

it is early childhood education. These children who are in childcare will do better later in life. There have been many studies that verify this.

This is a win-win situation, providing a safe environment for children so their parents can work and educational opportunity for the children at the same time. It pays off big-time for the workforce. A TANF study showed that parents who had their children in childcare for 2 years or more were more likely to remain in the employment field. So it provides stable employment, help for the child, and a win-win situation.

The eligibility for the program is it cannot exceed 85 percent of the State median income, to give you an idea of the type of people we are talking about who benefit from this program.

In Maryland, for a family of two the maximum income is \$24,000 and for a family of four the maximum income is \$35,000. In my State, Maryland, the average cost for childcare for an infant is about \$12,000 a year. For a child over 4 years of age, it is about \$9,000 a year.

We heard about the income levels and how a family is eligible for this program. It is clear that low-wage families cannot afford childcare on their own. We need to help, and that is what this program does, so that they can move up the economic ladder and not be a burden on the cash-assistance program.

Today, as we did prior to 1996, we have combined discretionary and mandatory programs for our childcare. Today discretionary spending is at \$2.36 billion and \$2.9 billion in mandatory spending.

The legislation before us also makes improvements, as it should. It allows the States to develop 13 specific health and safety standards, such as first aid and CPR, and SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome. It is keeping our children safer in childcare by having safety standards that are developed. It requires the States to do inspections of childcare centers, comprehensive background checks for those who are involved in childcare, online information, more transparency in the program, and additional State flexibility on how they can set priorities within the childcare program. That is exactly what federalism should be.

The Federal Government establishes a broad policy that we want to see families self-sufficient, we want to make sure there is a safe environment for children, and we want to make sure we do this in a way that is consistent with our national priorities. We also need to give flexibility to the State and local governments to be able to set their priorities to meet the needs of their citizens, and that is what this bill does.

I will take a moment now to give real-life examples of how this program is critically important to our community. A great example is the Judy Centers of Maryland. We have 25 Judy Centers in Maryland. They are named after Congressman STENY HOYER's wife Judy, who died of cancer in 1997. Judy was a

longtime advocate for quality early childhood education and comprehensive family support services. I knew Judy very well, and she was an incredibly dedicated leader and advocate for our children.

I have a couple of specific examples from the Judy Center as to how the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program is critically important to their existence. According to the testimony given before a committee, Judy Center employees discovered a dad who lost his job and a mom who only worked part time. They could not make ends meet or look for jobs or go on interviews because they had no childcare for their 2- and 3-year-old children. The Judy Center enrolled them in KinderCare, a childcare partner, and provided tuition assistance.

Since they lost their health insurance when their dad became unemployed, they were given an application for the Maryland CHIP program, the health insurance program. The 3-year-old had a behavioral issue and was referred to the Judy Center behavioral specialist, who worked with her extensively. She also received tutoring services.

Dad is now employed full time. Thanks to safe childcare, dad is now employed full time. After much encouragement, mom enrolled in adult education classes and received her GED. She has also completed a medical assistance program and is now enrolled in the College of Southern Maryland to pursue an associates degree. The children are now in elementary school and are doing well in school.

I could give many more examples like this family. I could talk about many other success stories that would not have been possible without the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, and that is why it is critically important that we reauthorize the program.

I see my colleague from Maryland is on the Senate floor. I congratulate her for her leadership in getting this bill to the floor—not just getting this bill to the floor, which is important, but doing it in a way that we can get it passed in the Senate and accomplish our objectives so we can get women into the workforce and have early childhood education to help children succeed in life. We can help American families and strengthen America.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before my colleague leaves the floor, I want to express my appreciation for his statement today and in particular when he spoke about the Judy Center, which has meant so much in Maryland to show the way childcare should be addressed. The Judy Center is a family-oriented organization that is focused on children. Their so-called wrap-around services help the child not only

with all that is necessary in a well-run childcare facility, but they also work with the family, strengthen the family, and help the family by giving them information about other opportunities to improve their life, such as educational benefits. I think it is a national model. If I had my way, I would like to adopt the Judy Center model throughout America.

Again, I thank the Senator for speaking about the Judy Center.

I also thank my friend for his steadfast advocacy for children, the way he has worked for the children's health program, particularly focusing on the dental services for that little boy Deamonte, the child who died. He is a real fighter.

Senator CARDIN is also well known for getting rid of lead paint poisoning in Maryland. So now he wants the lead out of bureaucracy and the lead out of the Senate. Again, I thank him for his comments.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the bill.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1086, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1086) to improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin amendment No. 2811, to include rural and remote areas as underserved areas identified in the State plan.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am going to give a recap of where we are and then note the absence of a quorum as we sort through our amendments.

This is the second day of the Senate's consideration of S. 1086, the child care and development block grant reauthorization on which 1.5 million American children depend, including 20,000 children from the State of Maryland. We have been working on this bill for over 2 years, and now it is our second day of moving this legislation.

We have made an impressive amount of progress. Yesterday the Senate agreed to nine amendments—three by rollcall vote and six by voice vote. We had a great group of bipartisan amendments. Of the nine amendments that were adopted, three were sponsored by Republicans, two were sponsored by Democrats, and four amendments were bipartisan. The amendments yesterday improved the underlying bill. They streamlined Federal early learning programs; made sure tribes get the funding they need; required States to develop childcare disaster plans; and ensures that CDBG, as it is known, also

serves an often much-overlooked population—foster care.

We also had a healthy debate on the floor in which women Senators came down to show their support for this bipartisan bill. Today we hope to continue our due deliberation of amendments.

Last night we identified approximately 29 to 30 amendments that remain. It is the hope of the chair and ranking member that sometime today—around 11:30 a.m., before the lunch—we will move to votes. We expect to have voice votes, possibly a rollcall vote, and I will give a further progress report. The timeline for all amendments is closed. We are now sorting through those amendments to see which we can adopt by agreement or adopt by a voice vote so we can move ahead.

I also say to my colleagues, there are many who have excellent ideas about childcare issues, and some are relevant to children but not necessarily relevant to this bill. As we wrap up the legislation, we hope to focus only on germane amendments to the bill today, and those other ideas, as meritorious as they are for consideration, that they either be withdrawn or find another vehicle for discussion and consideration.

