

benefits, no holiday pay, no vacation pay, no medical or dental coverage. My wife recently suffered a badly broken leg. We have no insurance. Her injury required surgery and a hospital stay. Now we are in danger of losing the house that I bought in 1993.

I am told that my contract has been renewed for another year. That will bring us to May of 2012. Then I have to leave for three months before I can return. I am given no promise of being able to return to work there.

That is Jerry's story that he sent in to share.

Virginia from Hillsboro writes:

In February 2010, my department at my company was advised we would be laid off after transitioning our job duties to a replacement staff in India. It felt like quite a blow.

Prior to the layoff, the company had not given us raises for 3-4 years, even though they were reporting profits. Half of our department was laid off within a few months.

I filed a TAA petition to attempt to attain additional funds or schooling for the people at our department, but it was denied.

The year before I was laid off, my daughter, who lives with us with her son, changed jobs and then was laid off from the new job. Four months after my layoff, my husband was advised the rest of his department is being laid off after their job duties were transitioned to an off-shore site; hopefully, he will have work until March.

My daughter, myself, and my husband are all looking for work.

We moved my mother up with us three years ago, so now we have four generations living in our home. I have no idea what will happen if none of us can find work. My husband served his time in the Army and he and I have always worked full-time, steady jobs. It feels like we're being punished for spending our lives working to take care of our family and to keep a roof over our heads.

I read in the papers this morning that things are improving in Oregon, but, honestly, I don't see it. Americans are hurting.

Americans need jobs! We want to work and need to work! We are not lazy—we are innovators and always have been! We need to regain our pride in our country, help each other and quit focusing on greed.

That was Virginia from Hillsboro. And if you didn't catch the beginning, her letter started by saying that she and her team were laid off after training replacements in India to take over their jobs. This terrible economy is resulting in multiple generations of her family without work.

Julio from southwest Portland says:

I am 31 years old with my first baby on the way and I can honestly tell you I am nowhere where I thought I would be at this point in my life. Upon graduating high school, I joined the Navy. I did a 6-year enlistment. My mother was a housekeeper and my father was an ordained minister and they were unable to help me with the expenses of higher education, so I took full advantage of the GI bill once I was honorably discharged in 2004.

I completed my degree in three years and nine months and graduated with a bachelor's in business management and a minor in economics. I strongly felt that as a 6-year veteran of the Navy, with a degree in business, and being bilingual, that I would have no problem finding employment.

Unfortunately, I had the misfortune of graduating just as the financial world collapsed in 2008. Three years later, I work two jobs and still make less than \$30,000 a year.

I have interviewed for several great jobs, but due to the same amount of people applying for the same position I have lost out to individuals with a great amount of experience.

I know I can do well, but in our current environment I feel as though I don't even have a chance. Anything you can do to create better paying jobs in Oregon would be greatly appreciated.

That was Julio from southwest Portland.

These stories that are coming from our single parents, coming from our husbands, our wives, are coming from folks who are taking care of their parents. They are coming from folks who are trying to take care of their children, and you can feel the sense of frustration. You can feel the sense of panic in this economy.

Last week this Chamber debated whether to have a debate about creating jobs. My colleagues across the aisle said, no, we will not let the jobs bill come to the floor. I must say I am extraordinarily frustrated that at this time in this economy, with so many Americans hurting, my colleagues are unable to summon the connection to the challenge of the American family so that we can have a full debate on this floor on a jobs bill.

These families that are writing, as you can tell from the letters, served their country. Several of them were in the service. They played by the rules. They worked hard. But they have been let down again and again by a political system that has protected tax breaks for the wealthy over creating jobs and opportunities for working families.

I hope we will have another chance to decide whether to debate a jobs bill, and I hope every Member of this Chamber will say yes to taking and shutting down tax breaks, \$20 billion a year for oil companies that are stashing that money in the bank and not creating a single job with it, and instead take that \$20 billion and put it to work on energy retrofits, which is, according to every economist, the best bang for the buck we could possibly have in creating jobs. You cannot outsource a single bit of the labor, and virtually all of the products are made right here in our economy, from the pink cotton candy insulation to the double-paned windows to the caulk. That is just one example of the kind of conversation we should be having.

We should be having a conversation about whether we should be helping our school districts hire teachers. Some will agree, some will not, but let's have the debate. If someone wants to propose an amendment and say we don't want to help our school districts, we can do something better to create jobs, let's have that debate. Let's not sit on our hands when American families are suffering. Let's get to work and create jobs that the families across America need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I am delighted the Senator from Colorado is in the chair when I speak. I want to speak on a subject where he is the foremost expert on the day-to-day operation of school systems. He will appreciate and understand what I am about to say in ways that many people will not.

