

sequences that integrate rigorous academics, work-based learning, and career and technical education;

“(BB) measures of a high-quality and accelerated academic program as determined appropriate by the State, which may include the percentage of students who participate in a State-approved career and technical program of study as described in section 122(c)(1)(A) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 and measures of technical skill attainment and placement described in section 113(b) of such Act and reported by the State in a manner consistent with section 113(c) of such Act, or other substantially similar measures;

“(CC) student performance on assessments aligned with the expectations for first-year postsecondary education success;

“(DD) student performance on admissions tests for postsecondary education;

“(EE) student performance on assessments of career readiness and acquisition of industry-recognized credentials that meet the quality criteria established by the State under section 123(a) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102);

“(FF) student enrollment rates in postsecondary education;

“(GG) measures of student remediation in postsecondary education; and

“(HH) measures of student credit accumulation in postsecondary education;

On page 57, line 14, strike “; and” and insert “, which may include participation and performance in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, and early college high school programs; and”.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, July 13, the Senate vote on the following amendments, with no second-degree amendments in order to any of the amendments prior to the votes: Hatch amendment No. 2080 and Kaine amendment No. 2118.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from North Dakota.

#### EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I thank Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY for crafting this bipartisan proposal to reform and reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the main source of Federal aid for K-through-12 education.

The Every Child Achieves Act takes many important steps to return the authority of K-12 education back to the States and to the local school districts and directly to those who are best equipped to understand and respond to what it takes to educate our students. Importantly, this bill empowers States to develop their own education accountability plans. Instead of a one-size-fits-all Federal mandate, this bill

charges the States to work with teachers, school districts, Governors, parents, and other stakeholders to develop a State-led education plan for all students without interference from Washington.

The bill affirms that the Federal Government cannot dictate a State's specific academic standards, curriculum or assessment. I repeat. The bill affirms that the Federal Government cannot dictate State-specific academic standards, curriculum or assessments. It affirms local control and accountability while maintaining important achievement information to provide parents with information on how their children are performing as well as to help teachers target support to those who are struggling to meet State standards.

We also recognize that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—or STEM—education continues to play an increasingly important role in preparing our students for the careers of tomorrow.

In North Dakota, STEM education prepares students to fulfill the workforce needs of our dynamic economy, from the high-tech industries in the east to the energy fields in the west. For example, we have one school district, the West Fargo school district, which has created a STEM center for students in grades 6, 7, and 8, and is doing an exceptional job of integrating STEM teaching into the classroom. This school district program started in 2009 with 150 students in the sixth and seventh grades. Since then, it has been expanded to serve eighth grade students as well. They have also created a STEM pathway program at the high school level. The approach focuses on project-based learning that connects their school work to solving real world problems through the engineering and design process.

When Senator KLOBUCHAR and I visited the school this spring, we witnessed students working hands-on with a wide range of technologies at cooperative lab stations, including drones and flight simulators. West Fargo students have received numerous awards and honors, placing first in the Nation in a lunar water recycling design competition sponsored by NASA to excelling in a number of Web page design and robotics competitions around the country.

This education is not just about teaching students more science, math or engineering. This approach reaches across subjects to promote problem solving, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills.

The Every Child Achieves Act includes a formula grant aimed at providing State resources to improve STEM education. The Improving STEM Instruction and Student Achievement Program provides grants to States to improve STEM instruction, student engagement, and increased student achievement in STEM subjects. Under this program, States have the ability

to award subgrants to projects of their choice to serve high-need school districts or form partnerships with higher education institutions. States can also use these funds to recruit qualified teachers and instructional leaders in STEM subjects or to develop a STEM master teacher corps.

In recent years, North Dakota has chosen to award funds to projects that partner with our State's higher education institutions to provide professional development opportunities for K-12 math and science teachers.

I have worked with Senator KLOBUCHAR to craft amendment No. 2138. Our proposal will give States the option to award those funds to create or enhance a STEM-focused specialty school or a STEM program within a school.

STEM-focused specialty schools or STEM programs within a school are those that engage students in rigorous, relevant, and integrated-learning STEM experiences. Allowing funds to go toward a STEM program within a school will allow successful programs such as those occurring in our State to benefit. It will also encourage other school districts to begin their own programs.

So if a school district would like to better integrate STEM concepts into their teaching practices, this amendment allows those districts to submit a proposal to the State for resources to carry out that plan.

The Klobuchar-Hoeven amendment also requires the Education Secretary to identify STEM-specific needs of States and districts receiving funds and publicize information about those activities. The Secretary is then directed to align Federal STEM activities with State and district needs.

