

(A) discrimination on the basis of gender; and

(B) deprivation of human rights of women; (6) calls on all Afghan parties in particular to take measures to ensure—

(A) the effective participation of women in civil, economic, political, and social life throughout the country;

(B) respect for the right of women to work;

(C) the right of women and girls to an education without discrimination, reopening schools to women and girls at all levels of education;

(D) respect for the right of women to physical security;

(E) those responsible for physical attacks on women are brought to justice;

(F) respect for freedom of movement of women and their effective access to health care; and

(G) equal access of women to health facilities;

(7) supports the work of nongovernmental organizations advocating respect for human rights in Afghanistan and an improvement in the status of women and their access to humanitarian and development assistance and programs;

(8) calls on the international community to provide, on a nondiscriminatory basis, adequate humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in neighboring countries pending their voluntary repatriation, and requests all parties in Afghanistan to lift the restrictions imposed on international aid and to cease any action which may prevent or impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

(9) welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi as special envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for Afghanistan, and encourages United Nations efforts to produce a durable peace in Afghanistan consistent with the goal of a broad-based national government respectful of human rights; and

(10) calls on all warring parties, factions, and powers to participate with Ambassador Brahimi in an intra-Afghan dialogue regarding the peace process.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL ACTION BY PRESIDENT.

It is the sense of Congress that the President and Secretary of State should—

(1) work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the international community to—

(A) guarantee the safety of, and provide international development assistance for, Afghan women's groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan;

(B) increase support for refugee programs in Pakistan providing assistance to Afghan women and children with an emphasis on health, education, and income-generating programs; and

(C) explore options for the resettlement of those Afghan women, particularly war widows and their families, who are under threat or who fear for their safety or the safety of their families;

(2) establish an Afghanistan Women's Initiative, based on the successful model of the Bosnian Women's Initiative and the Rwandan Women's Initiative, that is targeted at Afghan women's groups, in order to—

(A) facilitate organization among Afghan women's groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan;

(B) provide humanitarian and development services to the women and the families most in need; and

(C) promote women's economic security;

(3) make a policy determination that—

(A) recognition of any government in Afghanistan by the United States should depend, among other things, on the human rights policies towards women adopted by that government;

(B) the United States should not recognize any government which systematically maltreats women; and

(C) any nonemergency economic or development assistance will be based on respect for human rights; and

(4) call for the creation of—

(A) an international commission to establish a record of the criminal culpability of any individual or party in Afghanistan employing rape or other crimes against humanity considered a grave breach of the Geneva Convention as an instrument of war; and

(B) an ad hoc international criminal tribunal by the United Nations for the purposes of indicting, prosecuting, and imprisoning any individual responsible for crimes against humanity in Afghanistan.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should submit a report to Congress not later than 6 months after the date of the adoption of this resolution regarding actions that have been taken to implement this resolution.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1385 to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The report will be stated.

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. 1385), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of July 29, 1998.)

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be adopted, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and other statements relating to this conference report be printed in the RECORD.

Before you proceed, Mr. President, I believe the Senator from Ohio would like to make some comments, and I invite him to do so.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I thank the chairman of the committee, Senator JEFFORDS, for yielding to me and thank him also for the tremendous work he has done on this bill. He has been working on this for a number of years. This is the culmination of a great deal of work.

We are about to pass the conference report. Once the bill is sent on to the President and signed by the President, it will represent a major accomplishment of this Congress. This bill consolidates over 70 federally funded job training related programs—over 70 of them consolidated. This bill will make

job training, federally funded job training, in this country much more accountable. It will also involve the business community much more in the development and design of job training.

The one thing Chairman JEFFORDS and I have learned as we have held hearings on this matter over the years is that if you want job training to work, it has to be run locally and it has to have great input from the local business community. This bill will make sure that we have that local input. We have to remember who the consumers are. When you are talking about job training, there are two consumers. One is the person who wants the job and wants to be trained for the job. But the other, equally as important, is the company or the individual who wants to hire that person, and so you have to involve them both in the design of job training.

