Left Behind. It would fund high quality early childhood programs aimed at promoting school readiness for low-income children, particularly 4 year olds. And it would help reduce class sizes, increase teacher salaries, and require States to report regularly on the effectiveness of these programs.

Research shows that children who get good prekindergarten education are less likely to fall behind or need special education services—and they are more likely to graduate from high school.

To give you just one example, kids who learn the names and sounds of letters before they enter kindergarten are 20 times more likely to read simple words by the end of kindergarten. And children who don't learn the same skill before they start school often fail to catch up—ever.

In other words, the early childhood education programs—like those we fund in this bill—are a great investment that will pay off in dividends later. They save money in the long run and help kids get the best possible start in life.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I have been a strong supporter of early childhood education for my entire career. But given our economic crisis, investments like the ones I am talking about today are more important than ever before.

I believe that strengthening our schools and making sure our kids are prepared for tomorrow's workplace are going to be the keys to economic recovery. We need to build a workforce that is the most competitive in the world so that we can recruit and hold onto good-paying jobs. And we can't do it unless all of our children get the strongest possible start in life.

So I urge my colleagues to support these bills and help our kids get on a path to learn and succeed.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Oregon, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Oregon, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 2:30 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 2:34 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as the Senator from the State of Oregon, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, are we in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH SELLERS

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to recognize Elizabeth Sellers on her retirement from the Department of Energy after 26 years. Beth most recently spent 6 years as DOE's Idaho Site Manager at the Idaho National Lab, INL. During her time there, the INL was created as the lead nuclear research and development laboratory for DOE, and a separate project, the Idaho Cleanup Project, was created to manage and clean up the radioactive waste at the site. Since 2003, Beth has overseen the work of 300 Federal employees and approximately 6,500 contractors. Beth's leadership and vision has helped further the critical energy and national security missions of INL and the Advanced Mixed Treatment Project with a commitment to excellence and safety. She has been at the helm as significant state milestones have been met through the Idaho Cleanup Project, and she will be missed at the lab.

Beth was not satisfied simply leading efforts at the lab. She knows the importance of community and maintaining strong community ties, both as the DOE Site Manager and on a personal level. She immersed herself in the Idaho Falls community life, volunteering in a number of different organizations, giving back to her host community. She not only leaves big shoes to fill in her professional life, she leaves a hole in the community as well.

I wish Beth well in her future endeavors overseas and have appreciated working with her during her time at INL.●

TRIBUTE TO NORRIS O'NEIL CHANDLER

• Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, today I recognize Mr. Norris O'Neil Chandler and his lifetime of service to his country and his community. Mr. Chandler was born in Chaffee, MO, on August 11, 1923, and enlisted in the Regular Army at Jefferson Barracks. Following basic training he was assigned to a special amphibious engineering unit activated for World War II—the 149th Engineer Combat Battalion.

Mr. Chandler bravely participated in the monumentally important invasion of France on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944, as a demolition specialist for the 149th. He would fight alongside his brethren, all of whom have rightfully become known as the Greatest Generation, from those Normandy beaches all the way to Germany, enduring hardship, tragedy, and triumph along the way. His efforts were one small part of changing the world as the forces of evil that sought to exterminate an entire religion and to deny freedom to so many were defeated. Mr. Chandler returned home, and like so many of his fellow veterans never stopped doing his small part to serve his country nor ever asked for anything in return for his humble service. This type of character cannot be taught, but it certainly can be appreciated. It is the finest exemplar of American values, and I honor Mr. Chandler and his American values today.

More specifically, following his service in WWII, Mr. Chandler became part of the newly activated Organized Reserve Corps, which developed into what is known today as the U.S. Army Reserve. Mr. Chandler continued his service in the Reserve Corps from December 1945 until October 1951, at which point he entered civilian service with the Missouri Military District, 11th Army Corps, St. Louis, MO, where he held various positions. Over 40 years later, Mr. Chandler remains employed by this organization, now known as the Directorate of Logistics-Washington's Media Distribution Division. This sort of longevity, commitment and humble service is hard to even comprehend in today's world, but it is easy to understand when you think of the values of the Greatest Generation that Mr. Chandler exudes.

It is because of people like Mr. Norris O'Neil Chandler that I am so proud to be a Senator representing the State of Missouri. I have even been told that he has more than 3,300 hours of unused sick leave, and has donated much of his annual leave to other employees through the leave donation program. It is because of the generosity and dedication of people like Mr. Chandler that the United States of America is the great Nation that it is.

For 60 years, Mr. Chandler has given so much to his country, his community, and his family, yet demanded so little back. I wish today to give my simple, humble thanks to this American hero. I have the utmost respect and gratitude for those who live their lives like Mr. Chandler. As we honor him today, he is a reminder to all of us of the true value of selfless service, and the impact of that service in our communities, our States, and our country.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The following message from the President of the United States was transmitted to the Senate by one of his secretaries:

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT DATED JANUARY 2009 WITH THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS FOR 2009—PM-7

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Joint Economic Committee:

To the Congress of the United States:

The American economy has consistently proven its strength and resilience in the face of shocks such as natural disasters, high energy prices, and the terrorist attacks of September 11. The economy experienced 6 years of uninterrupted expansion, which included a record stretch of 52 consecutive months of job creation. The past year saw this growth cease as several forces that developed over many years in the credit and housing markets converged. The combination of these factors, coupled with a sustained period of rising energy prices, was sufficient to threaten the entire financial system and generated a shock so large that its effects have been felt throughout the global economy.

Under ordinary circumstances, it would be preferable to allow the free market to take its course and correct over time. But the Government has a responsibility to safeguard the broader health and stability of our economy. Under the extraordinary circumstances created by the financial crisis, the potential damage to American households and businesses was so severe that a systemic, aggressive, and unprecedented Government response was the only responsible policy option.