Finally, this amendment directs the U.S. Department of Education to avoid unnecessary duplication of STEM programmatic activities supported by the Department and other Federal agencies. This is important because there are so many disjointed STEM activities and programs throughout our government.

In a May 2015 report, the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service states that despite recent reductions in the number of Federal STEM programs, recent estimates suggest there are still between 105 and 254 STEM programs scattered throughout as many as 15 Federal agencies. These programs account for \$2.8 billion to \$3.4 billion in spending. These programs have their own distinct requirements and obligations that allow very little collaboration or coordination. We simply want to ensure that States and schools are aware of the existing efforts underway to best utilize public resources.

In conclusion, we believe that this bipartisan amendment should be agreeable to both sides and will strengthen the Every Child Achieves Act. In fact, I have just been informed that both the chairman and the ranking member from the HELP Committee and the

leaders on this Every Child Achieves Act have included our legislation in the manager's package with support from both sides of the aisle.

I want to thank both Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER from Tennessee, who is the chairman of the committee and the sponsor of the bill, as well as Senator PATTY MURRAY from Washington, who is the co-lead on this legislation, for their support of this STEM legislation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINES. Mr. President, I also rise in support of the Every Child Achieves Act and the good work that is being done in a bipartisan way to move elementary and secondary education forward in this country. I applaud Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY and all HELP Committee members and their staff for the good work that has been done on this bill, which is hugely important to our Nation's children but even more importantly to our economy and our global competitiveness. The fact that we are approaching this in a bipartisan manner creates a lot of hope and optimism.

I speak from a number of roles. I was well educated in public, private, and parochial schools myself. My three children have gone through the Richmond public school system, an urban public school system in Virginia, during the era of No Child Left Behind. So Federal education policy was coming home in their backpack, crumpled up at the end of every day. My wife and I have kind of lived through that with them. My wife is the current secretary of education in Virginia, with the responsibility of carrying out State and Federal education policy. In my own role, as an elected official—as mayor—education was our biggest expenditure, and I visited a school in our city every Tuesday morning. As Lieutenant Governor, in the State budget education was our biggest priority, and I visited schools in all 134 cities and counties in Virginia. Then, as Governor, I had the opportunity—the great opportunity—to work with our State, our teachers, our PTOs, and other educational stakeholders in the Virginia education system, which 50 years ago was one of the weakest in the United States, and I am proud to say is now one of the best in the United States.

I learned a lot as Governor when No Child Left Behind was being implemented in the schools of my State. I saw the good and the bad of No Child Left Behind, and I certainly saw the reason that we need to improve it. That is what the Every Child Achieves Act does.

First, I will speak about the good things of No Child Left Behind. There are two notable good things that, frankly, are critically important we maintain. No Child Left Behind made us disaggregate student data so that we couldn't hide behind averages. Averages can be deceiving. Virginia average test scores are great, but that doesn't

mean they are great everywhere in Virginia. So we had to dig in and look at whether minority students were performing well or whether rural students were performing well or urban students. No Child Left Behind helped us to do that and not hide behind averages but really make sure that groups of students were not falling behind either statewide or in the individual cities and counties.

The second thing No Child Left Behind did—which is pretty amazing—was that before No Child Left Behind there was not a standardized definition of graduation or dropout rates in this country. So if you wanted to know how your own city was doing or your own county was doing or your own State was doing, and if you wanted to compare that against anywhere else, you couldn't because everybody was using their own measure. Usually folks would try to fuzz up the data because they were afraid of being held accountable around graduation rates and dropout rates. No Child Left Behind, together with some pioneering work from the National Governors Association, ended up standardizing the definition of graduation and dropout rates, which enabled us to compare and compete with each other.

Not surprisingly, as President Obama discussed in the State of the Union in the early part of 2015, our graduation rates are better than they have ever been because now we can focus on them, we know who is doing well and who is not, and that sense of focus and competition is enabling us to move ahead.

But No Child Left Behind also had some unintended negative consequences. The intense focus on high-stakes testing, which is supposed to help you diagnose and then lead to educational strategies down the road—sometimes testing has become an end in itself rather than a means to an end: better student performance. That creates all kinds of stresses on students and teachers and parents.

Similarly, the focus on disaggregating student data which demonstrates that there are achievement gaps in certain communities, whether it be minority communities or rural or urban areas, has often had the perverse consequence, when coupled with high-stakes testing, of encouraging some of our best and brightest teachers not to want to go into the schools where they are most needed. If they feel as if they will be punished because the test scores are not as high with poor kids, for example, then they will often choose not to go to those schools. That is clearly not what we meant to do with No Child Left Behind, but that has been one of its perverse consequences.