That is what this bill does. This bill also dramatically reforms Job Corps. Job Corps is a Great Society-era job training program, residential, that is run by the Federal Government. It costs over \$1 billion a year. It is targeted at our most at-risk young people in this country, people who desperately need our help, desperately need our assistance. What this bill does is make sure that \$1 billion will be correctly spent. And again, we do that by measuring the results.

One of the things that Chairman JEFFORDS and I, I think, and the rest of the committee, were so shocked about when we held hearings several years ago on this—actually former Senator Kassebaum was chairman—was that Job Corps did not really measure success or failure of the young people. It didn't measure the success or failure of a particular job training program. They looked at it and saw whether or not a person had a job for 2 weeks. If they kept a job for 2 weeks after graduating from the program—and it didn't matter what the job was—the program was considered a success. The contractor who was in charge of getting that person a job got paid, and then no one ever looked back.

What we do with this bill is say we are going to measure success or failure after 6 months. We are going to measure success or failure after 12 months. And then we are going to be able to tell which programs work and which do not work in regard to Job Fair.

Another change we are making in Job Corps is to involve the local business community. Too often Job Corps has herded young people from 500, 600, 700 miles a way. They go to the Job Corps. They stay there for awhile, they complete their program, and then they go back home, and it is very difficult to involve the local business community when they know that person is not going to be there to work for them. And so we change those priorities in regard to Job Corps as well.

We also in this bill make a major step forward to link the regular job training programs of this country with

vocational rehabilitation. We do that by closing the gap. We do that by preserving the dedicated flow of money that will go for this targeted population, targeted population that is in need of our assistance, who wants to help themselves. We preserve that dedicated fund, those dedicated funds. But we give that recipient, that client, more resources. We empower that client to go to the vocational rehabilitation site or, if the services are not there, to make sure that the client has the legal right to go across the street or across the county, wherever that is, to get help and assistance from the regular system as well. It integrates the two.

In conclusion, let me say this bill is a bill for workers. It is a bill for people who want to be workers. It is a bill for young people. It is a bill that literally empowers the person who is seeking the job training. It gives them a lot more, many more rights. It gives them a lot more flexibility. It puts them into the ball game as far as choosing what is the job training that is best for them. So it makes a significant difference.

This bill also has a very significant component aimed directly at children. We set aside a significant sum of money for those young people between the ages of 14 and 21. We do it; we target it; we say it is important. There is nothing, I think, more important in this country than what we do with our young people and the assistance we try to provide for them. We have many young people in this country who we call at-risk youth. This bill will go a long way to give them direct assistance. However, even though we target it in this bill and say these funds are dedicated for these young people, we also at the same time give all the flexibility to the local community, States and local communities to allow them to design the specific program that will actually work for their young people in their local communities.

This is a revolutionary bill. It is a bill that dramatically changes the status quo. It is a bipartisan bill. It is a bill that Senator WELLSTONE worked on with me in the subcommittee. It is a bill on which Senator KENNEDY worked with Senator JEFFORDS. It is a bill that Secretary Alexis Herman has been very, very much involved in. She has been involved in it up until the last 10 minutes, as we have negotiated the final portions of this bill.

So, it is a bipartisan bill. It is a bill we can all be very proud of. It is a bill that will truly make a difference for our young people and for those who need to be trained in this country.

Again, I thank my chairman for the tremendous work that he has done; for his persistence. One of the qualities I think you have to have in the U.S. Senate is perseverance and persistence, as well as patience. He has demonstrated all three very well. The culmination is what we see tonight, which is a bill we are about to send to the President of the United States for his signature.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, first, I thank my colleague from Ohio for his very eloquent description of the legislation, which makes it entirely unnecessary for me to go further. I appreciate the kind comments he made.

As he pointed out, this is an example of bipartisanship as well. Senator WELLSTONE and Senator KENNEDY, on the other side of the aisle, participated always in a constructive way and allowed us to come up with an excellent piece of legislation.