We thank our colleagues for the quality of the amendments that have been brought forth. It shows that the Senate—on both sides of the aisle—has been thinking about children and has actually been listening to this compelling need around childcare and its availability and affordability, its safety and helping children get their education. Not all of the amendments—although they are focused on children—are relevant to the block grant, which is a voucher program to help low-income women qualify for childcare.

I will give further updates as the morning progresses and we sort through this. In the meantime, we invite Senators to come to the floor and talk about this very important topic facing American families.

I note 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. SANDERS. Mr. 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.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me begin by commending my colleagues Senator MIKULSKI, Senator HARKIN, Senator ALEXANDER, and Senator BURR for their hard work to reauthorize the child care development block grant. This is a modest piece of legislation and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The main point I wish to briefly make this morning is that even if this modest piece of legislation passes, it will not begin to address the very serious problems we face in childcare in our country and, even more importantly, in childhood poverty.

The United States is the wealthiest Nation in the history of the world. Unfortunately, despite our great wealth, we have the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on Earth. We have more people today living in poverty than at any time in the history of our country. Most significantly, and related to the discussion we are having about childcare today, the United States of America has, by far, the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on Earth. In my opinion, we have a moral responsibility to address that issue and we should put our energy and our minds to focusing on how we eliminate childhood poverty in America.

I will be offering an amendment today which is a very simple amendment. My amendment says the President of the United States should submit a plan to Congress which substantially reduces childhood poverty over the next 5 years. That is the amendment—that the President of the United States submit a plan to Congress which substantially reduces childhood poverty over the next 5 years. I hope and expect we would have unanimous support for this amendment.

As the Presiding Officer will recall, not too long ago, during the Winter Olympics at Sochi, Americans there were shouting out to our great athletes: “USA, USA! We are No. 1.” That was something I think many of us in America supported. We wanted our athletes in the Winter Olympics to be No. 1.

While we want to be No. 1 in terms of our athletic prowess, while we want to be No. 1 in terms of our scientific and intellectual accomplishments, while we want to be No. 1 in terms of economic growth and prosperity, we surely do not want to be No. 1 in the world in terms of childhood poverty. That is where we are today, with almost 22 percent of our kids living in poverty.

The reason, quite obviously, we do not want to be No. 1 in terms of childhood poverty is not only the moral issue of turning our backs on millions and millions of our most vulnerable people—kids who are 6 months old, kids who are 2 years old, kids who are 8 years old; human beings who cannot fend for themselves—it seems to me, as a caring people, we have the moral responsibility to make sure all of our children receive the basic necessities of life and not live in poverty.

I think there is a moral obligation to make sure we eliminate childhood poverty, but there is also an economic reality as well. I will get to that in a minute. But the first point to be made is that when we look at childhood poverty in America, which is 21.8 percent, we should examine what is going on in other countries.

Is it possible to go forward and significantly reduce or eliminate childhood poverty? The answer is yes. All we have to do is look around the world. In Denmark, child poverty is 3.7 percent. In Finland, it is 3.9 percent; in

Norway, it is 5.1 percent; in Iceland, it is 7.1 percent; in Austria, 8.2 percent; Sweden, 8.2 percent; Germany, 9.1 percent; in South Korea, 9.4 percent; in the United Kingdom, 9.4 percent; France, 11 percent; New Zealand, 13 percent; Poland, 13.6 percent; Canada, 14 percent. But in the United States of America, the childhood poverty rate is 21.8 percent.

As I mentioned a moment ago, this is clearly a moral issue. A powerful Nation which, in recent years, has seen huge increases in the number of millionaires and billionaires, we should not be a society in which almost one out of four of our kids gets their nutrition from food stamps. We should not be a society where a significant number of young people are dropping out of high school, standing out on street corners and destroying their lives.

This is not just a moral issue; it is an economic issue. My colleagues, please tell me what kind of economic future we have when we are competing against countries around the world which are doing a better job than we are in providing the intellectual and emotional support their kids need; that are doing a better job than we are in educating their young people. How do we compete against these countries in the very competitive international global economy? Do we say to the young children who are living in poverty: Sorry. We can't afford to provide the preschool education you need; we can't afford to provide the childcare your parents need for you, and we are really sorry the odds are that many of you may drop out of school and that some of you will end up in jail.

We have more people in jail in the United States of America than in any other country on Earth. Clearly, one of the reasons for that has to do with the fact that we have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. We pay for these things one way or we pay for them another way. The way we are paying for it is by spending \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year incarcerating huge numbers of people rather than making sure our kids get the nourishment—intellectual, emotional, nutritional—they need in order to do well in life.

It is important for us to look at what happens around the world, to see what we can learn, and to see what is working well around the world. It is important for us to learn and to understand that in countries such as Denmark, Finland, and Norway, where childhood poverty is very low, childcare is free to all of its workers. Workers in these countries get paid maternity leave. That means when a mom has a baby, she has the opportunity to stay home with her baby during the most important months of a baby's life and not have to worry about going to work and making a living, because those societies have said the right thing—that they want kids and mothers to bond and fathers to bond well, for those kids to do well. In this country, if a person

is low income and working class and they have a baby, they have to get to work right away, because if they don't have that income, how do they take care of their families? Those countries have done the right thing and it is important to learn from them.

In many countries around the world, workers get allowances from their governments to take care of their children. Their workers are guaranteed a 4-week paid vacation. Health care is a right and not a privilege for their citizens. In France, for example, if both parents go back to work after having a child, they are entitled to receive strong childcare benefits. In Germany—hard for us to believe—but if children get sick, their parents get up to 25 days of paid leave to stay home and take care of those children. These are just a few of the many benefits people in other countries—our competitors—receive. Maybe we can learn something from them.

Unfortunately, workers in our country—in this great Nation—have none of those benefits. Here is what has happened as a result. More than one in five children in America lives in households that lack consistent access to adequate food because their parents don't make enough money. In other words, the number of millionaires and billionaires is growing—more and more income in wealth inequality—and millions and millions of families today who are raising kids are wondering how they are going to have enough food on the table to provide basic nutrition to those kids. Should that be happening in the United States of America?