When I was Governor, I had a very funny—now it is funny; it was not funny at the time—argument with the Federal Department of Education. They absolutely insisted that jurisdictions in northern Virginia were admin-

istering certain tests wrong to students who don't speak English as their first language at home. Indeed, some of my cities and counties had a strategy of phasing students in. If they were coming from a background where they did not speak English at home, they would be tested in special ways for the first couple of years they were in the school system and then mainstreamed even in the way they were tested.

The Department of Education said: You cannot do that. You cannot do these tests differently.

What I would say to the Department of Education: Hey, let me show you the SAT scores of my Latino students. Let me show you how they are doing when they graduate, that they are some of the highest performing students in the country. Clearly, if you measure it by the outcomes, we are doing it the right way.

But the Department of Education said: Outcomes do not matter to us. We worry about the processes and the inputs and the way you provide the tests.

Well, outcomes should be important. Results should be important. Too often, No Child Left Behind was administered in a way where results did not matter. That is not what should happen.

I applaud Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY for this bill because I believe the Every Child Achieves Act gives school districts and States the incentive to work for the success of all students but also the flexibility they need to close achievement gaps. The bill maintains critical annual testing requirements to allow us to track progress of students, while letting States set their own goals for improvement. The bill invests in early childhood education, which is critical to give States the authority to determine teacher qualifications in those areas. I am very glad this bill recognizes there are factors other than test scores that determine whether our students will be successful. I applaud this act. I cannot wait to vote for it.

I would like to comment on two amendments I have worked with my team and my staff member Karishma Merchant, who is superb, to put into this bill—some that are already in and some that I think are forthcoming or are in the process on the floor.

The first is the very important challenge of young people, age 16 to 24, who are in the most vulnerable time in their lives to being the victims of sexual assaults. A kid age 16 to 24—that is the most likely period in their life where they would be vulnerable to any kind of sexual assault or sexual misconduct. That is whether they are in school, college, the military, the workforce, or whether they are somewhere else.

We are spending a lot of time working on this issue, but this bill contains an amendment I proposed called the Teach Safe Relationships Act to help tackle this issue. Basically, under the amendment Senator McCASKILL and I

introduced in February, schools that are receiving title IV funds must report on how they are teaching safe relationship behaviors to students—communication, understanding what coercion is, understanding what consent is, understanding how to avoid pressure, understanding where to go for help. These are matters which we will teach to our students at a younger age so they can keep themselves safe.

I need to give praise on this one—the idea for this came from students at the University of Virginia. I went and visited with them about sexual assaults on campus in December. They told me: We wish we came to campus better prepared to deal with these issues.

I asked them: Well, don't you take sex education classes in high school?

They said: Yes, but the classes are about reproductive biology. There needs to be a little more about safe behavior and relationship strategies.

I thought, what a great idea. That led to the amendment. The amendment has now been incorporated. I praise the students at UVA who put this on my radar screen. I thank Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY, who worked with me to incorporate this in the base bill. If we teach young kids the right strategies, whether they are in the military or on college campuses or in the workforce or anywhere else, our young students, 16 to 24, will be safer.

The second series of amendments—some have been included and others have been voted on—one today and one will be voted on on Monday night—are amendments dealing with career and technical education.

I was a principal of a school that taught kids to be welders and carpenters. I grew up the son of a guy who ran an iron-working shop. I am a huge believer in career and technical education. Every job in this country does not need the traditional 4-year bachelor's degree. In fact, there are many jobs in this country—and the unemployment rate is still too high—there are many jobs in this country that are going unfilled. We have to bring welders in on foreign visas and other important career and technical fields because we don't adequately promote and celebrate career and technical education. This is similar to the previous speech about STEM.

I have formed a Career and Technical Education Caucus, together with Senators PORTMAN and BALDWIN. We introduced the Career Ready Act. Some portions have already been included in the bill, and another portion will be voted on on Monday night. But the idea is basically to make career and technical education every bit as front-and-center as college prep courses because we want our kids to graduate from high school both college- and career-ready. Career and technical education is an important part of that.

Earlier today, we passed an amendment to make clear that for Federal purposes, career and technical education is not elective, it is core cur-

riculum, because it is core, important education. Nations around the world recognize it. We need to do well.

I have two additional amendments. We will consider one Monday night—the Career Ready Act, which clarifies and encourages but does not require the use of accountability indicators in State accountability plans to promote readiness for postsecondary education and career readiness. Forty-one States already do this. We will encourage more to do it if we pass the career-ready amendment.