On the House side, Congressman GOODLING, my good friend and colleague for many years, as chairman of the committee, and Congressman CLAY, whom I also worked with in the past and to the present, Congressman MCKEON of California, and Congressman KILDEE of Michigan—all participated in this conference report.

It could not have been done without the fantastic help of our staff. The committee personnel, CRS, and legislative counsel, and DOL, Department of Education, the White House—all participated in bringing to fruition a piece of legislation which has been struggling for 4 years to be able to get there.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, final passage of the Workforce Investment Act is a landmark achievement in which we can all take pride. For years, Congress has struggled to design an employment training system that would provide America's workers with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century workplace. I believe this legislation will accomplish that enormous task. Few bills which we consider will have a greater impact on more Americans than the Workforce Investment Act we pass today.

An educated workforce has become the most valuable resource in the modern economy. Our nation's long term economic vitality depends on the creation of an effective, accessible, and accountable system of job training and career development which is open to all our citizens. Schools must assume more responsibility for preparing their students to meet the challenges of the 21st century workplace. Disadvantaged adults and out of school youth need the opportunity to develop job skills which will make them productive members of the community. Dislocated workers who have been displaced by the rapid pace of technological change deserve the chance to pursue new careers. Individuals with disabilities need the opportunity to fully develop their career potential. The way in which we respond to these challenges today will determine how prosperous a nation we are in the next century.

The importance of highly developed employment skills has never been greater. The gap in earnings between skilled and unskilled workers is steadily widening. For those who enter the workforce with good academic training and well-developed career skills, this

new economy offers almost unlimited potential. However, for those who lack basic proficiency in language, math and science and who have no career skills, the new economy presents an increasingly hostile environment.

Over three million young men and women between the ages of 16 and 24 in this country did not complete high school and are not enrolled in school. Many more graduate from high school without the level of knowledge and skill that a high school diploma should represent. They will require more education and job training in order to obtain stable, well-paying employment. Without it, they are in danger of becoming a lost workforce generation.

Effective job training is also essential to the success of welfare reform. More than 40 percent of those in the JTPA program for disadvantaged adults have come from the welfare rolls. Under the welfare reform legislation, an additional 1.7 million people will be entering the job market. Most of these individuals have little or no work background and very limited employment skills. In many cases, they are also the sole support of young children. They are making urgent new demands on a job training system that is already burdened beyond its capacity.

In addition, the combination of rapidly changing technology and the shift of manufacturing jobs overseas is creating an alarming number of dislocated workers. These individuals have extensive work experience, but their skills are no longer in demand. We must give them the opportunity for retraining, and for the development of new skills to enable them to compete in the 21st century workplace.

The accelerating pace of technological change has made much of the existing job training system obsolete. Broad reforms are clearly needed to meet the demands of the modern workplace.

The Workforce Investment Act will provide employment training opportunities for millions of Americans. It responds to the challenge of the changing workplace by enabling men and women to acquire the skills required to enter the workforce and to upgrade their skills throughout their careers. It will provide them with access to the educational tools that will enable them not only to keep up, but to get ahead.

The legislation is the product of a true bipartisan collaboration. I want to publicly commend Senators JEFFORDS and DEWINE for the genuine spirit of bipartisanship which has made this effort possible. Senator WELLSTONE and I appreciate it. This spirit of collaboration was also shared by the House conferees. The resulting legislation will, I believe, truly expand career options, encourage greater program innovation, and facilitate cooperative efforts amongst business, labor, education and state and local government.

I also want to recognize the important role President Clinton has played in bringing about this dramatic reform

of our current job training system. He has consistently emphasized the need for greater individual choice in the selection of career paths and training providers. The philosophy behind his skill grant proposal is reflected in our legislation.

