

for children born in 1971, compared with 9.0% for those born in 1986.” In other words, your chances of moving up the economic ladder depend a lot upon who your parents are, how much money they make—and whether or not they’re married.

These are not easy conclusions to reach or easy discussions to have.

But the evidence of these long odds is strong enough that our 100,000 public schools—as well as our private schools—should do all they reasonably can to help today’s American children—and their parents—to succeed.

School policies can help low-income, single-parent families get their children to the same starting line as children from better off families.

Here are 8 ideas:

1. More parental choice of schools: The most obvious and important step the federal government can take to improve the education of children is to give their parents a choice of schools.

First, we know that one of the best ways to lift a child out of poverty is to give them a good education.

Second, we know that many low-income parents are seeking these opportunities for their children and will work to get their children into better schools if they are able.

A single mom who is busy working two jobs may have a harder time getting to a parent-teacher conference, but we see in the D.C. voucher program and elsewhere that some of the fiercest advocates for school choice are single parents of children enrolled in the program.

Researchers at the American Enterprise Institute conducted a series of focus-group sessions and personal interviews with low-income urban families enrolled in the D.C. voucher program. They found that “parents report that they want to be respected as advocates of their child’s education and will fight hard to keep their child’s private-school choice program if that program’s future is threatened.”

A 2007 study published in *Education Next* found that “parents in high-poverty schools strongly value a teacher’s ability to raise student achievement and appear indifferent to student satisfaction.” It was parents in schools serving better-off families who seemed to place less weight on academics when requesting a particular teacher for their child.

2. More charter schools: One promising way to provide more low-income parents with school choice is by creating more charter schools. In fact, one of the most exciting developments in American education in the past two decades has been the emergence of a growing number of charter schools that have demonstrated remarkable success educating disadvantaged children. The success of these schools is attributable to many factors, from close attention to student behavior and discipline to the flexibility their leaders have to put together an excellent teaching staff. But one thing that many of them have in common is that they have expanded the amount of time students spend in school, usually with longer school days.

Low-income parents, many of them single-parents, are rushing to enroll their children in these schools. I suspect that one reason is school schedules that make it easier for parents to make ends meet while knowing that their children are well cared for.

3. Different school schedules: It shouldn’t be just charters that experiment with different schedules. School schedules that follow traditional work schedules—year-round, 7 am to 6 pm—would make it easier for parents to keep full-time jobs and still have the ability to be there with their child before and after school to make sure they’ve had

breakfast in the morning, or make sure they’ve done their homework in the evening.

4. Flexible workplace schedules: I intend to try putting in statute authorization for employers to negotiate schedule and overtime with employees, so they know they have the full support of federal law in enabling employees to find arrangements that suit their needs. This would help working parents have the flexibility to attend parent-teacher conferences.

5. Work-site day care: Years ago in my private life, I helped start a company with Bob Keeshan of Captain Kangaroo, and my wife and a couple of others that later merged with Bright Horizons and became the largest work-site daycare provider in the country. We recognized that the number of mothers of young children working outside the home had created a need, and we helped corporations provide worksite daycare centers that were safe and good for those moms and dads as well.

6. Work-site schools: A few dozen large U.S. corporations have partnered with their local school districts to open public schools in their corporate facilities. It’s a similar idea to work-site day care—it provides working parents with choice, as well as makes it easier for them to be involved with their children’s care and education.

Federal policy ought to enable and at least not discourage states and local school districts and businesses from these kinds of arrangements. Policymakers can support states and school districts to take these steps to enable low-income families to get their children the education they deserve.

7. Better Teaching, Better schools: Over the long run, improving schools so that they serve students well regardless of their circumstances may have a direct effect on the challenges of single parenthood.

For example, the Harvard economist Raj Chetty has done studies showing that a good teacher improves earnings and, for girls, reduces teenage pregnancy. A study at Promise Academy in the Harlem Children’s Zone found that girls attending that school, a high-performing charter school, were 12.1 percentage points less likely to have a child as a teenager.

Results like these show how great teachers and schools can put their students on track to college and, eventually, the kinds of jobs that enable them to move out of the cycle of poverty.