Second, I have an amendment that I am still working on and hope to get in on the floor. It is bipartisan by introduction. Senator AYOTTE and I have this. It is to create a middle school career and technical exploration program called Middle STEP. Kids in the middle school years, if they get a broader exposure to the careers that are available to them, they will be better equipped to start picking curricular paths when they go to high school.

I am so passionate about the need for career and technical education because I lived it growing up in my dad's business and teaching kids in Honduras the value of career and technical fields.

Everywhere I go in this country, I have employers who tell me they need workers who are skilled, whether it is allied health professionals, such as EMTs, or culinary training or welding and iron-working training or computer coding. These career and technical fields that require some postsecondary education but not necessarily a 4-year college degree are paths to great livelihoods. We do not often emphasize them enough. This bill will help us do that.

I will close and say this: It has been 13 years since Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is time to update No Child Left Behind, and this is good work to do it.

President Kennedy said in a message to Congress in 1961—and these words still ring true:

Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progresses in education. Our requirements for world leadership, our hopes for economic growth, and the demands of citizenship itself in an era such as this all require the maximum development of every young American's capacity.

That is almost a great 20th-century paraphrase of what a Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, said in the 1780s:

Progress in government and all else depends upon the broadest possible diffusion of knowledge among the general population.

Those words were true then. Senator Kennedy's words are true. Education is still the path to success for an individual or for a community and nation. We will advance the cause of education and the cause of success if we pass the Every Child Achieves Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to take this time to thank Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY on the bill

that is before our body, the Every Child Achieves Act. It is so important that we focus on this area of education.

Two important provisions I asked to be included have been included in the bill. I want to specifically talk about those and again thank both Senators for including those important initiatives in this important bill.

One of them is the reauthorization of afterschool programs—something I have worked on my entire life in Congress. It goes back a very long time. Another one is on e-cigarettes, which I believe are endangering our Nation's youth.

Senator MURKOWSKI was very instrumental in the committee, working with Senator MURRAY to make sure my bipartisan After School for America's Children Act was incorporated in the bill. I thank her.

In the Senate, I first introduced my afterschool bill in 1997. I worked with Senator Ensign at that time. The Federal Government at that time only funded small afterschool pilot programs. When we got to 2001, I saw an opportunity to take that pilot program and turn it into a real, funded authorization for afterschool programs. The bill we have on the floor today and next week will modernize that afterschool program. It is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, which incorporates afterschool. It will help States support quality afterschool programs. It encourages parental engagement and involvement and ensures that afterschool activities complement the academic curriculum. Our kids don't stop learning just because the clock strikes 2 or 3 or 4; they keep learning. So the afterschool activities are very important.

Most important to me is that this bill preserves the stream of funding that is necessary to protect the afterschool programs because, to be quite honest, we have had a lot of issues with people trying to grab those funds and use them for something else. Let me tell you why we cannot do that. We now serve more than 1.6 million children of working families every year through this afterschool program. That is progress. Think about 1.6 million children. Think about all of their parents and the relief it brings to them to know they have their children in a quality afterschool program.

But there are still 11.3 million children left unsupervised when the day ends. In other words, one in five children is unsupervised from 3 to 6 p.m. Those are the hours where juvenile crime peaks and risky behaviors are most likely to occur. Law enforcement and mayors have been telling us for years that afterschool programs reduce crime. It truly is a no-brainer. Our kids need a safe place to go after school. Our parents need to make sure their kids are safe after school because most parents work in today's world.

No matter what leading candidates for the Republican nomination say, today my understanding is Jeb Bush

said our workers don't work hard enough. He said that our workers don't work hard enough. Just talk to the parents of these kids. They are working hard, sometimes multiple jobs. They need to know their kids are safe.

I want to talk about one student, Gerardo Rodriguez, who grew up in poverty in Los Angeles. He dealt with the threat of violence and the allure of gang life. While he was at Carson Middle School, he chose to join an after-school program that was run by the Boys and Girls Club instead of a gang. Gerardo went to an afterschool program instead of joining a gang. In statistics, he would be told he was likely to be a dropout. Instead, he graduated from Carson High. In 2012, he obtained \$3,000 in college scholarships. He is in his second year at California State University, Long Beach, and he is majoring in engineering.

We need to save kids like this. Yes, the parents are working hard, many hours, and they need afterschool help. This bill helps those kids. I would like to do more for more children, but I am thankful we are preserving this program.