The Workforce Investment Act is designed to provide easy access to state of the art employment training programs which are geared to real job opportunities in the community through a single, customer-friendly system of One Stop Career Centers. Over 700 such Centers are already operating successfully across the country. This legislation will ensure that every individual in need of employment services will have access to such a facility. The cornerstones of this new system are individual choice and quality labor market information. In the past, men and women seeking new careers often did not know what job skills were most in demand and which training programs had the best performance record. All too often, they were forced to make one of the most important decisions of their lives based on anecdotes and late-night advertisements.

No training system can function effectively without accurate and timely information. The frequent unavailability of quality labor market information is one of the most serious flaws in the current system. This legislation places a strong emphasis on providing accurate and timely information about what area industries are growing, what skills those jobs require, and what earning potential they have. Extensive business community and organized labor participation are encouraged in developing a regional plan based on this information. Once a career choice is made, the individual must still select a training provider. At present, many applicants make that choice with a little or no reliable information. Under this bill, each training provider will have to publicly report graduation rates, job placement and retention rates, and average earnings of graduates.

Because of the extensive information which will be available to each applicant, real consumer choice in the selection of a career and of a training provider will be possible. The legislation establishes individual training accounts for financially eligible participants, which they can use to access career education and skill training programs. Men and women seeking training assistance will no longer be limited to a few predetermined options. As long as there are real job opportunities in the field selected and the training provider meets established performance standards, the individual will be free to choose which option best suits his or her needs.

An essential element of the new system we have designed is accountability. As I noted earlier, each training provider will have to monitor and report the job placement and retention achieved by its graduates and their av-

erage earnings. Only those training programs that meet an acceptable performance standard will remain eligible for receipt of public funds. The same principle of accountability is applied to those agencies administering state and local programs. They are being given wide latitude to innovate under this legislation. But they too will be held accountable if their programs fail to meet challenging performance targets.

The rapid pace of technological change in the workplace has produced an alarming number of workers who have become dislocated in mid-career. The dislocation has been compounded by the increasing number of labor intensive production employers relocating their businesses abroad. This trend has been particularly acute in the manufacturing sector. We have a special obligation to these dislocated workers who have long and dedicated work histories and now are unemployed through no fault of their own. The Workforce Investment Act makes a commitment to them by maintaining a special dislocated worker program, supported by a separate funding stream, which is geared to their retraining needs. The current dislocated worker program served approximately 540,000 dislocated workers nationwide in the most recent year. Of those who completed the program during that year, 71 percent were employed when they left the program, earning on average 93 percent of their previous wages. America's dislocated workers have earned the right to assistance in developing new skills which will allow them to be full participants in the 21st century economy.

There is no challenge facing America today which is tougher or more important than providing at-risk, often out-of-school, youth with meaningful education and employment opportunities. Far too many of our teenagers are being left behind without the skills needed to survive in the 21st century economy. I am particularly pleased with the commitment which the Workforce Investment Partnership Act makes to these young men and women. This legislation authorizes a new initiative focused on teenagers living in poverty in communities offering them few constructive employment opportunities. Each year, the Secretary of Labor will award grants from a \$250 million fund to innovative programs designed to provide opportunities to youth living in these areas. The programs will emphasize mentoring, strong links between academic and worksite learning, and job placement and retention. It will encourage broad based community participation from local service agencies and area employers. These model programs will, we believe, identify the techniques which are most effective in reaching those youth at greatest risk.

Another important program for young people who face the highest barriers to employment is Job Corps. Most of the participants grow up in extreme

poverty. Their educational opportunities are limited. Job Corps, at its best, moves them from deprivation to opportunity. But, for many of them, it is an extremely difficult transition. As a result, critics of the program are always able to point to failures. But for each story of failure, there are many stories of success. Job Corps is a program worth preserving and worth expanding too. Our legislation decisively rejects the view that Job Corps should be dismantled. Instead, it strengthens the program in several ways. It establishes closer ties between individual Job Corps Centers and the communities they serve. It ensures that training programs correspond with the area's labor market needs. It extends follow-up counseling for participants up to 12 months and established detailed performance standards to hold programs accountable.