Yesterday I had a telephone conversation with a member of an editorial board of a prominent newspaper in this country who asked me this question. She said: Senator ALEXANDER, how can you and the National Education Association possibly be together on the teacher evaluation question? How can you justify that? Then she said: When has the NEA ever done anything to encourage the evaluation of school teachers? That is a good question. Both questions are good questions. What she was referring to, of course, was the draft announced yesterday by Senator HARKIN and Senator ENZI, who are the ranking members of the Senate committee that handles education.

It included a provision on evaluation of teachers and principals. At my suggestion, and that of others, but contrary to the suggestion of a number of people, it does not include an order from Washington that all 15,000 school districts have a teacher and principal evaluation system. It does not include a definition of what it should be, and it doesn't include the opportunity for the Education Secretary, whoever it may be, to then issue a number of regulations defining what a teacher and principal evaluation system would be in Denver or in Maryville or in Nashville. What it does include is the following: For the first time it specifically allows a State to spend its title II money that is the \$2.5 billion of Federal funds that goes to States. It allows that money to be spent to design and implement a principal-teacher evaluation system that is related to student achievement.

In my view, that is the holy grail of public education. If we could ever figure out how to do that and to get everybody to do it, I think it would do more than any other single thing we could do to help our children learn what they need to know and be able to do, except some law that would make everybody better parents, and I don't know how to pass such a law. So that is the first thing the Harkin-Enzi draft includes about teacher and principal evaluation.

In Tennessee, for example, that would mean there would be about \$41 million this year that could be spent for that purpose. There are about 63,000 teachers in Tennessee, so that is about \$660 per teacher per year of Federal funds that could be used to design and implement a teacher and principal evaluation system related to student achievement. This is the first time that has been specifically allowed.

Secondly, there is something in the draft legislation called the Teacher Incentive Fund. Many school superintendents, such as the distinguished Senator from Colorado, know that program very well. We know in Tennessee because of the work in Memphis. Basically it is a grant that was included as a result of language in No Child Left Behind. Secretary Spellings then beefed up the program, got the money appropriated, and it recognizes the difficulty of figuring out how to reward and evaluate teachers in a fair way, especially if you are going to base compensation on that. It says, if you want to do it, we will give you some money to help you try to do it. So you can do it one way in Knoxville, another way in Denver, another way in Los Angeles. Hopefully what will happen over time is we will find lots of fair ways to reward outstanding teaching and determine outstanding teaching, and smaller school districts and other school districts can borrow ideas from one another. That has been a big success. Secretary Duncan supports it. It has support all the way around. President Obama has supported it.

The third thing that is available for helping develop teacher evaluation systems is a program called Race To The Top. There is \$700 million in Federal money for fiscal year 2011. That is a lot of money. States had to compete based upon, among other things, their ability to develop teacher and principal evaluation systems. I can brag about this because I had nothing to do with it, at least recently. My State of Tennessee won that competition. It won \$500 million, which has been spent to develop and implement an evaluation program for all the teachers in Tennessee.

Then there is another item in this draft which fits in here. I would call it the Secretary's report card. All previous Education Secretaries—and I am one of them—have tried to use the bully pulpit. So have Presidents. When I was Governor of Tennessee and we were working on a master teacher program, President Reagan came to Tennessee to say it was a good idea. That was very helpful to me at that time. He didn't say this is how you should do it. He said, I recognize what you are doing and I applaud it and encourage it.

Bill Bennett, when he was the Secretary of Education for President Reagan, went to Chicago and said they had the worst schools in the country. That made a lot of news.

But when a Secretary uses that bully pulpit, he can make a difference. We have a very good Education Secretary right now, Arne Duncan. What he now has at his disposal no one else has had before. He has 8 or 9 years of reporting requirements of schools all across the country, and there are about 100,000 public schools for which he has this information. He can go around the country and say: This is good. This is bad. I will put the spotlight here. I will brag on this. Let's do more of this. He can do that in a way that nobody ever could before.

So this is what is in the draft we are talking about that would for the first time get the Federal Government significantly involved in creating an environment for teacher-principal evaluations related to student achievement. One is \$2.5 billion of Federal dollars in title II. All of it can be used for this purpose if States want to. No. 2, there is the Teachers Incentive Fund. That was \$399 million this year. Race to the Top was nearly \$700 million. Then there is the Secretary's Report Card.

I responded to my editor, who called me, and said: Look, I know something about this. In 1983 and 1984, when I was Governor of Tennessee, we became the first State in the country to create a statewide system for rewarding outstanding teaching and paying those teachers based upon that.

At that time, in Tennessee—or anywhere in the country—not one teacher made one penny more for being a good teacher. Not one teacher made one penny more for being a good teacher. So that is what we did in 1983 and 1984.