Our working families need to know their kids are safe because there are more than 28 million parents of school-age children who are employed, including 23 million who work full time. These parents miss an average of 5 days of work a year because they don't have afterschool care and their child gets sick. We all know that. We have all gone through that. Our children have gone through that. So it was 30 years ago when I started to work on this issue.

I again thank Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY for preserving afterschool care for our children.

#### E-CIGARETTES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I also thank Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY for including my provisions on a dangerous product that is gaining popularity among our children, e-cigarettes. The language in the bill allows schools to use their same Federal funding that goes toward alcohol, drug, and tobacco education to teach children about more novel tobacco products such as e-cigarettes.

According to the CDC, youth use of e-cigarettes has tripled in 1 year from 2013 to 2014. Let me tell you, our kids are not getting accurate information. There is advertising that is aimed at them that makes it sound like this is just a wonderful opportunity for them.

What are our children being exposed to? It is not just nicotine—clearly, e-cigarettes are a nicotine delivery system—but even more.

Now the Surgeon General has said nicotine has a negative impact on adolescent brain development. So for God's sake, let us stop our kids from being able to smoke e-cigarettes on campus. I have an amendment that would do just that, and I hope it will be unani-

mously accepted because these e-cigarettes also contain benzene, cadmium, formaldehyde, propylene glycol, and nanoparticles that are present in traditional cigarettes, according to the California Department of Health.

So we need the FDA to finalize their rule on e-cigarettes. But in the meantime, youth use is soaring. We finally are making progress on reducing smoking among teens, and yet this e-cigarette situation is out of control. That is why I am pleased that in this bill schools will be able to teach kids about the dangers of e-cigarettes.

In conclusion, again I thank the bill's managers for helping me get the after-school language in, protecting our kids after school, getting some language in to make sure we can educate our kids against the dangers of a new nicotine delivery system called e-cigarettes, but I also have three more amendments that are pending and I hope will pass.

The first one I talked about was clarifying that a ban on smoking in schools includes all tobacco products such as e-cigarettes. The second amendment would prohibit advertising e-cigarettes to children. When you see this—I am sorry I didn't bring the charts to the floor—they are using cartoon characters, the same kind of thing that was done by the big tobacco companies. Big Tobacco is behind this, let's be clear. We don't need another epidemic that starts killing our people before we finally turn the corner on regular smoking.

#### COLLEGE CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, the last amendment I have is a different subject, and it deals with college campus sexual assault. It would simply say that every college campus should have a confidential, independent advocate to help sexual assault survivors every step of the way.

I am proud to say that my legislation has been voluntarily adopted by universities in my home State of California, including the University of California, the State college system, and the community college system, to the extent they can deal with it, because there is a lot of discretion in that particular group of colleges. But I haven't heard from the private colleges in California.

So all we are saying in this amendment is let's make sure every college campus that gets Federal funds sets up a confidential advocate for women—for men as well who are also victims of sexual assault—so that from the beginning of their complaint they have a friend, they have a confidant, and they have someone who knows their rights with them every step of the way. I would be so proud to see this included.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his endurance on this little talk.

#### 6-YEAR HIGHWAY BILL

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, next week I hear Senator McCONNELL may be coming forward with a highway bill. I pray it is a 6-year bill. Republicans and Democrats voted one out of the EPW Committee—I am proud to say not one dissenting vote—a 6-year robust bill.

I hope we will fund it in a way that doesn't cut other jobs, while we are trying to create jobs in the transportation industry, but in fact looks at international tax reform, where we can actually help our businesses and have a tax system that is reformed. The funds that come in to us go to the highway trust fund so we can take care of those bridges that are falling down and insufficient—60,000 of them—the highways that need help, and the roads, 50 percent of which are in disrepair. We need help.

Our businesses need that help. They call for that help. They are the concrete people, the granite people. They are the general contractors, they are the engineers, our workers, and the construction workers. We still have 200,000 of them out of work since the great recession.

We need a 6-year highway bill. We need it now. We need it funded in a smart way that helps our economy keep on growing. So there is a lot of work ahead.

I wish to take this opportunity to say thank you to Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY—and a hopeful request to Senator McCONNELL that the bill that comes to the floor on the highways is one which we can all embrace, and we can take care of this great Nation because, I will tell you, there isn't a great nation on Earth that doesn't have an infrastructure to match.

You have to move goods, you have to move people, and if you can't do that, we simply can't keep up in this global economy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, Nelson Mandela once said there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children.

Every child deserves a fair chance. If we fail at taking care of our children, we fail at everything else. So the stakes are high as we work to reform the No Child Left Behind Act. Too many children are left behind. The Every Child Achieves Act is a step forward.