8. Wraparound services: Professor Coleman’s suggestion was that if parents don’t do it, schools should—in which case we should look at a whole range of services schools ought to be providing. This takes us far afield from the traditional role of the school described by Albert Shanker.

There are today many social programs that are not school-based—many funded by the federal government, other by the states—that are designed to support families that need help.

For example, welfare programs, child-care vouchers, Earned-Income Tax Credit, the housing allowance. The total amount spent by the federal government on these kinds of safety net programs was \$398 billion in 2013, or about 12 percent of the total federal budget.

Some suggest that these services should be “wrapped around” the school—that the school should become the dominant institution through which children whose families are unable to provide basic supports receive them. I am not so sure. There is a limit to what the school can do and, for that matter, what the government can do.

If the challenges single parents face are so great, at the very least the government can make sure it “does no harm” and does nothing to discourage marriage. Yet there is

strong evidence that that is precisely what the government does.

In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last year, Robert Doar of American Enterprise Institute said that our “policies aimed at assisting low- and moderate-income households with children often penalize marriage.

Doar said that “A single parent with two children who earns \$15,000 enjoys an [Earned Income Tax Credit] benefit of about \$4100. The credit decreases by 21.06 cents for every dollar a married couple earns above \$15040. . . . [I]f the single parent marries someone earning \$10,000, for a combined income of \$25,000, [the tax credit] benefit will drop to about \$2,200. The couple faces a marriage tax penalty of . . . \$1,900.”

He continued: “Similar penalties are embedded in Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, housing assistance, and child care—all of which apply to low-and moderate-income Americans. Efforts to mitigate marriage penalties have largely taken the form of tax cuts directed toward married couples. But . . . 81 percent of that relief flowed to couples earning above \$75,000.”

Doar suggests that a “host of reforms could alleviate this burden” including: “implementing a maximum marginal tax rate for low-income families would tamp marriage-induced hikes in rates. Providing a subsidy on individual earnings—not combined earnings (like the EITC)—would enable a low-wage American to marry someone with a child, but do so without sacrificing significant income or transfer payments. And mandatory individual filing, as done in Canada, Australia, Italy and Japan, would either require or allow low-income individuals to avoid income tax penalties.”

Perhaps the wisest advice comes from AEI fellow W. Bradford Wilcox, who says this: “Government’s role when it comes to strengthening marriage and family life is necessarily limited. Any successful twenty-first century effort to renew the fortunes of marriage in America will depend more on civic institutions, businesses, and ordinary Americans than upon federal and state efforts to strengthen family life.”

What would Pat Moynihan say today? Well, surely it would be creative, entertaining, insightful and probably controversial. And since those on today’s panels are among those who knew him best and know this subject the best, we’ll let them answer that question.●

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. KENNETH DOBBINS

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Dr. Kenneth W. Dobbins on the occasion of his retirement. Dr. Dobbins has served as the president of Southeast Missouri State University for more than 15 years. The people of Missouri are grateful for Dr. Dobbins’ contributions and commitment to Southeast Missouri State University and the Redhawk community.

Dr. Dobbins became the seventeenth president of Southeast Missouri State University in 1999 after serving as the university’s vice president of finance and administration and executive vice president. Prior to his time with Southeast Missouri State University, he held several positions in the higher education administration at Kent State University in Ohio.

Growing up in Ohio, he earned his bachelor of science degree in accounting from the University of Akron in

1971. He then served his country as a commissioned officer and civilian executive in the U.S. Air Force for almost 10 years and was named the 1978 Air Force Audit Agency Outstanding Civilian Auditor of the Year. In 1979, he received his master's degree in business administration from Old Dominion University and later his Ph.D. in higher education administration from Kent State University. His commitment to leadership was recognized in the form of the 2001 Distinguished Alumni Award from Old Dominion University and the 2011 Alumni Leadership Award for the College of Education, Health and Human Services Annual Hall of Fame Awards from Kent State University.

As president at Southeast Missouri State University, academic programs have flourished and expanded, including the establishment of the College of Science, Technology, and Agriculture and the Earl and Margie Holland School of Visual and Performing Arts. In addition, Dr. Dobbins increased access to higher education in the university's 25-county service region through the development of new regional campuses in Sikeston and Kennett to serve place-bound students in rural communities. More than \$400 million in capital construction and building improvement projects have enhanced the university during Dr. Dobbins' presidency.

