

leader after consultation and with information, of course, being provided to the minority.

As previously announced, there will be no rollcall votes during today's session since we have 6 hours reserved for debate on the State Department reorganization.

The next vote will then occur at 6 p.m. on Monday.

#### THE EDUCATION BILL

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to speak briefly on a couple of issues. I will not take long. But I want to again express my appreciation to a number of Senators and to the Senate as a whole for the passage of the education bill on Thursday night by a bipartisan vote of 56 to 43 with one Senator being absent. I think you have to acknowledge that Senator COVERDELL of Georgia was persistent. He was fair. This issue really has been considered in one form or another for over a month. But he stuck with it. There was a lot of give and take. I appreciate the involvement of Senator TORRICELLI of New Jersey and his support of the bill. But more important than that, I appreciated the tone of the debate. There are fundamental disagreements on how we begin to improve the quality of education in America, deal with violence in the schools, and drugs in the schools. That is understandable. But we don't have to be nasty in our disagreements. We weren't.

I thought the debate was of a high quality. While the disagreements are passionate, we covered a lot of subjects over the last week, a lot of amendments. We probably voted on 10 or 12 amendments on this bill. Others were accepted or agreed to in one way or another or set aside by agreements. It took cooperation to get it done even after most of the week was spent on that. I think we came up with a good bill. Education is important. This is the best debate I have seen on education in many years. Having been in Congress for 25 years, the debate on education over those 25 years has always been the same: more decisions from Washington, more programs from Washington, more strings from Washington, more money from Washington. And the test scores and the violence—the test scores have been going down and the violence and drugs have been going up. What we have been doing is not working. We need to try some different things.

This bill does that: More choice in elementary and secondary education, No. 1.

I emphasized in my remarks that in my own State, higher education in America is the best in the world. People want to come from all over the world and go to schools, from Stanford to Harvard to Ole Miss, to get degrees in science and engineering, business, or whatever.

But our elementary and secondary education has been deteriorating, and

we are way down on most lists. Why is that? What is the difference between higher education and elementary and secondary education? One difference is choice. When you finish high school you can go to a trade school, you can go to a community college, you can go to a denominational college, or you can go to a university. You have a choice. The second big difference is you have financial assistance to be able to do it.

For 2 years I worked in the placement and financial aid office at the University of Mississippi. I know the importance of grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study programs for any student in America. Any student in America can go to college. He or she has a choice. Not so in elementary and secondary. If you are poor, if you come from a blue-collar working family like I did, son of a shipyard worker and a mother that taught school to help make ends meet, they couldn't afford to send me to a different school. They couldn't afford today's market. They wouldn't have been able to afford tutors or computers. They just couldn't have done it. We don't have financial assistance. There needs to be some. How can you get it?

No. 1, allow the parents to keep more of their money and make choices about how to spend their money in helping their children. This is not an attack on public schools.

I am a product of public schools. My wife is a product of public schools. Both of my children went to public schools from the first grade through college. Now, a lot of people who are pontificating as great defenders of public education went to private schools and send their children to private schools. It makes it difficult to believe that you are as sincere as I am. I want to help public education, but I want to give parents a choice.

When I give this sort of speech to some of the traditional education groups, they say, "But the bad schools, the bad public schools may not make it." Right. That is the idea. It is called competition. It is called quality. Get right, improve the quality of your teachers, improve the quality of the administration, or go out of business; let somebody else do it that can do a better job.

This bill also included merit pay for teachers, teacher testing. I still don't understand why it is OK to test and test and test the students but, oh, you can't test the teachers. That is one of the problems we have all over this country. We don't always have good-quality teachers. Should we encourage it? Should we pay them better? Yes. Should they be paid by the Federal Government? No. That is a local decision, State decision.

Senator GORTON came up with a block grant approach, but it was an interesting approach. Again, it is a choice. He took programs, consolidated them into something over \$10 billion, and he said, Well, now, States, if you want to continue with the traditional

strings-attached, Washington-knows-best controls from the bureaucracy, you can do that. If Massachusetts wants its money to come through the Federal multiplicity of programs with directions of how it must be spent, Massachusetts can choose that. But if Texas wants to bring it through their State government and then to the local schools, they can choose that.

Or in my State of Mississippi, I hope we would choose to let it go direct to the schools. Why does it have to stop in Atlanta or Jackson and trickle down and trickle down and trickle down, with everybody taking a bite for administrative costs—5 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent? Why not let it go from Washington directly to the schools and let the administrators, the parents, the teachers, and the children decide where that \$10 billion portion that they get would be spent? Hopefully, they would spend it for STAR teachers, merit pay for better teachers, teachers who work hard, do the extra thing. Maybe they would decide to spend it on construction. That is OK if they make the decision at the local level. That is their choice.

I think they are crying wolf. Those who want the status quo, those who want Washington to make the decisions, those who want controls and directions of how the money is going to be spent from Washington, they didn't like what we did this week and what we voted on last night. Those who say the status quo is not good enough when it comes to education should feel good about our effort last night. Now, they say, Well, the President is going to veto it. I don't know that he will. It is like laws; they are not unconstitutional until some court or the Supreme Court says they are unconstitutional. A bill is not vetoed until a President vetoes it. It will have to go through conference. Perhaps changes will be made. Perhaps the President will have a conversion and decide this is good legislation. But if he does veto it, the parents will know who has faith in them and the local education apparatus and those who believe Washington is the only place that can decide what is best for education in America.

So I slept better last night knowing that at least we were trying to make sure that my prospective grandson will have more opportunity and greater choices in education.