The number of homeless children living in America has gone up by 73 percent since 2006. In every State in the country, including my State of Vermont, there are families living with their kids in cars or in emergency shelters. Is that the way we give kids the opportunity they need to advance in their lives?

The psychologists tell us over and over that the most important years of a human being's life in terms of intellectual and emotional growth are those years between 0 and 4. Yet, in this country today, less than half of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in preschool. Ninety-six percent of infants and toddlers living in low-income families don't receive the early education they need through the early Head Start Program. More than 220,000 American children are currently on waiting lists for childcare assistance. And on and on it goes.

What does this mean in English? This is what it means. It means in Vermont, in New Jersey, in Maryland—it means in States all over this country—a mom and dad wake up in the morning with a 3-year-old and they are worried about the quality and affordability of the childcare they can find for that kid. So they go to work and they are saying, what is happening? I have to go to work. I can't stay home with my child. We need to make money. Yet, I cannot

find quality, affordable childcare for my child. And in this country that is exactly what we should be providing.

According to a recent study by the Children's Defense Fund, childhood poverty costs this Nation at least \$500 billion each and every year in extra education, health and criminal justice expenses, and in lost productivity. In other words, rather than learning what other countries are doing—investing in our kids, nurturing our kids, making sure our kids get the great education they deserve—we turn our backs on millions of kids and then we are shocked—just shocked—that they turn to drugs or crime or self-destructive activity, and we spend a fortune incarcerating them. Think about all of the intellectual and emotional destruction that takes place in this country because we ignore the needs of our children.

We hear our fellow Senators come to the floor and talk about how the United States is the greatest country on Earth, and I share that sentiment. But I do not believe the greatest country on Earth should have, by far, the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world.

The amendment I have offered is a very simple amendment. I hope it is accepted. I hope it will be supported unanimously. I hope it will allow us to go forward.

What the amendment says, again, is very simple. It says the President of the United States should submit a plan to the Congress which allows us to substantially reduce childhood poverty in the next 5 years. That is it.

With that, I yield the floor and hope very much this amendment is adopted. Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we are in the process of sorting out the amendments that are pending, again, to see what we could accept by UC, what we could accept by voice vote, and those that might require a rollcall vote. The chairman and the ranking member of the committee, Senator HARKIN and Senator ALEXANDER, are discussing this, and we are looking forward to some type of votes on or about 11:30 a.m.

But I see there are a lot of amendments out here about streamlining this and duplicating this and others—very thoughtful—but I wish to clarify exactly what is the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program. This is a program that meets a particular need to help people have access to childcare, and we are strengthening the quality requirements. It does not solve all of the childcare problems in the United States of America.

The overall need of childcare for both poor women and middle-class women or families is well known. It is one of the agonizing choices families need to make.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Program—and this is why we are looking at a variety of other issues. We have on the books the childcare tax credit bill, where many of us hope to expand the deduction. Senator GILLIBRAND has others. But today we are focusing on the child care and development block grant. It is the primary Federal grant program to provide childcare assistance for working families.

It was passed originally in 1990, under George Herbert Walker Bush. Before 1996, there were four childcare programs for low-income families. All of them had different eligibility criteria and work requirements—exactly what we have talked about here, the need to streamline. Three were targeted to families in or at risk of being in the welfare system. One was targeted to low-income families outside of welfare.

But in 1996 under welfare reform, on a bipartisan basis, we created one unified program to serve low-income families with one set of eligibility criteria and work requirements. It was then streamlined. The overarching purpose of the childcare bill in welfare reform was to give parents aid, substantial assistance, so they could go from welfare to work or get the training to go to work.

It has been a very successful program—a very successful program. One and one-half million children in America benefit from it; 20,000 in Maryland alone—a substantial waiting list if we had more vouchers.

What we are doing in this bill is reauthorizing, following the spirit of 1996, streamlining and taking now what we know—new knowledge and best practices of how to help children in childcare be able to be safe, have a sense of security and stability, and then also enhance their ability to learn. We know now—all the research shows—from infancy to age 5 is one of the greatest growth spurts for brain development in a person's life. Vocabulary development and so many other things occur.

So what our bill does is help improve that, but we do not so overmandate to the States that we do not allow for local flexibility. So we are trying to streamline the bill, have a better emphasis on quality, without stringent new Federal mandates, and at the same time streamline this legislative process by moving through our amendment process.

I now look forward to conferring with my colleague. Members should stay tuned. If they would like to speak on this or the matter of childcare, we welcome them. We have had an open amendment process. We have had an open dialogue. We have had an open floor. I think this has been very constructive.

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

Mr. BURR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague for withholding on that quorum call.

We have made tremendous progress. Our joint staffs worked well into the night with Members who have amendments to this bill that they think improve the bill. We have worked aggressively to try to work out as many of those as we possibly can, and I am here to report to our colleagues we have made tremendous progress. We have processed, since we started yesterday, a number of amendments and this bill has become better. We still have several on both sides that we are still working on with our Members to try to accommodate their intent with language that is acceptable and continues to improve this bill, and we will do that.

Let me say to our colleagues who still might have amendments, if you have them, we need you to come to the floor. We need you to offer those amendments. If you have amendments that have yet to be cleared, I would urge you to come to the floor and work with Senator MIKULSKI and myself and our staffs to figure out how we can process those in a timely fashion.

It is our intent that in approximately 1 hour, with agreement from our leaders, we would move to votes—both recorded and voice votes—on all amendments that remain on this bill in the hopes that Members could then leave to go to their caucus lunches, and after returning from those lunches, hopefully, we would be in a position to have final passage on this legislation; again, that is with the chairman's, the ranking member's, and the leaders' blessings, but that is certainly the intent of Senator MIKULSKI and myself.

We can only do that if, in fact, those Members who want to offer amendments offer them and those who still have some to be worked out come and try to work out those differences.

