

would be for people to turn out this fall. I think the Republican strategy is for people to be turned off this fall, low turnout.

I hope that from this example people in the country will realize that there is a lot at stake. If you care about a good education for all of our children, if you are committed to the idea of living-wage jobs, if you are committed to the idea of decent health care for every citizen, if you are committed to improving the standard of living for all the people in our country, if you believe that economic and educational opportunities are important, then I make this appeal to people in the country: Don't let people turn you off to politics.

This election this fall is not about President Clinton. We can talk about his behavior at another time. Nobody needs to approve of it. I don't know of anybody who does. But this election, I say to people in the country, is about you; it is about your families. This election this fall—the President is not on the ballot—is about these kinds of issues.

I hope people will turn out. I hope you will vote for education. This amendment was knocked out of the higher education bill in spite of the good support of Senator JEFFORDS. We supported it on the Senate side. I tell you, this GINGRICH-House Republican majority agenda is harsh, it is mean-spirited, and if you are committed to education for children, make sure you vote this election. If you believe in the importance of health care and you think good jobs are important, just make sure you vote this election. If you think it is wrong in the same week in the House of Representatives to give a tax break to people with estates over \$17 million and eliminate the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and eliminate summer jobs for kids—that is exactly what this majority did in the House—you make sure you vote this election.

If you are angry at people in Washington, DC, and the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate because you think that neither party is doing enough about your concerns and you think too much of our decisionmaking is dominated by special interest or big money or you feel locked out or all the rest, make sure you vote. Don't opt out. Don't let people turn you off. There is a lot at stake in elections in our country, and this is but one example.

I will get to speak more about this after our caucuses. I see my colleague, Senator GRAHAM. I wanted to start out congratulating my colleagues for the good work on the higher education bill.

Roger Wolfson, thank you for your help.

I want to tell you that what happened in the conference committee is just outrageous. There is nothing I can do about it, not now. I will bring this amendment back on the first bill I can amend. Of course, for the last couple of weeks there hasn't been an opportunity

to amend any bills. I want to make sure people understand what is at stake.

In my not too humble opinion—and the Chair is a good friend; I really like him, and I hope it is mutual, so I don't mean this in a personal way—but what is at stake in these fall elections is critical.

I say to people in the country, this small story tells a larger story. I shudder at the thought of Speaker GINGRICH or, for that matter, on the Senate side as well, there being even more of a majority or more power, because I think it will be an agenda that will move our country back 60 years. People have learned how to talk about education, I say to my colleague from Florida, but the budgets don't reflect that. On the House side, they cut funding for education. There was no action whatsoever on health care. There is very little concern about what I call some really important family-value issues, and this is but one example.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to my colleague from Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, is there a set time for the recess?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a set time for the recess, 12:30 p.m.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak until 12:35.

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

(By unanimous consent, the remarks of Mr. GRAHAM are printed earlier in today's RECORD.)

MEASURE READ FOR THE FIRST TIME—S. 2529

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I understand that S. 2529 is at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the first time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2529) entitled the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I now ask for its second reading, and I object on behalf of the Republican leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The bill will be read the second time on the next legislative day.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:39 p.m., recessed until 2:14 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. SANTORUM].

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a

period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 3:15 p.m., with time to be equally divided between the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. WELLSTONE, and the Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS, or their designees.

Mr. FORD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

HIGHER EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1998

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, what is the legislative schedule now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is an hour of morning business under the previous order equally divided between the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. WELLSTONE, and the Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS.

Mr. FORD. I thank the Chair.

Will the Senator from Minnesota give me 10 minutes?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will be pleased to yield the Senator from Kentucky 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. FORD. Up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Up to 10 minutes.

Mr. FORD. I may give back some.

I rise to speak about the conference report to H.R. 6, the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. I take this opportunity to commend my colleagues on the conference committee for the truly outstanding work they have done on behalf of our Nation's students and the higher education community. This legislation includes an important expansion of the Pell and work study programs, provides the lowest interest rates in 17 years for student borrowers, provides for loan forgiveness for teachers working in high poverty areas, and makes a continued commitment to improving our teacher preparation programs.