#### STATE DEPARTMENT REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, on the legislation we are fixing to take up, the State Department reorganization bill, this is the result of literally years of work, give and take, by Senator HELMS, the chairman of the committee, and by the administration. I think credit has to go to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She worked with Senator HELMS on this State Department reorganization, which is so long overdue, which would allow us to do a

better job in our foreign policy apparatus. Senator BIDEN has been a good partner, I believe, with Senator HELMS, as the ranking member on that committee that reported this legislation, in developing this State Department reorganization.

So this is very important legislation which has been a long time coming.

The second part of that bill does provide for the U.N. arrearages, something over \$900 million, I believe. You can still argue about how much really the United States owes to the United Nations. You can still argue that the United Nations doesn't always make the right decision. You can argue back and forth. But it is an agreed-to compromise which will allow the United States to fulfill its commitment in a way that a majority of those directly involved, Republican and Democrat, conservative, moderate, and liberal, feel is a fair way to get this job done.

So that is an important part of this package, not only the reorganization of the State Department, which will be of tremendous benefit, I believe, in the next few months and years of this administration and of future administrations, but then you add to that that we are finally addressing this question of U.N. arrearage. That is very important.

There is also included in this bill language that maybe nobody is totally happy with but language dealing with the so-called Mexico City issue, which is language that would have some restraints on lobbying other governments and organizations with taxpayers' dollars to promote the changing of laws to provide for abortions or to deal with the abortion issue. It is an issue that we have been tangled with for years. I am not diminishing it by putting it that way, but it is just something that we have been trying to find a fix to. There is no easy answer. You have passionate people on both sides of the issue. And I have clearly been on one side of the issue forever. I don't think that taxpayers' dollars should be used to promote abortion. Does anybody want to question JESSE HELMS on this issue? Anybody? No.

Now, the others who are on the other side of the issue, such as Senator BIDEN, they argue very strongly. They have been consistent on the other side. This is a compromise. This is a part of the package. This is a way to deal with three very important issues in this package. It has been agreed to reluctantly, but now I think with understanding and vigor, by the Senators who are involved directly with this legislation.

So I urge my colleagues to think about it, recognize that you may not like one piece of the three or maybe two of the three, but what is the alternative? Are we never going to reorganize the State Department? Are we never going to deal with the U.N. arrearage issue? Is the abortion issue going to be involved with U.N. arrearage, State Department reorganization, IMF, appropriations bills? How long

will this go on this year? This is the solution. So I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I caution the administration and urge them to stop lobbying against this legislation, their bill. I have expressed this to the Secretary of State, in which I said, "Madam Secretary, this is the last train out of Dodge on the U.N. arrearage." Now, I don't believe it will happen—if this bill doesn't pass the Senate and if this bill is not signed by the President, then the U.N. issue is probably dead for the year.

Am I advocating that? Am I defending it? No. I am just stating a fact. I don't see how you do it. Senator HELMS and Senator BIDEN have reluctantly agreed to this process, but it is the only process, I believe, that will allow us to deal with these three difficult, complicated, but important issues.

So I hope the Senate will have a good debate today and will think about it. I don't think anybody is going to be surprised by what is in here. We do not need a lot of pontificating on either side of the aisle. You are for or against State Department reauthorization. You are for or against the U.N. arrearage issue. And you may be for or against the abortion issue. But this is a reasonable solution, and I hope it will pass when we vote on it Tuesday at 2:25.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### BILL PLACED ON THE CALENDAR— S. 1981

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, before I yield the floor, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1981) to preserve the balance of rights between employers, employees and labor organizations which is fundamental to our system of collective bargaining while preserving the rights of workers to organize, or otherwise engage in concerted activities protected under the National Labor Relations Act.

Mr. LOTT. I object to further proceedings on this matter at this time, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS REFORM AND RESTRUCTURING ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to consideration of a report of the committee of conference on the bill (H.R. 1757) to consolidate international affairs agencies, to authorize appropriations for the Department of State

and related agencies for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1757), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by majority of the conferees.

The Senate proceeded to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of March 10, 1998.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 6 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the distinguished occupant of the chair, who is a valued member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I say good morning to him, and all the others who are here this morning.

Mr. President, back in the middle of the 20th century—and when I say that I sound like I'm talking about a long time ago—Congress created a number of temporary, independent federal agencies. I think it was a bad mistake. If I had been here, I would not have voted to do that, having the hindsight that I have. But, of course, members of Congress did not have the hindsight. They had just gone through, not too many years earlier, a horrible World War and were trying to get this Government stabilized, trying to help get the rest of the world stabilized. This seemed like a good idea, to create these specialized, independent Federal agencies.

Ronald Reagan, when he was President, had to deal with what these independent agencies had become—and they did grow mighty independent. He would say, "There is nothing so near eternal life as a temporary Federal agency."

I read the other day that the responsibilities of just one of these agencies is duplicated by about 42 other entities in the Federal Government. And of course the cost of running the U.S. bureaucracy has risen constantly. Furthermore, there is what has become an interesting psychology among those who not only run these agencies but are employed by them. The agencies have become the personal little fiefdoms of these bureaucrats, and they fight tenaciously at any attempt to do away with their turf or, as this conference report proposes to do, to mesh these agencies with the rest of the State Department foreign policy apparatus. In order to pass this legislation, we have gone through a great deal of difficulty, but turf protection is only one of the difficulties. Let me proceed, if I may, to give some further historical reference, with an assessment of the situation that now exists.

Of course, we have before us as the pending official business the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, which I believe, it is fair to say, is the most comprehensive and far-