The legislation also provides for the continuation of summer jobs as an essential element of the youth grant. For many youth, summer jobs are their first opportunity to work and their first critical step in learning the work ethic. The summer jobs program also provides many youth with quality learning experiences and follow up during the school year. Studies by the Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General and research by Westat, Inc. have reported positive findings regarding the program, concluding that work sites are well-supervised and disciplined, that jobs provide useful work, that the education component teaches students new skills that they apply in school, and that students learn the value of work.

I believe that the summer jobs program needs to continue to be available on a significant scale with sufficient funding. This bill recognizes the critical importance of the summer youth program by requiring that it be a part of each local area's youth program and allowing local communities to determine the number of summer jobs to be created.

The Workforce Investment Act includes titles reauthorizing major vocational rehabilitation and adult literacy programs. Both programs will continue to be separately funded and independently administered. We have incorporated them in the Workforce Act because they must be integral components of any comprehensive strategy to prepare people to meet the demands of the 21st century workplace.

Vocational rehabilitation offers new hope to individuals with disabilities, allowing them to reach their full potential and actively participate in their communities. The Rehabilitation Title of the Act will ensure that all working-aged individuals with disabilities, even those with the most significant disabilities, have realistic opportunities to obtain the resources and support they need to reach their employment goals.

Adult literacy programs are essential for the 27% of the adult population who

have not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. Learning to read and communicate effectively are the first steps to career advancement. This legislation will increase access to educational opportunities for those people most in need of assistance and enhance the quality of services provided.

The Workforce Investment Partnership Act will make it possible for millions of Americans to gain the skills needed to compete in a global economy. In doing so, we are also enabling them to realize their personal American dreams.

I would like to recognize the substantial contributions made by several individuals to this enormous legislative effort. On my staff, Jeffrey Teitz has worked on the development of the workforce and education titles of this bill for nearly eighteen months and done an outstanding job. Connie Garner has devoted a comparable effort to the vocational rehabilitation title. Jane Oates' assistance throughout the conference process has also been invaluable. I am proud of their work.

I also want to call the Senate's attention to the role of my longtime friend, William Spring of Boston. Bill is a leader on training and education issues in Massachusetts and his creative recommendations are incorporated throughout this legislation. There is one further person who deserves special mention. Steven Spinner worked for me during the 104th Congress until his tragic and untimely death. His invaluable efforts helped to lay the groundwork for our success in reforming the workforce system.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in support of the Workforce Investment Act Conference Report. This is a truly bipartisan bill. As a conferee, I would like to commend Senators JEFFORDS, KENNEDY, DEWINE, and WELLSTONE, as well as the House conferees, for shepherding this bill through the conference.

Few issues that we vote on in Congress are as important to the future of this country as the lifelong education and training of our workforce. We live in an era of a global economy, emerging industries and company downsizing. It is imperative that our delivery of services meets the employment and educational needs of the 21st century.

The current maze of more than 160 programs which are administered by 15 separate federal agencies has failed. The Workforce Investment Act streamlines these programs by giving more authority to state and local representatives of government, business, labor, education, and youth activities. The bill establishes a true collaborative process between the state and local representatives to ensure that training and educational services will be held to high standards. This bill also gives more flexibility to individuals seeking training assistance. Individuals will no longer be limited to a predetermined set of services.

I am especially pleased that the cornerstone of the Workforce Investment Act is streamlined service delivery through one-stop career centers. My state of Connecticut is nearing completion of implementation of its one-stop system, called Connecticut Works. This network has reformed the delivery of job training services in the state. I have had the privilege of visiting many of these centers and can attest to their success.

While I applaud the new system of providing training assistance incorporated in this bill, I am pleased that the bill retains some direct federal involvement in order to ensure that disadvantaged youth, veterans and displaced workers receive the training assistance and support they need.

For many years, the Connecticut economy was dependent on defense-oriented industries. The Workforce Investment Act ensures that employees who are adversely affected by base closures and military downsizing will have access to job training and supportive services in order to acquire the skills needed for employment in the technology-driven economy of the 21st century.