I know that the passage of this bill will have a significant impact on students and colleges in my State. While I am pleased with many provisions in this bill, I am extremely disappointed that the conference committee did not include the text of the Wellstone amendment. This amendment allowed up to 24 months of postsecondary or vocational education, removed the 30-percent limitation on education as a work activity for teen parents, and clarified that participation in a Federal work study program is a permissible work activity.

Instead, the conference report calls for a GAO study on this issue. I am personally aware of at least a half dozen studies—a half dozen studies—which already indicate that this is a problem for many low-income, single mothers. Why do you have to have a study to tell you that the more education you have the better job you can receive and the better the employer likes you? Instead of doing the right thing for these

single mothers, trying to better themselves, our colleagues want to study the issue to death. What they ought to do is try living in the single mother's shoes for a day and see what it is to try to raise a family and attend school full time, while holding down a part-time job.

As many of my colleagues know, I supported and voted for welfare reform. It has been almost 2 years since Congress rewrote our Federal welfare laws in the hopes of breaking the cycle of dependency that was trapping too many Americans in poverty and despair. Much good has come of that law, including substantial drops in the welfare rolls and saving States like Kentucky \$14 million. But despite its good intentions, the new welfare law is penalizing parents, particularly single mothers trying to improve their chances at getting good jobs.

Under the new law, a parent must work 20 hours to continue receiving aid. That might not seem particularly onerous, but the law also limits these single parents to just 1 year of education before requiring them to find work. As a result, too many promising, capable, nontraditional students are being forced out of postsecondary education due to the Federal restrictions.

My State is not a wealthy State. There are many single mothers trapped in the cycle of poverty. Recently, the University of Kentucky released a study which demonstrated that higher education greatly increases a person's ability to earn a living. The study found that a parent living in rural Kentucky needs to earn at least \$10.61 an hour working full time, or \$19,708 a year, to support two children on a basic budget. The study found that only women with a college degree—and let me repeat, only women with a college degree—earn above that threshold in Kentucky. This same study found that single mothers with a high school degree never, never reach that threshold. In fact, the average income for Kentucky women of any age with a high school degree is only 67 percent of that benchmark.

My State wants to go forward and help these women help themselves. A bipartisan bill in the 1998 Kentucky general assembly to improve access to education for welfare recipients was ultimately scrapped. Why was it scrapped? Due to the fear of Federal penalties. The State wanted to extend the opportunity, particularly to single mothers, and they were fearful because of Federal penalties.

I know the Wellstone amendment was perceived by some of my colleagues as an effort to undermine the welfare law and had little business being attached to a Higher Education Act. I am sorry that these colleagues decided to frame this issue in such a way. This was an amendment about education. This was an amendment about education. Education is the key to helping parents escape the low-paying jobs that only perpetuate the wel-

fare wheel. If these single mothers have just a little more time to get an education, they will be able to compete for higher paying jobs which will help them keep their families from sinking.

Although I will not be here next year, I am heartened by the fact that there will be joint hearings on this issue and that my colleague from Minnesota, Senator PAUL WELLSTONE, will continue to advocate for this change.

I urge my colleagues to learn more about this pressing problem, pay full attention to these hearings, and talk to people in your State. I believe that my colleagues will find that this is a commonsense fix that will improve the welfare law. As someone who voted for this bill, I reiterate the Wellstone amendment was not about trying to undo welfare reform, but an attempt to help single mothers caught in a Catch-22. The Wellstone amendment is about helping families help themselves. I hope my colleagues will look beyond party lines next year and do the right thing.

I thank my friend from Minnesota and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I know the time in the Senate for my colleague, Senator FORD, is limited. But I want to say to him, when we received 56 votes for this amendment on the floor of the Senate, in the aftermath of that a lot of people were just thrilled around the country, especially a lot of these mothers and a lot of the higher education community and a lot of States like Kentucky, and others that wanted to allow mothers to complete 2 years of education. I am not naive about this. I don't think we would have ever gotten the 56 votes if not for the voice of Senator FORD.

I wish he would not be leaving here. I don't think there is anybody more respected. I know we all come out here on the floor and we say these things about one another. But, you know what, I am sure most of the time it is sincere, but in the case of Senator FORD, when I hear him speak I just wish he wasn't leaving.

