

for my education in those days. She couldn't do it.

That was my story. Now repeat that story millions of times across America and ask ourselves: What are the House Republicans thinking? They are going to cut Pell grants for these students who are struggling to go through college? Why would we do that when 80 percent of our Nation's fastest growing jobs require higher education? In Illinois, an estimated 61,000 students are going to see their Pell grants significantly reduced or eliminated.

The House Republicans also want to eliminate \$1.5 billion in grants to States for job training. When we think about the number of unemployed in America today and how few of them will be able to return to the same job they left, we understand they need new skills, new training. They have to move into new areas of opportunity. Job training offers that. The Republicans eliminate it.

Now take a look at what the President does. The President makes a dramatic cut in spending, freezing our spending, reducing our spending by over \$400 billion over the next 5 years, and bringing domestic discretionary spending in America as a percentage of our gross domestic product down to a level lower than it was in the 1950s under President Eisenhower. So he calls for sacrifice, as we should. But the President understands the importance of education. His budget includes \$8.1 billion for Head Start to serve nearly 1 million children and families. It includes \$1.3 billion to support almost 2 million children and families through the childcare development block grant program.

The President's budget also includes \$26.8 billion, an increase of about 7 percent, for elementary and secondary education, focused on raising standards, encouraging innovation, and rewarding success.

Last week, the heads of many school districts in Illinois came to see me. They are struggling. We can understand why. With real estate prices going down and values going down, property tax receipts are not what they used to be. Our State is in bankruptcy. It doesn't have the money to send back to school districts. A small amount—about 5 percent that comes from the Federal Government—is important to them. If Republicans have their way, that amount will be reduced. The President tries to maintain that contribution from the Federal level to help local school districts.

There is something else the President does which I think is essential to better education. He invests \$185 million for a new Presidential teaching fellows program which would provide scholarships to talented and aspiring teachers who commit to teaching for 3 years in a high-needs school. It also invests \$80 million to improve teacher training in the STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering, and math.

I think most would agree the success of an education depends, first, in my

case and many others, on strong family support and encouragement but also on the quality of the teacher in the classroom. We want to make sure we have the best teachers so we have the best students, the best graduates who are then in the best position to compete in the years ahead.

The President's budget maintains a maximum Pell grant award of \$5,550 per year, ensuring nearly 8 million students across the country can continue to pursue a college degree.

There is also money in the President's budget for worker training, which we desperately need.

There is also an investment of \$1.4 billion in competitive programs to bring about reform in education, including the Early Learning Challenge Fund, spurring States to improve quality; the new Race to the Top, bringing resources to school districts willing to make reforms; and a new First in the World competition, which encourages colleges and universities to demonstrate success in graduating more high-needs students and preparing them for employment.

There are skeptics who believe that no matter what the government does, it is not going to create jobs or create opportunity in America. I think we can go too far in selling the government's role, and we shouldn't. But we can understand in education that the government's role does make a difference.

I try to calculate in my mind. It has been barely 50 or 54 years since we made a decision in Congress that we were going to invest in student loans to help young people go to college—the same program that helped me go to college. It happened after Sputnik was launched and we were concerned about the Russian effort to put satellites in outer space, followed by missiles, followed by a Cold War face-off that we might experience. So we said we need more engineers and scientists and more college grads. We made the investment and it worked. We not only made it to the Moon, but we moved the American economy forward to lead the world in the last half of the 20th century. It was no accident. Part of it was the investment of our government in education for our citizens. The President believes we have to keep that commitment. I agree with him.

I think the House Republicans have gone too far in their cuts. I think they start with the skepticism that government cannot do anything right. Many of them were the beneficiaries of college student loans through the government, and they have forgotten. They shouldn't. Families across America count on it, and we should too. We have to make sure we have a strong budget that cuts deficits—and I agree we must—but maintains essential economic investment. Congress needs to enact a plan that will lead to fiscal sustainability over the long term if we want to ensure a strong economic future. The President has provided an excellent starting point in that conversation.

Madam President, before I yield the floor, I ask unanimous consent that the time consumed in any quorum call during the period of morning business be charged equally to both sides.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY TO T. ROGERS WADE

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I rise to speak for a few minutes about a gentleman whose 70th birthday will be celebrated next Monday night in Atlanta, GA. He is a gentleman who has deep ties to the Senate. His name is T. Rogers Wade.

He came to the Senate in 1973 as an administrative assistant and later chief of staff to Georgia Senator Herman Talmadge. During those years, Senator Talmadge was chairman of the powerful Agriculture Committee which, in my State of Georgia, is instrumental. Rogers Wade is one of those unique people whom all of us, such as the Presiding Officer and myself, are lucky enough to have in our offices, somebody who supports us, keeps us moving in the right direction, helps us back home with our people—in other words, kind of drives our ship of State. My chief of staff does. Rogers Wade did it for Herman Talmadge.

He took those talents and brought them back to Georgia after 1980 to do a number of memorable and tremendous things. For example, when he first came back he founded a firm called Edington Wade & Associates, a public affairs firm that represented many Fortune 500 companies throughout the State of Georgia and their locations.