I urge my colleagues now, we have over an hour before we intend to move to a period where we might process the remainder of the amendments. We would like to be in a situation where we can give certainty—at least as it relates to the disposition of this bill—to our Members that we would finish shortly after the lunch. I encourage all of our colleagues, if they have interest in this bill, come to the floor. Work with us.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I want to give an update. We had originally thought we would be voting around 11:30. We are going to delay that until on or about 12:15—nothing fixed, nothing mandatory. People have said: Well, what are you all doing? Look at the Senate floor. Where is the action? This is a compelling issue.

Actually, there is a lot of action going on in the sense that we are reviewing over 20 amendments that are still outstanding to see what could be accepted by unanimous consent, what could be accepted by a voice vote, and what requires a mandatory rollcall vote. So there is a lot of discussion going on, and Senators and their staffs are talking.

It is not to be debated; it is to be discussed right now. I think it is so healthy. This is one of the first times in a couple of years where we have had an open amendment process. In some ways we are getting adjusted to how that actually works. This is terrific. So just because you do not see Senators in intense debate, there are intense conversations about how we help children, how to not create new bureaucracies, how we have the sense that all this is child focused and yet not creating lots of new mandates or whatever.

So this has been really very good. I compliment Senator HARKIN, who is the chair of the full HELP Committee. It is under his leadership that Senator BURR and I held some hearings. His advocacy for children is so well known. If we can move this bill today, we will have accomplished two major goals. We would have reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, made improvements and new reforms, and refreshed the program.

At the same time I think we have improved the process in the Senate to show we can govern by moving bills, by offering amendments, by discussion and by debate. But we could not have done it had Senator HARKIN not been willing to establish such a great tone with Senator ENZI and Senator ALEXANDER while Senator BURR and I did this.

This is the way the Senate ought to be. There were differences. But differences do not mean that you have to be filled with rancor and ranting all the time. At the end of day, when all is said and done, people want us to get more done and less said.

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.

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

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, a lot of work has gone into this bill. The person who led that whole work for a 2-year period of time was Senator MIKUL-

SKI. I happen to be chair of the committee. But it was Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR, working together, who really have brought this to fruition. It is a good bill.

Senator ALEXANDER always says that our committee probably has the biggest divergence ideologically of any committee in the Senate. Yet we have reported out, I think, 19 bills out of our committee, 10 of which have been signed into law during this Congress. We are able to do that because people work together. We work things out.

That is what has happened with this bill. There are a lot of crosscurrents on this bill. There are a lot of items that Senator MIKULSKI would like to have had in the bill, that I would have liked to have had in the bill, and I am sure I can say the same thing for the Republican side.

But over a 2-year period of time—I know it has been at least that—Senator MIKULSKI has worked on this. We made our agreements, and we worked it out to the point where the bill passed our committee unanimously. We have, as I said, a wide divergence of ideological views on our committee. So, here is a bill that passed unanimously. We will have an open process here of debate, deliberation, and amending.

I think at this time we have a pretty defined universe of the amendments, unless something else pops up that I did not know about.

We are working on those. The staffs are working on those now with the Senators. With any legislation that comes through, let's face it, as Senators we probably would like to change something here or there. I understand that. I have been in the Senate a long time, and I know I have wanted to add an amendment to something to change it, to do something different, maybe, that I cared about.

But in the interests of the broader perspective of the legislation at hand, I didn't offer it. I would wait until some other point in time to offer it or perhaps to offer a different pathway. That is what I am asking Senators on both sides of the aisle to think about.

We have a great bill. It is sorely needed. It updates a law that hasn't been changed. I know Senator MIKULSKI has told us many times, and it bears repeating. We have not addressed this since 1996, and a lot has changed since 1996 in terms of childcare.

This bill updates, modernizes, and does some things that will move us ahead and better this country in terms of the child care and development block grant program.

I know that different people have different ideas, saying: Well, I would like to change this or modify that. I get it; I understand that.

But if there is a problem in terms of bringing an amendment up that might jeopardize the bill, I ask Senators to consider whether their interests, whatever it might be, and I am not saying it is not legitimate, but if it upsets the

balance we have worked out in this committee with this broad, ideological spectrum, I ask them to reconsider whether they would want to jeopardize this bill, which we are so close to passing. I think we could actually pass this bill this afternoon.

I ask Senators, if they have those kinds of amendments, to reconsider maybe the broader implications of this legislation and whether they would want to jeopardize it for their legitimate interests, as I said. I don't deny any Senator the right to offer an amendment and to push an interest that he or she might have. Some of them I might agree with. But if it really jeopardizes the bill, then I would have to say, no, I wouldn't support it because of the broader interests of getting the bill passed.

Senator MIKULSKI and her staff, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator BURR, and my staff, we are working together on this. I still hope we can bring this bill to fruition sometime early this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I come to the floor today to thank the bipartisan leadership that has brought us to the place where we are considering reauthorizing this important child care and development block grant bill.

In my home State of Washington there is a young woman named Janelle who is a single mom. She lives in southeast Seattle and was looking for opportunities to support her family. But before she could go back to school or participate in a job-training program so she could advance her career, she had to find affordable childcare for two of her children.

Thankfully, with the assistance of this Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, she was able to get some subsidies to help cover the costs. She now works. She works part-time, and she is attending school and becoming a surgical tech.

This Federal grant program expands opportunities to parents such as Janelle and so many families across our country by helping them with the cost of childcare. That is why I support this effort to reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program.

We all know the cost of childcare has soared in recent decades. The Census Bureau found that childcare costs have nearly doubled since the 1980s, and that high cost hits low-income families especially hard. For working families who live below the poverty line, the cost of childcare can eat up more than 30 percent of their monthly income. For single parents, if they only have one income, it is an even bigger burden. When low-income parents don't have access to reliable and affordable childcare, they can't work. They can't go back to school. They can't advance their skills with job training. They are stuck.

That, as we know, is particularly problematic for women. Women are more likely than men to cut back their hours at work or quit their jobs all together so they can take care of their children.

In the long run, that puts women on an uneven playing field with their male counterparts, both in terms of earnings and of opportunities to advance in the workplace.