This legislation also provides for the coordination of adult education systems, allowing adult education to play a crucial role in a participant's professional training program. In the area of adult education and literacy, this legislation specifically targets those communities that demonstrate significant illiteracy rates to receive adult education programs as a first priority. I am pleased that this legislation also includes a provision that will direct funds designated to support English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to those ESL programs in communities with designated need. This means that ESL programs with waiting lists—those in communities with the greatest need for the valuable services these programs provide—will receive funds on a prioritized basis.

Mr. President, in order to better assist nonnative English speakers and fully assimilate them into our society, we must help them become more fluent in English. I can think of few more important factors in determining whether or not someone new to this society will successfully make this difficult transition than their ability to speak English.

A clear and effective grasp of the English language is still the best indicator of success for nonnative English speakers. The ability to speak English for anyone in today's marketplace represents an "open door," Mr. President. This "open door" can lead to greater employment and advancement opportunities for those whose first language is not English.

Additionally, Mr. President, this legislation reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act. This critically important legislation provides comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services designed to help individuals with disabilities be-

come more employable and achieve greater independence and integration into society.

Under the Rehabilitation Act, states, with assistance provided by the federal government in the manner of formula-derived grants, provide a broad array of services to individuals with disabilities that includes assessment, counseling, vocational and other educational services, work related placement services, and rehabilitation technology services. More than 1.25 million Americans with disabilities were served by vocational rehabilitation programs in 1995 alone, Mr. President.

I am particularly pleased that a provision dealing with assistive technology was included in this legislation. This provision, Section 508, will require the federal government to provide assistive technology to Federal employees with disabilities. This provision will put into place for the first time regulations requiring the federal government to provide its employees with disabilities access to appropriate technology suited to their individual needs.

This legislation would allow the federal government to take the lead in providing critical access to information technology to all federal employees with disabilities in this country. It strengthens the federal requirement that electronic and information technology purchased by federal agencies be accessible to their employees with disabilities.

Electronic and information technology accessibility is essential for federal employees to maintain a meaningful employment experience, as well as to meet their full potential. We live in a world where information and technology are synonymous with professional advancement. Increasingly, essential job functions have come to involve the use of technology, and where it is inaccessible, job opportunities that others take for granted are foreclosed to people with disabilities.

Presently, there are approximately 145,000 individuals with disabilities in the federal workforce. Roughly 61 percent of these employees hold permanent positions in professional, administrative, or technical occupations. Nationally, there are 49 million Americans who have disabilities, nearly half of them have a severe disability. Yet most mass market information technology is designed without consideration for their needs.

Section 508, Mr. President, is the first step in an effort to ensure that all individuals with disabilities have access to the assistive technology providing them the ability to reach their full capability. Though Section 508 will presently only affect federal employees, it is my hope that one day all individuals with disabilities will have the same access to assistive technology now afforded federal employees because of this important legislation. The federal government must truly be an equal opportunity employer, and this equal opportunity must apply fully to individuals with special needs.

Finally, Mr. President, I would again like to commend Senators JEFFORDS, DEWINE, KENNEDY, and WELLSTONE, as well as Chairman GOODLING, Congressmen CLAY, KILDEE, and MARTINEZ for the important role they each played in making this conference agreement a reality. They all worked closely with myself and my staff to address numerous concerns and for that I would like to thank them.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I am extremely pleased we are about to pass this important conference report. I look forward to its enactment upon signature by the President, which I hope can occur very soon. It is my understanding that the House is prepared to act on the conference bill during the coming days.

I have spoken on numerous occasions regarding the subject. As the Ranking Democrat on the Senate Labor Subcommittee on Employment and Training, I have worked hard with my colleagues Senator DEWINE, Senator JEFFORDS and Senator KENNEDY to help bring us to where we are this evening. I thank them and the many Minnesotans who have worked directly with me and my staff during the months of hearings, preparations, debate and drafting.