She said: How hard could that be? Everybody knows some teachers are better than others. We all know that when we put our children into school. Everybody knows that. Why can't we evaluate teachers? How hard could that be?

Well, I was a little bit amused by that because those were exactly the same kinds of questions I was asking in frustration 30 years ago. I would say it to every college of education in the country. I could not find a single one that would help me in any significant way evaluate outstanding teaching.

Now, that may sound like an overstatement. But it is not much of an overstatement.

I had dean after dean, education professor after education professor say: You cannot do that. You cannot determine that one teacher is better than another one, especially if you plan to reward them, compensate them based upon that.

I found that patently ridiculous—patently ridiculous.

Just like the editor was trying to tell me every parent knows that. My mother put me in one first grade instead of another first grade in Maryville, TN, because she thought one teacher was better than the other. She had an opinion about that. She was a teacher herself, so perhaps she knew.

We all have those judgments to make. IBM hires a lot of education people. They have teachers and they know some are better than others and they pay them correspondingly. Colleges and universities hire a lot of teachers. They pay teachers all the way up the ladder, from lower amounts to very high amounts for distinguished professors. They can find a way to make a distinction, but somehow we got into this rut 30 years ago that said: We cannot make any distinction among teachers based upon their ability to teach, especially related to student achievement, and then we especially cannot

take the next step and pay some more than others.

The reason I thought that was such an urgent problem 30 years ago was because we cannot trap women in our schools anymore to teach. Women are in the marketplace now. That is what we did for many years. So if we want to attract and keep the very best men and women teaching in our classrooms, we need to be able to recognize excellence when we find it, to encourage it, and to reward it with compensation.

I can remember sitting around with a group of Governors in 1980 when the late Bill Clement, Governor of Texas, said to mostly a group of Democratic Governors: When is one of you—and he used another word—so-and-sos going to get the courage to take on the NEA? What he meant was, every single one of us knew that the National Education Association had its foot on everyone who tried to pay some teachers more than others.

Well, I was young and maybe did not know better, so in my second term I created a bipartisan commission with the Democratic leaders of the legislature, and we set out to figure out a number of things about education, including a master teacher program. The long and the short of it was, we did that. It took a year and a half of my time as Governor. I must have spent 40 or 50 percent of my time every day engaged in an ongoing brawl, mainly with the National Education Association, as to whether we could do this.

They defeated my proposals in the first year. I came back in the second year and won by one vote, and we put in place a voluntary program that before long up to 10,000 Tennessee teachers voluntarily went into a career ladder program, became master teachers, and many got 10-month and 11-month and 12-month contracts. It raised their pay. It improved their retirement. It gave them distinction. I have teacher after teacher come to see me today to thank me for that, including the current leadership of the Tennessee Education Association, whose organization killed the program after I left office.

So it is appropriate to ask: Senator ALEXANDER, why are you and the National Education Association in cahoots on any sort of teacher evaluation proposal?

Well, I want to say briefly why. A lot has happened since 1983, 1984. Governor Hunt, Democratic Governor of North Carolina, and others have worked to create the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The NEA and the American Federation of Teachers both participated in that. That was a step forward in recognizing and certifying outstanding teachers.

AFT, the American Federation of Teachers, has always been open to this proposal. I remember the late Albert Shanker telling me: Well, if we have master plumbers, we can have master teachers, especially if you are going to pay them more. He invited me to come out to his national convention in Los Angeles to talk about it.

President Bush and Secretary Spellings, with the Teacher Incentive Fund, and President Obama and Secretary Duncan, who have taken a lead on this, despite the fact that it is not popular with many of the constituents of their party, have stuck their necks out on this, and I applaud them for that.

The Gates Foundation has put money behind it. Bill Gates has told me personally this is one of the two things he wants to do in education with the time and the money he has.

So there is a consensus. Everybody might not say, as I do, it is the "Holy Grail" of K-12, but there is a consensus that finding fair ways to reward outstanding teaching through teacher and principal evaluation related to student achievement is urgently important.

So it is very tempting just to pass a law in Washington to say: Let's order it. Let's just do it. Well, that is not the way things work in the United States of America. We did that with professional development. The law now says, with all that \$2.5 billion: Do it. Have professional development programs.

I do not know what the Senator from Colorado thinks, but my view—and I do not think Secretary Duncan would mind my repeating his comments often—that is the biggest waste of money we have in the Federal education program. It is not well used. We say: Do it, and so they have all these programs. Teachers know it is a waste of time, and everybody knows it is a waste of time. We are not spending that money wisely.

So why are we to think, if we just say, create a teacher evaluation system all across the country in 15,000 school districts, people will just say, OK, they have to do it to get the money, and they will just do it? I think it would be the kiss of death for the whole movement. Although it is tempting to do it that way.