Dr. Dobbins' knowledge and leadership have been valued by his peers in higher education. He has served on the board of directors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and as chairman of the Finance Committee of the American Leadership Institute.

On behalf of the grateful constituents of Missouri, I congratulate Dr. Ken Dobbins on his well-deserved retirement. We congratulate him on his remarkable career and extend a huge thank-you for all the wonderful contributions he has made to our Bootheel communities and our State. I wish the very best to Dr. Dobbins and his wife Jeanine, along with his son and daughter-in-law, Paul and Stacey Dobbins, and his two grandsons, Lincoln Kenneth Dobbins and Brady Larson Dobbins.●

#### ARKANSAS GAME AND FISH COMMISSION CENTENNIAL

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate a century of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, AGFC. Enjoying our wildlife and outdoors is a way of life for residents of the Natural State, and the efforts of AGFC help preserve this time-honored tradition through management of our State's fish and wildlife populations.

In the early 1900s, maintaining healthy wildlife populations was desperately needed in the State. Elk, bison, and swan populations in Arkansas were extinct, and deer, duck, quail, and fish species were near extinction.

Following the leadership of President Teddy Roosevelt, Gov. George Wash-

ington Hays signed Act 124 creating the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission on March 11, 1915. One of the commission's first orders of business was improving hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations. Thanks to these efforts we have seen extinct animal populations flourish, while creating an excellent environment for fishing and hunting. This has allowed tourism to become a leading sector of Arkansas's economy. Our State now has a thriving elk population with a regulated hunting season. We have also seen growth in the deer population. More than 200,000 deer are harvested annually in Arkansas, up from just over 200 checked in the 1938 hunting season. Once known as the Bear State, black bear in Arkansas neared extinction with fewer than 50 believed to be in the State in the 1930s. Today there are more than 5,000 bears in the State, making it one of the most successful reintroductions of a large carnivore in history.

The AGFC laid the foundation for Arkansas to become the "Duck Hunting Capitol of the World" in 1948 with the establishment of Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area. Today Bayou Meto WMA consists of 33,832 publicly owned acres, providing world class duck hunting that attracts hunters from all over the world.

The AGFC's five fish hatcheries help stock some of finest lakes, streams, and rivers in Arkansas that attract anglers from around the world. More than 12.5 million fish are harvested from these hatcheries annually.

While the mission is the same, the agency has experienced many changes in the last century. The first nine game wardens were paid \$80 a month and had to provide their own horse. Today the agency operates an \$88 million annual budget and employs thousands of Arkansans.

In the past 100 years, the AGFC has created policies that maintain the natural beauty and abundance of wildlife in the Natural State so Arkansans and visitors from across America and around the world can enjoy the great outdoors. From restoring habitat, managing wildlife and protecting the public, the men and women of the AGFC help preserve the Natural State's beauty and natural resources. But this mission comes at a cost: throughout its history AGFC has lost five brave officers in the last line of duty. I thank them and all the men and women of the AGFC for their service and commitment to making sure future generations can experience the natural resources and outdoor activities that we enjoy today.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-905. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Biomass Crop Assistance Program" (RIN0560-AI27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-906. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Defense Stockpile (NDS) Annual Materials Plan (AMP) for fiscal year 2016 and the succeeding 4 years, fiscal years 2017–2020; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-907. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Transportation Statistics Annual Report 2013"; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-908. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Procurement, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule revising the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (RIN2700-AE01 and RIN2700-AE09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-909. A communication from the Chief of the Policy and Rules Division, Office of Engineering and Technology, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Parts 0, 1, 2, and 15 of the Commission's Rules regarding Authorization of Radiofrequency Equipment; Amendment of Part 68 regarding Approval of Terminal Equipment; Amendment of Part 68 regarding Approval of Terminal Equipment by Telecommunications Certification Bodies" ((ET Docket No. 13-44) (FCC 14-208)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-910. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements" ((FCC 15-9) (PS Docket No. 07-114)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-911. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Pumped Storage and Potential Hydropower from Conduits"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-912. A communication from the Chief of the Aquatic Invasive Species Branch, Fish