I think what happened with him and certainly what happened with me is I would travel in Minnesota and I would go to community colleges and maybe speak at a gathering. Maybe there would be a couple of hundred students, the majority of them were women, most of them were older, most of them were going back to school, and a good number of them were single parents. Their plea was: Please, Senator WELLSTONE, the only thing we are asking is try and let us finish our 2 years here.

Mr. FORD. May I say to my good friend, I found the same thing, too. We have several community colleges around the State. I have not talked to an employer yet who said he would not prefer to have an employee that was better educated. I have never talked to those from academia who would not

tell me that at least, the minimum, 2 years of education would give, particularly a single-parent mother, the opportunity to secure the \$10.91 per hour that was necessary to keep that family out of poverty. That is just a little over \$19,000 a year to take care of three people. That does not sound like much. But you give them an opportunity to earn and compete. That is what this bill is all about, I thought, under welfare.

So, somehow, some way, our colleagues are going to have to understand the employer wants a better educated employee; the single-parent mother particularly wants to be able to get out of poverty and get away from that cycle. Whatever you can do next year—you don't have to have a study to understand that.

Mr. WELLSTONE. No.

Mr. FORD. I don't understand. They just tried to throw a wet blanket on it to say it was undoing welfare reform because, after we have had it in place for 2 years we found there was a kink in it? I didn't know that we were perfect.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the other thing that was interesting, this amendment just allows States to do this if they want to. No State was required to. Any State that thought it would be better for many of these women and children and their families, to allow these women to finish 2 years of education so they get a better job and their children would be better off, would be allowed to do so.

I will just say to my colleague from Kentucky, I was there in the conference committee. I think it was punitive for this amendment to be eliminated. I never heard anybody make a credible argument against it, I really didn't. There was not any credible argument made against it. I said here this morning, and I will say it one more time, I think this small story tells the larger story, the same Republican majority in the House, as we look to the elections in the fall, the same Republican majority in the same week in June—one more time, this bears repeating—voted to give a tax break to people with estates worth more than \$17 million and at the same time voted to eliminate the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and eliminate summer jobs for kids.

This is a kind of meanness that I think is just simply not the best for America. I want to say to all of my colleagues, I am going to really miss having Senator FORD with me. The first bill that comes out here, the first vehicle—if it is tomorrow, it is tomorrow; if it is next week, it is next week; if it is after, in January or February—I am going to be coming right back with this amendment again, right back with this amendment again. Because all across our country there are a lot of these women who have just essentially been driven out of school.

I cannot believe that is what we are doing. There is not one person I know,

just on the basis of common wisdom about this, who doesn't know that a mother and her children are going to be better off if those mothers are allowed to complete 2 years of higher education. So we will be back. We will be back and we will pass this amendment.

Mr. President, I, again, will just finish speaking about this amendment if I refer to Latashie Brown, who is a single mother in her thirties from Minnesota. She decided to return to college to enhance her nursing skills and improve her earning power.

You have a single mother, she wants to go back to school, it is 2 years to get that associate's degree to go into nursing, to be a nursing assistant. And too many women like Miss Brown are just essentially being told you have to leave school because the States get penalized for not meeting the work requirements. We will be back.

CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I also want to bring up one other matter on the floor today because we are in another fight. You know, it seems like, with about 2 weeks to go, there is a whole lot that is actually going on here in the Congress. I think the tragedy of it is people may not be aware of all of it. But I will tell you, one issue that people in Minnesota, especially the farmers and people in greater Minnesota, are well aware of—we have a crisis in agriculture. We have a lot of people who are faced with record-low prices. There is no way farmers can cash-flow on the basis of \$1.40 a bushel of corn.

Those farmers are being driven off the land. As those farmers get driven off the land, that is the death knell for many of our rural communities because it is those family farmers who live in those communities and buy in those communities that support our schools and support our small businesses and support our churches and support our synagogues—you name it. That is what is happening.

We put together a \$7 billion package. Senator BAUCUS from Montana was part of that effort. I was hopeful because, whereas before our August recess I heard Senators come to the floor and say "stay the course." The Freedom to Farm bill—which I call the Freedom to Fail bill—it is the market. Stay the course. Stay the course.