Then, yesterday, on my way up here, in my little hometown of Maryville, TN, I picked up the newspaper and it reminded me of why I so strongly believe it is a good idea to create an environment in which school districts and States can create teacher and principal evaluation systems and it is a bad idea to order it, define it, and regulate it from Washington.

Here is the headline. I mentioned this yesterday in my remarks on the floor: "Evaluation of Teachers Contentious."

Now, here is the State of Tennessee—Mr. President, could I ask unanimous consent for 3 more minutes?

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I certainly have no objection.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator from Kansas, and I will kind of speed up my comments a little bit. But I might take 4 minutes, unless that is a problem.

Mr. MORAN. I certainly have no objection.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator from Kansas because I would like to make my point, if I may.

Remember, the State of Tennessee won Race to the Top. It has been working on teacher evaluation for 25 years. It developed the Sanders Model, which was the first real way that we related student achievement to teacher performance. May sound easy. It is pretty hard. Nobody else would do it.

This professor at the University of Tennessee's Agriculture Department, a statistician, said: I think I can do it. He did it, and it is being used all around the country in many places—but not everywhere. Some do not have confidence in it.

So Tennessee wins \$500 million in Race to the Top—to do what? Have a teacher and principal evaluation program. Here they are doing it. Twenty-five years of experience, and it is the front page news: "Evaluation of Teachers Contentious"—all the struggles with that program.

Then we get here into what is involved. It says:

Under the new system—

This is the Tennessee system of evaluation—

tenured teachers will be evaluated at least four times each year. Nontenured teachers will be evaluated at least six times each year. . . .

Teacher effectiveness ratings are calculated using a formula that is 50 percent qualitative and 50 percent quantitative. The quantitative portion combines student growth (35 percent) and student achievement (15 percent).

Now, they are having a tough time down in Maryville, TN, and Nashville, TN, about implementing their own proposal. It says:

State officials are also traveling across the state to meet with stakeholders.

The state Department of Education's Advisory Group will bring revision recommendations to [the] Education Commissioner. . . .

That's Kevin Huffman, one of the best in the country.

Based on the proposed revisions, the recommendations might need to be brought before the State Board of Education.

Do we really want them to come to Washington after they get through with that and say: OK, now we have it figured out. We are having a really hard time doing it. You tell us what to do. You define what we ought to do. And may we please have your permission to do things this way instead of that way? I think not. I think that would be the kiss of death for any movement for teacher-principal evaluation.

So my plea is that we show some restraint, that we recognize that just a little movement here makes a big difference there when we are dealing with 3.2 million teachers, when we are dealing with 100,000 schools, and 15,000 school districts.

Secretary Duncan, whom I greatly admire, says:

A comprehensive evaluation system based on multiple measures, including student

achievement, is essential for education reform to move forward. We cannot retreat from reform.

He is exactly right. But that does not mean we need a national school board. That is what a Governor, a legislator, a school district, local people ought to be doing, working with teachers.

So the NEA and I may have the same position today on whether to have a mandate definition and regulation from Washington on teacher evaluation. We may agree. I cannot speak for them. But I will be watching—as I did 30 years ago, as I did 15 years ago, as I did 20 years ago as Education Secretary—to see what they are doing in Tennessee.

Are they making it easier for Kevin Huffman and the Governor and the legislature to implement this award-winning teacher evaluation program or are they making it harder?

So I hope we will have a good, full debate as we move to the markup in the next few days. I respect the enthusiasm of all those who want to begin a process for teacher and principal evaluation. I would like to believe that no one wants it to move more than I do. I have watched it for 30 years. I have fought everyone who is against it for 30 years, and I strongly believe the right way to do it is to recognize that education is like jobs. Both are national concerns, both are of interest to the Federal Government, but we cannot create them from here. We have to create an environment in which local people, State people, can create better schools and create better jobs, and, in this case, a mandate definition and regulation from Washington, a national school board, would be a terrible error.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I thank the Senator from Kansas for his courtesy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from Tennessee for his remarks. I believe that while what happens in Washington is important, we really do change the world one person at a time, and it happens at home in classrooms across America each and every day, and there is no more noble profession, other than parenthood, than that of a teacher. They make a tremendous difference in the lives of Americans each and every day, and I commend them for that. I also commend the Senator from Tennessee for his passion for education.

RECOGNIZING THE ARTHUR D. SIMONS CENTER

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I want to talk about education that is occurring at Fort Leavenworth, KS. I want to call my colleagues' attention to the important work that is being done in our Nation's heartland to educate the next generation of military leadership at the Command & General Staff College. The CGSC is the intellectual center of the U.S. Army and has trained