We have to break down those barriers. We need to make sure that working doesn't become cost prohibitive for parents, and we have to strengthen access for low-income families so they can get affordable, quality childcare.

This bipartisan Child Care and Development Block Grant Act is part of the solution. These grants expand opportunities for parents with low income. It allows them to work, to go to school or to get job training—all with the peace of mind that their kids are taken care of in a safe childcare center.

In 1990 President George H. W. Bush signed this grant program, as we know it, into law. Today it helps 1.6 million kids get childcare.

To participate a parent has to have a job or be enrolled in school or in a job training program. That has helped countless parents across our country.

I want to mention a woman who has contacted us. She is a single mom whose name is Star. She lives in Skagit County, a rural part of my State. She wants to advance her skills to support her family, as so many people do today.

With this assistance she is able to go to a community college 1 hour away from home, knowing that her kids are OK in a reliable childcare program. There is nothing more important to a parent than the safety and well-being of their child. I have said many times: You do a better job at work if you know your kids are safe. If you are worried about whether your kids are OK, you can't do a good job at work. Reauthorizing this program is a critical part of this, and it helps parents such as Star feel comfortable when they are away from their kids.

In this reauthorization bill we are looking at ways to improve these grants. We know that stability is critically important for a young child's development. But before kids could lose their spot in childcare, if their parents didn't meet the eligibility requirements, even temporarily, that disruption in care is exactly what we need to work to avoid.

I have seen this a lot in my work on behalf of foster kids, military students, and homeless children. These are highly mobile populations. Now with this legislation and the work that has been done, we have ensured that these kids have a mandatory 12 months to access that care so they don't have that disruption of stability in their lives. That is critically important.

This bill also reduces barriers for homeless families to access childcare and will train more childcare providers in identifying and serving homeless

kids and families so they can get the support they need. I truly appreciate the inclusion of those provisions.

For many families it can be very difficult, as we know, to find quality childcare. This legislation authorizes a toll-free hotline and a Web site so parents can get and find good-quality care in their own community. Those provisions are why I am such a strong supporter and so delighted we are at the point where we are able to pass this critical piece of legislation.

Let me end by saying in Washington State there is a young couple named Edward and Constance. They are struggling to make ends meet on a very low income. They are working, and they are studying to ensure that times won't always be as tough as they are today. Because of childcare assistance with this grant money, Edward now works full time. When Constance is not working at her part-time job, she is training to become a dental assistant. Supporting parents such as this couple, giving them these opportunities to make sure their kids are in a safe, quality childcare program is what the grants are about in this program.

I urge our colleagues to support this legislation, and again, I thank the Senators who have participated in making this a strong bipartisan proposal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator from Washington for her comments and her leadership in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, as well. She has been a consistent spokesman for children, especially for homeless children.

I want to make an observation about the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program that the Presiding Officer from New Jersey will especially find of interest because of his work with children and schools in New Jersey. We have heard this morning a great deal of support for the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, which is a very remarkable piece of legislation in terms of the way it is structured, if we think about it.

It has been around for about 20 years, but it takes 5 to 6 billion Federal dollars each year and gives it to States—a block grant with a lot of flexibility. Then the money is distributed as vouchers to individual parents—low-income women, mostly—who then choose among thousands of certified childcare centers. That, I would argue, while it was done 20 years ago, fits the Internet age.

Newt Gingrich—and I have sometimes accused Newt of being Vesuvian in his qualities because he has such a steady flow of new ideas—has done some very interesting work recently. He quotes a computer programmer named Tim O'Reilly who made a suggestion for how the Internet could transform government. Mr. O'Reilly said:

The best way for government to operate is to figure out what kinds of things are

enablers of society and make investments in those things. The same way that Apple figured out, "If we turn the iPhone into a platform, outside developers will bring hundreds of thousands of applications to the table."

In a way, the developers of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program in the early 1990s, under the first President Bush, were ahead of their time because, rather than having a big burdensome program run from Washington with lots of rules made here, we have a piece of legislation that survived for more than two decades and that helps 1.5 million children this year.

It enables people such as the mother in Memphis I talked about on the floor yesterday who became eligible for a childcare voucher in Tennessee. She was at LeMoyné-Owen College studying for her business degree and was able to place her infant in a childcare center of her choice. The State gave her \$500 to \$600 a month for a voucher—infant care is more expensive. She earned her degree and is now an assistant manager at Walmart. She now has a second child in the same childcare center—but she can afford to pay for it herself.

That is a perfect example of enabling her, using taxpayer money, to move up the economic ladder, to reach the American dream and succeed. Rather than making her do it or mandating her to do it, we enabled her to do it.

We also do this—and we have done it very successfully since World War II—with college grants and loans, which also have virtually unanimous support in the Senate on both sides of the aisle.

Beginning with the GI bill for veterans in 1944, we have given vouchers to veterans, and those vouchers follow them to any educational institution of their choice. At the beginning, many of them went to high schools. Some of them went to colleges overseas.

That was the beginning of our current system of Federal Government support for grants and loans, and now half of our college students have a Federal grant or a loan to help pay for college. All of those grants and loans follow them to the institution of their choice. That is a lot of money. It is over \$100 billion in loans—new loans—every year. It is \$33 billion in Pell grants each year.

We followed Tim O'Reilly's suggestion there as well. We haven't set up a lot of complicated Washington programs and managers. We have simply said this. If you are eligible and go to an accredited institution—whether it is public, private, for-profit, nonprofit, Yeshiva, Notre Dame or Rutgers—the money will follow you to the college of your choice. That is what we have done since World War II with college students—and since the era of George Walker Bush, with children—we have given them tickets to the institutions of their choice.

But what have we done in the middle? We have vouchers for college students and vouchers for very young children, but what about students who go

to elementary school? And what about students who go to high school? Especially, what about students who are low-income students who are trapped in failing schools? Our childcare vouchers are for low-income parents, mainly women. Our vouchers for college students are for low-income students. We call those Pell grants. But we give our K–12 money to the schools instead of allowing it to follow students to the schools of their choice.