Following that, he did many other things in Georgia. He founded Leadership Georgia, a program today celebrating over 40 years in our State, generating new leaders for our State. It is a great program. He came to the Fanning Institute of Leadership at the University of Georgia and serves on its board. He serves on the board of the Richard Russell Foundation. Most importantly, he is a can-do guy who became president of something known as the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, an organization that is nonpartisan and dedicates itself to opine on legislation going through the Georgia Legislature or initiatives coming before the people on the ballot to give them an unvarnished, nonpolitical, straight-talk expression of what that law or what that issue would be. It has become one of the most respected foundations in our State and, in fact, around

the country. He served as president of that foundation from 1997 to 2009 and today is a trustee of the foundation.

One of the interesting things T. Rogers Wade did—a lot of people talk about what they want to do to reform education and help kids in need. T. Rogers Wade did it. He founded something called Tech High in Atlanta, GA, a school in an old dilapidated building that he raised the money to rehabilitate. He brought in excellent faculty in STEM math and science and opened it as a charter school approved by the State of Georgia for the most in need, free-and-reduced-lunch kids in the metropolitan city of Atlanta public school system. He began attracting those kids to that charter school. So successful has Tech High been that Arne Duncan, the Secretary of Education, chose it to be one of his first visits after he became Secretary of Education under President Obama. It still is a guiding light today of what can be done, with a focus on excellence and helping kids in need to brighten their future.

Just recently, with the election of Nathan Deal as the new Governor of Georgia, he picked one person out of our State to guide him in his transition team. It was T. Rogers Wade.

T. Rogers Wade has touched the lives of American servicemen by being on the board of the USO, Georgia businesses by being on the board of the chamber of commerce, and citizens around our State by being the president of the Public Policy Foundation.

Next Monday night, I am going to have dinner with a great Georgian and great American. And I rise at this moment on the floor of the Senate to pay tribute to T. Rogers Wade on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

I yield back the remainder of my time. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I realize we are in morning business, but I rise to oppose the McCain amendment to the FAA bill, which will probably come up later when we get to the bill.

The McCain amendment will eliminate the Essential Air Service Program. I applaud my colleague for exploring ways to address our deficit, and I want to join him in looking for opportunities to control spending, but this is one program we must preserve. We won't improve the deficit by stifling local economies.

The Department of Transportation estimates that 1.1 million travelers from more than 150 communities rely

on the Essential Air Service Program. The Essential Air Service Program is a promise to rural America, which absolutely needs airports for economic development, as noted in the 2009 Journal of Rural Studies report entitled, "The Economic Importance of Air Travel in High-Amenity Rural Areas."

Nearly half of the American West consists of publicly owned lands containing mountain ranges, forests, rivers, lakes, parks, and areas for wilderness, wildlife, and grazing. Many people come to the West to visit—especially from the East—especially in the summer, to go fly fishing, camping, for tourism, and in the winter for skiing. People enjoy public lands in the West. We have so many public lands in the West, we don't have private land for development. This means we have tremendous distances between population centers, and we need reliable air travel to ensure jobs, private enterprise, and access to medical assistance.

Montana is primarily a rural State. We rank 47th in population—that is only three States with less populace than we—while being the fourth largest in land mass. To put it differently, although we are slightly larger than the country of Japan, we have fewer citizens than the State of Rhode Island, the smallest State in the Nation.

Montana has eight Essential Air Service communities: Sidney, Glendive, Wolf Point, Miles City, Glasgow, Havre, and West Yellowstone. The first seven rely on industries such as agricultural and mineral extraction—industries that are vital to America's growth and industries which exist in rural America rather than in downtown metropolitan areas. A couple of those airports also lie near Indian reservations where economic needs are paramount. Without the Essential Air Service all these areas risk isolation.

In 2008, Montana's Essential Air Service provider went out of business. We lost air travel for months. At this point, I want to read a passage from a recent Great Falls Tribune article to illustrate the impact on jobs and the economy. It says:

When Havre, a city of about 10,000 people, lost its air service . . . BNSF Railway closed its local office and moved its operation to Billings.

Think of that. Think of the irony. The railroad needs reliable air services. They didn't have them so they moved to another location. That shows how interconnected our economy is.

I want to take this opportunity to also announce that I have launched a Senate Essential Air Service Caucus. Senator COLLINS from Maine is co-chairman of the bipartisan caucus, and several other Democratic and Republican Senators have already joined us, and I encourage my other colleagues to join and stand with us.

It is important to rein in the deficit. That is clear. But let us be responsible about how we do it. Pulling the rug out from under programs such as Essential

Air Service will shrink the economy rather than shrinking the deficit. I will not turn my back on communities that rely on this program as a lifeline.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

FAA AIR TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 223, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 223) to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Wicker modified amendment No. 14, to exclude employees of the Transportation Security Administration from the collective bargaining rights of Federal employees and provide employment rights and an employee engagement mechanism for passenger and property screeners.

Blunt amendment No. 5, to require the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security to approve applications from airports to authorize passenger and property screening to be carried out by a qualified private screening company.

Paul amendment No. 21, to reduce the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal year 2011 to the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Administration for fiscal year 2008.

Rockefeller (for Wyden) amendment No. 27, to increase the number of test sites in the National Airspace System used for unmanned aerial vehicles and to require one of those test sites to include a significant portion of public lands.

Inhofe amendment No. 7, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to initiate a new rulemaking proceeding with respect to the flight time limitations and rest requirements for supplemental operations before any of such limitations or requirements be altered.

Rockefeller (for Ensign) amendment No. 32, to improve provisions relating to certification and flight standards for military remotely piloted aerial systems in the National Airspace System.

McCain amendment No. 4, to repeal the Essential Air Service Program.

Rockefeller (for Leahy) amendment No. 50, to amend title 1 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to include