The conference bill preserves important policy principles contained in the Senate bill. It will help coordinate, streamline and decentralize our federal job training system. At the same time, it will make that system more accountable to real performance measures. It gives private sector employers—the people who have jobs to offer and who need workers with the right skills—a greater role in directing policy at the state and local level, which is where most decision-making power resides in this bill. The bill retains crucial federal priorities, then allows state and local authorities to decide how best to address their needs.

And it will move the country to where Minnesota and a number of other states have already moved decisively: to a system of One-Stop service centers where people can get all the information they need in one location. It will replace currently overbureaucratized systems in many states and localities with systems driven more by the needs of those who utilize them. Adults seeking training will receive Individual Training Accounts to give them direct control over their own careers. High quality labor market information will be accessible through the One-Stops, and training providers will be required to report publicly on their performance. Men and women will have the ability to make their own choices based on the best information about which profession they should pursue, about the skills and training they'll need, and about the best place to get those skills and that training.

This week in Minneapolis, concluding today, the U.S. Department of Labor

and Minnesota's Department of Economic Security hosted a national conference on One-Stop Workforce centers. It is with some pride that I note that my state has been a real leader in innovation with respect to One-Stops. Minnesota has also been a national leader when it comes to workforce system performance.

The conference bill ensures that states such as Minnesota, and the localities within them, can continue to innovate within the new system created. Good-performing service delivery areas will be allowed to continue to perform successfully. The same is true of current collaborative one-stop structures and local workforce boards which currently successfully undertake a range of activities, such as what the bill calls core services and training services. We have intentionally built flexibility into the bill.

Veterans will be served both in State-administered training programs and the national veterans workforce investment programs. Veterans also will have a strong role in the policy processes established in the bill. Community-based organizations are assured an appropriate role in setting policy. Labor organizations, too, retain a prominent role. Crucial provisions regarding the federal employment service are protected.

Mr. President, it has been a very busy week. I have given longer speeches on this topic in the past and may yet again. For now, I am extremely satisfied with our accomplishment in this bill. I hope we will soon be able to celebrate its enactment.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Conference Report on H.R. 1385, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

In a world where economic activity knows no national boundaries, it is crucial we ensure that we have the most knowledgeable and best trained workers in the world.

As a member of the Conference Committee on H.R. 1385, I am pleased that the Conference Agreement before us today will help us reach this goal by streamlining and reforming job training, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programs, while enhancing federal support and investment in these critical areas.

The Conference Agreement will help states implement a more coherent, performance-driven system to ensure that Americans receive the training and education they need throughout their lives.

The Conference Agreement will streamline services by establishing a one-stop delivery system; enhance accountability by requiring states, local boards, and training providers to meet higher performance measures; provide more reliable information on local career opportunities and training programs and providers; empower individuals to use individual training ac-

counts to choose their own training programs and providers; and increase flexibility to allow states and local areas to implement innovative job training programs.

I am also particularly pleased that this Conference Agreement includes provisions which will benefit my home state of Rhode Island, such as preserving the state's successful service delivery area structure.

In addition to job training reform, the Conference Agreement also improves the accessibility and quality of adult literacy and education programs. Indeed, more aggressive adult literacy programs are essential if we are to ensure that everyone in the workforce has an ability to read.

Lastly, the Conference Agreement reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In doing so, it links vocational rehabilitation to the new workforce system, while maintaining a separate funding stream for vocational rehabilitation. This will provide improved training and employment services to individuals with disabilities.

I want to thank Chairman JEFFORDS, Senator KENNEDY, Senator DEWINE, and Senator WELLSTONE, and their staffs, for their efforts on this important legislation and for working with me to address issues affecting Rhode Island.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I now renew my unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the conference report is agreed to.

PATRIOTIC AND NATIONAL OBSERVANCES, CEREMONIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar 477, H.R. 1085.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1085) to revise, codify and enact without substantive change certain general and permanent laws, related to patriotic and national observances, ceremonies, and organizations, as title 36, United States Code, "Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies and Organizations."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 1085) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.