I have always wondered, if we have had such success with the GI bill and the Pell grant and the student loan and the childcare voucher, why don't we try it with kindergarten through the 12th grade? Many enterprising mayors and Governors have tried that, usually facing a lot of resistance from people who see something un-American about vouchers. It is not very un-American if it is the GI bill, not very un-American if it is a Pell grant, not very un-American if it is a childcare voucher, but something somehow is wrong with it if you are in third grade or the seventh grade or the ninth grade.

So I have introduced something called Scholarships for Kids, which is almost like the child care development block grant for students who are in elementary and secondary schools. It would take 80 Federal education programs that spend about \$24 billion a year and say to New Jersey or Tennessee or Iowa: You can take all that money, whatever your share of that is, and create a \$2,100 scholarship for every single child in your State below the Federal poverty level, and it can follow that child to whatever school in your State the child attends.

If you live in a city or a State where you want the child to be able to go to any accredited institution, public or private, the way we do with Pell grants, you may do that. If you believe that Federal dollars for elementary and secondary schools should only go to public schools, you may do that. You may design the program however you want to do it in your State. But the idea would be that we would enable low-income children, the ones who are below the Federal poverty level—and there are 11 million of those in our country—we would allow you to pin \$2,100 to their shirt to follow that child to school. I think we know what would happen if we were to do that. Those children may need to be in school longer each day. They may need a meal. They may need to be there during vacation time. They may need to be there in the summer. And if the teacher has the extra money and the freedom to use it, that gives that school more autonomy and that helps that child succeed.

Does every school succeed at the same rate? No. Not every college succeeds at the same rate. Not every childcare center succeeds at the same rate. But if we have 70 years of experience with colleges of creating autonomy and choice and letting the money follow the students to the school—and

people all around the world tell us we have the best system of colleges in the world—why don't we try it with our schools?

I see the Senator from Oklahoma, and I will wind down so he can wind up. I thank him for his contribution to the debate.

While we are in the middle of so much testimony about what a great thing the child care development block grant is—vouchers to little children who are poor—and while we all believe Pell grants are a great idea—vouchers to college students who are low income—should we not think about doing exactly the same thing with elementary and secondary school students as a way to help them succeed? And not as a Federal mandate but simply giving Governors and State legislators and educators the opportunity to say: Give us that share of our \$24 billion. Give every one of our children who is below the Federal poverty level \$2,100 each and let us decide how it follows them to the school they attend.

So I wanted to make that observation. And I am delighted to know the Senator from New Jersey is presiding today because of the work he has done in his State in that area.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Oklahoma wish to speak?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Oh, I am sorry, I thought the Senator from Oklahoma was involved in a conversation with the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. COBURN. I was, but I would like to speak, if I might.

Ms. MIKULSKI. No way we want to inhibit the Senator's ability to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I was going to call up amendment No. 2829, but I have chosen not to do that because of the plan of the manager of the bill to table it. So I will talk about what it is and make a few observations.

Four years ago we got the GAO to start a process on duplication, to look at what we are doing in a multitude of areas across the whole Federal Government. That will be finished, and for the first time it will have taken a complete look. We will see it at the end of this month, the first part of the fourth report.

One of their findings was, according to early learning and childcare programs, within 8 different departments there are 45 separate programs—8 different departments within the administration, 45 separate programs, spending \$16 billion a year. So the amendment I was going to offer would have forced us to do the metrics to look at what our outcomes are. It would have forced us to consolidate programs, other than major programs such as this one we are debating today, which has been markedly improved and enhanced.

Now, I don't want to put the Senate through a timely vote when I know what the outcome is going to be, so I won't call up that amendment. But I would remind my colleagues that the only way we are really ever going to get control of our budget is to do the hard work of eliminating duplication, so that when we have a program, such as the one the manager of the bill has on the floor today, it is really directed, it is focused, it has metrics, and we know what we are getting for what we are spending.

Most people don't realize we have 45 of these programs in 8 different departments spending \$16 billion a year.

So I hope we will consider that this is a great movement on this one particular bill, and I congratulate the people who worked on it—Senator HARKIN and his staff, Senators BURR and ALEXANDER and their staff—because I think they have done a good job. But it is not enough because we are still going to have 44 other programs and we are still going to have programs that don't have a metric on them. We are spending money on them, and we don't know if they are accomplishing what we want them to accomplish.

The whole purpose of the amendment was to force us to do that. I understand that is not going to move, and I am fine with that. I will work in every other way behind the scenes to try to accomplish the same purpose.

Mr. HARKIN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. COBURN. I yield for a question.

Mr. HARKIN. First of all, I just want to say—and I mentioned it on the floor the other day—that I spent this weekend in Iowa at two early learning centers, and what became clear to me was the number of different conduits of funding and the different programs, qualifications, requirements, and paperwork.

I said at the time: I am confused.

The man at the center said: If you think you are confused, how do you think we feel about it?

That is why I was very supportive of the amendment offered by Senator ENZI. The Enzi amendment was a mandate on HHS, I believe, to take a look at all of these things and have a report back within a certain amount of time—I think it was 1 year—on how we can better coordinate these.

I agree with the Senator. There are way too many conduits into childcare, and it is horribly confusing, and there are all these different requirements that overlap, and this just causes confusion.

I wanted to ask the Senator if he had looked at the Enzi amendment, which gives us some time, and I can assure the Senator that our committee—and I am sure I can speak for Senator BURR on this on the Republican side—will be riding herd on this because I think we all agree with the Senator from Oklahoma that it has to be fixed.

Mr. COBURN. To answer the Senator's question, I supported the Enzi amendment. I don't think it went far

enough because you are not going to look at some of the programs that are outside the purview of the Senator's committee. We have eight different Federal departments running these programs. They come from eight different sets of authorizations.

So the point is that I am going to work behind the scenes with Senator BURR and with Senator HARKIN to try to accomplish this.

AMENDMENT NO. 2830

Now I would like to call up amendment No. 2830 and ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator yield to me before he offers his amendment?

Mr. COBURN. Yes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Well, actually, I want to comment on how I want to work together with the Senator. Go ahead and offer the amendment, and then I would like to comment and not engage in klutzy conversation by asking questions. I think we are on the same broadband.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to setting aside the pending amendment?

Hearing no objection, the clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. COBURN] proposed an amendment numbered 2830.

Mr. COBURN. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read.

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

Mr. COBURN. The desk has a modification of that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Hearing no objection, the amendment is so modified.

The amendment (No. 2830), as modified, is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a \$1,000,000 asset limit for eligibility for child care assistance)

On page 138, line 8, insert “, and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of such family)” after “size”.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, what we are trying to accomplish with this amendment—and I have cleared it on our side, and I think it is being cleared on the other side as well—is to make sure the significant amount of money we spend in this area goes to people who really need it. So all this amendment does is require a self-certification when an individual acquires one of these grants that they don't have real assets greater than \$1 million. If they do, maybe they should be spending their money rather than taxpayers' money on their kids' childcare.

That is all this amendment does. All we have done is to put in there, in the application process, a box they have to check that says: I don't have real assets in excess of \$1 million. This will ensure that we know that at least the vast majority—and by the way, 16 percent of this money has gone to people

who are very wealthy, in terms of these vouchers. I have that data. I don't have it with me. Actually, I may have it with me, and I will pull it up and speak about that in a minute.

But the fact is we want this money to help the people who need help, not to help people who don't need the help. So that is the purpose of this amendment. I have agreed, if it becomes acceptable, to have a voice vote.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Before the Senator from Oklahoma leaves the floor and we proceed to a voice vote, et cetera, I wish to thank him for his steadfast advocacy in getting more value out of the taxpayers' dollar for the taxpayers' contribution to the Federal Treasury. He has been a well-known advocate for the consolidation and streamlining of existing programs, and I salute him for that.

Going back to 1996, we actually started this with streamlining childcare bills. In 1996, because I was here during the welfare reform debate and passage, we had four different childcare bills, with four different eligibility requirements, with four different levels of bureaucracy. So the money was going into the bureaucracy's determining eligibility rather than into childcare. In the 1996 welfare reform bill, we consolidated so that we have the child care and development block grant. That is how we got to where we are.

The Senator from Oklahoma talks about how he has data that cuts across eight different Federal agencies. I pledge to him, as the chair of the Appropriations Committee, to actually sit down and look at this data, to put our heads together. And really, with money as tight as it is, the stringent budgets we are under, particularly when it comes to funding the kinds of compelling human needs that are in health and human services and education, we want to get more value for the dollar. We don't want to get more bureaucracy for the dollar.

So I say to the Senator from Oklahoma that we appreciate his withdrawing his amendment. We know the Senator from Wyoming Mr. ENZI has offered an amendment to get a report as well. But as we look at our appropriations for this year, I invite my colleague, with the greatest sincerity—and I pledge to him my word as a Senator—to sit down and review these documents and see how we can put this suggestion he has into action. I look forward to it, and, quite frankly, I am eager to see what we can get done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I wish to join in. One, as the Senator from Maryland said, I recognize he has been out front in trying to get value for the taxpayers' dollar; and, second, he is working in a cooperative way to help us get a result. Those are two

great characteristics in a body of 100 people which operates by unanimous consent. So I am grateful for that.

On the first point, I completely agree with him on the early childhood money. We have about \$18 billion from various streams of Federal dollars aimed at children below 5 or 6; then we have State dollars; then we have local dollars; then we have private dollars. We have grappled with ways to try to make sure we spend that money more effectively. One way is to emphasize centers of excellence, like Oklahoma City, Nashville, or Jersey City, where they try to put all that money together.

But I am committed to work with Senator HARKIN and Senator MIKULSKI to take the research which Senator COBURN has done and see if we can consolidate, streamline, and get more value for early childhood.

Second, he has called attention to a problem which I would appreciate his help in solving with his "Millionaires' Amendment," which I think we will be voting on in a little while. Let me give an example, if I may.

The application form students fill out for Federal grants and loans to attend college is ridiculous. If I had it in my hand and held it up here, it would go from up here all the way to the floor. It is 100 questions. We had testimony in our committee that if we just answered two questions, in 95 percent of the cases it would be accurate. One: What was your family income 2 years ago? And, two: How many people are in your family? But the other 5 percent is the problem, because there could be abuse of the kind the Senator is talking about here.

What I would like to do—and I think others here would like to do—is to simplify the application form for Federal grants and loans, but do it in such a way we make sure the money goes where it is supposed to go. When there are 100 complicated questions to fill out, it discourages a lot of low-income people from going to college who we hope would, and it wastes time and money of administrators and families. Many of these families are not families with college degrees and accountants to help them fill out these long forms.

So we need the Senator from Oklahoma's help when we get to that discussion, sometime, of: How do we simplify the form of application for Federal grants and loans? And, with the 5 percent which remains, how do we narrow that down to 4, 3, 2, 1, to make sure almost all the money we are appropriating goes where it is supposed to go?

I salute him for both amendments. I look forward to supporting his amendment on the child care block grants, and hope it is a first step for dealing with the misapplication of Federal dollars aimed to help people move up the economic ladder.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, if I could have the attention of Senator ALEXANDER and Senator BURR. I am about to propose a unanimous consent request.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12:15 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the following amendments in the order listed: Coburn No. 2830, as modified; Portman No. 2827; Tester No. 2834; Thune No. 2838; Warren No. 2842; Bennet No. 2839, as modified; further, that no second-degree amendments be in order to any of these amendments prior to the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. For the information of all Senators, it is our understanding we will need one roll call vote in this sequence and the remaining amendments can be disposed of by voice vote.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the pending amendments be set aside and the following amendments be made pending: Portman No. 2827; Tester No. 2834; Thune No. 2838; Warren No. 2842; and Bennet No. 2839, as modified.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I realize the Senator is trying to move through this very important bill on the floor, which I fully support and thank him for the amendment.

Does the Senator know what the action of the Senate will be once this bill is completed? And is the intention to do final passage of this bill today?

Mr. HARKIN. I say to my friend I am hopeful we will have final passage today. We are working through it. We are down to just a couple of amendments. I haven't seen any others pop up right now. So I am hopeful we will have this series of votes, people will go to lunch, we will come back, and hopefully we will dispose of maybe a couple more amendments and then we will have final passage.

Ms. LANDRIEU. So final passage could potentially be—is it the Senator's understanding through the Chair—about 3 or so?

Mr. HARKIN. If we don't have any kind of extended debate on the floor, I would say probably at least by 3, I would hope we would be finished. If we work out agreement on a couple amendments, we might be done before that.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous consent request?

Without objection, the clerk will report the amendments, en bloc.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN] proposes amendments numbered 2827, 2834, 2838, 2842, and 2839, as modified.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2827

(Purpose: To provide for evidence-based training that promotes early language and literacy development)

On page 78, line 9, insert "and early language and literacy development" after "readiness".

AMENDMENT NO. 2834

(Purpose: To permit the Secretary of Health and Human Services to waive the prohibition on the use of amounts by Indian tribes and tribal organizations for construction or renovation of facilities for child care programs if the use will result in an increase of the level of child care services)

On page 136, strike line 16 and all that follows through page 137, line 7, and insert the following:

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

"(D) LICENSING AND STANDARDS.—In lieu of any licensing and regulatory requirements applicable under State or local law, the Secretary, in consultation with Indian tribes and tribal organizations, shall develop minimum child care standards that shall be applicable to Indian tribes and tribal organizations receiving assistance under this subchapter. Such standards shall appropriately reflect Indian tribe and tribal organization needs and available resources, and shall include standards requiring a publicly available application, health and safety standards, and standards requiring a reservation of funds for activities to improve the quality of child care provided to Indian children."; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

"(C) LIMITATION.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the Secretary may not permit an Indian tribe or tribal organization to use amounts provided under this subsection for construction or renovation if the use will result in a decrease in the level of child care services provided by the Indian tribe or tribal organization as compared to the level of child care services provided by the Indian tribe or tribal organization in the fiscal year preceding the year for which the determination under subparagraph (B) is being made.

"(ii) WAIVER.—The Secretary shall waive the limitation described in clause (i) if—

"(I) the Secretary determines that the decrease in the level of child care services provided by the Indian tribe or tribal organization is temporary; and

"(II) the Indian tribe or tribal organization submits to the Secretary a plan that demonstrates that after the date on which the construction or renovation is completed—

"(aa) the level of child care services will increase; or

"(bb) the quality of child care services will improve.".

AMENDMENT NO. 2838

(Purpose: To specify that child care certificates may be included in State strategies to increase the supply of child care)

On page 88, line 5, insert "offering child care certificates to parents," after "tions,".

AMENDMENT NO. 2842

(Purpose: To allow funds reserved under section 658G(a) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to be used to connect child care staff members with Federal and State financial aid, or other resources, in order to assist the staff members in pursuing relevant training)

On page 111, strike line 17 and insert the following:

early neurological development of children; and

“(L) connecting child care staff members of child care providers with available Federal and State financial aid, or other resources, that would assist child care staff members in pursuing relevant postsecondary training.

AMENDMENT NO. 2839, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To expand the requirement that space allotted to child care providers in Federal buildings will be used to provide child care services to children of whom at least 50 percent have 1 parent or guardian employed by the Federal Government)

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. ____ . ALLOTMENT OF SPACE IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS FOR CHILD CARE.

Section 590 of title 40, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (a) through (g) as subsections (b) through (h), respectively;

(2) by inserting before subsection (b) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(a) DEFINITION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEE.—In this section, the term ‘Federal employee’ does not include a person that—

“(1) is not employed by the Federal Government; and

“(2) meets the requirements described in subsection (c)(2)(C)(i)(II).”;

(3) in paragraph (2)(C) of subsection (c) (as so redesignated), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) the space will be used to provide child care services to children of whom at least 50 percent have 1 parent or guardian who—

“(I) is employed by the Federal Government; or

“(II)(aa) has met the requirements for a master’s degree or a doctorate degree from an institution of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)); and

“(bb) is conducting research in the Federal building under an arrangement between the parent or guardian and a Federal agency.”; and

(4) in subsection (d) (as so redesignated), by striking “subsection (b)” each place it appears and inserting “subsection (c)”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the Bennet amendment, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, en bloc: Calendar Nos. 634, 625, and 550; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action and the Senate then resume legislative session; further, that there be 2 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form prior to each vote, and that the votes be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. I am told we expect the amendments we are bringing up to be voice-voted this afternoon.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2830

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is now on agreeing to amendment No. 2830, as modified, offered by the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 75 Leg.]

YEAS—100

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murphy
Ayotte	Graham	Murray
Baldwin	Grassley	Nelson
Barrasso	Hagan	Paul
Begich	Harkin	Portman
Bennet	Hatch	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Heller	Risch
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Coburn	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Lee	Toomey
Corker	Levin	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Cruz	Markey	Vitter
Donnelly	McCain	Walsh
Durbin	McCaskill	Warner
Enzi	McConnell	Warren
Feinstein	Menendez	Whitehouse
Fischer	Merkley	Wicker
Flake	Mikulski	Wyden
Franken	Moran	
	Murkowski	

The amendment (No. 2830), as modified, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2827

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Portman amendment No. 2827.

The amendment (No. 2827) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2834

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Tester amendment No. 2834.

The amendment (No. 2834) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2838

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Thune amendment No. 2838.

The amendment (No. 2838) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2842

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on

agreeing to the Warren amendment No. 2842.

The amendment (No. 2842) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT 2839, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2839, as modified, offered by the Senator from Colorado Mr. BENNET.

The amendment (No. 2839), as modified, was agreed to.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I move to reconsider and then move to lay those motions on the table, for all the voice votes we just considered.

The motions to lay on the table were agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PUNEET TALWAR TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

NOMINATION OF JOSEPH PIUS PIETRZYK TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

NOMINATION OF DWIGHT L. BUSH, SR., TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Puneet Talwar, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State; Joseph Pius Pietrzyk, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation; and Dwight L. Bush, Sr., of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Morocco.

VOTE ON TALWAR NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the Talwar nomination.

Who yields time? The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. I yield back the remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Puneet Talwar, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON PIETRZYK NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the