I was thinking to myself, it is easy for people here to say "stay the course" while farmers in Minnesota are just being driven off their land.

That changed. Now, finally I think, at least I hope that everybody recognizes there is a crisis out there. I also believe that many people realize this Freedom to Fail bill is not working. We just eliminated the leverage for farmers to get a fair price in the marketplace. We capped the loan rate at \$1.89 for a bushel of corn.

What in the world are we doing supporting a piece of legislation that

keeps prices down when prices have plummeted to the point where you could be the best farmer in the world and you cannot make it?

So we put together a \$7 billion package that has indemnity payments for farmers that have experienced crop failure and have had to deal with scab disease, had to deal with terrible weather like wet weather in Northwest Minnesota, and we did a couple of other things, the most important of which was to take the cap off the loan rate so that we could get the prices up and have some kind of safety net for farmers who otherwise are going to go under.

Mr. President, we had a farm rally in Worthington, MN, just Saturday a week ago—not this past Saturday. There were petitions—I won't include them in the RECORD because there are too many—there were petitions that were passed out that talked about the importance of a fair price for family farmers.

I thank all of the farmers and small business people and lenders who came to this rally—almost 1,000 people were there—in Worthington. These petitions are going out all across our State. Ted Winter, who is house majority leader, a farmer himself, has been one of the people who has taken the lead.

This is a plea from Main Street businesses in rural America, a plea from family farmers, a plea from rural citizens. They are saying to people in the U.S. Senate, "We are not asking for a handout, we are asking for a fair shake. We are asking you to take some action that corrects a major deficiency in a piece of legislation you passed"—the freedom to fail bill—"which is great for the grain companies but puts us family farmers under."

What we got yesterday by the same Republican majority that I was talking about earlier—you talk about partisanship. I don't know if it is partisanship on the floor of the Senate right now or just an honest-to-goodness debate. I argue that any majority that gives away a break to people who have over \$17 million estates and cuts low-income energy assistance—those are priorities that are distorted priorities. I don't think that is the goodness of our country.

I argue that any majority that eliminates an educational opportunity for a single parent and her children—that is punitive.

And I argue that this package that was put together yesterday in the appropriations conference committee shut out—I say to my colleague from Montana—shut out the Democratic proposal. It is way too little, way too late, doesn't get the price up, deficient in all sorts of ways, and will not do the job. It is like my Republican colleagues in the House and the Senate labored mightily and produced a mouse. It is an insult.

We will on Thursday—Yom Kippur is tomorrow; it is a religious holiday for some of us—Thursday we will have a

motion to recommit this to the conference committee. We will keep coming back and fighting it.

I say to family farmers in Minnesota, "Look, \$4 billion doesn't get the price up, it isn't targeted, it helps landowners, not necessarily producers, doesn't help soybean growers, doesn't deal with the real issue."

People are not looking for handouts. They are not looking for more payments. They want to get the price up. I say to farmers in Minnesota, "Look, I have given this everything I have—everything I have," or "everything I had," if it is in the past tense. I will tell you that whatever is out there is just not going to do the job. I refuse to be a part of a phony argument where we pretend like we have come up with some agricultural crisis relief bill that does not provide the necessary relief for people so they can stay on their land and farm their land. This is not going to do the job.

You can say, "Well, but this goes part of the way." I suppose a quarter of a loaf of bread is better than none, but I am not going to be party to the argument that this is going to help the farmers or is anywhere near commensurate to the task before us.

The President has said that he is going to veto this. The administration is hanging in there tough. Let me tell you, Mr. President, I don't always agree with you on policies. I am a Democrat and quite often in disagreement with some of what the administration does. But I give credit where credit is due.

I am glad the President is hanging tough on this. I am glad that the President and the Vice President and Secretary Glickman—especially Secretary Glickman—are there for family farmers. I hope he vetoes this, and then I hope we sit down at the bargaining table and come back with a farm relief package that really provides relief.

I am tired of symbolic politics. We get ourselves in big trouble when we pretend like we put something together that is going to do the job. The Democrats' proposal, I say to my colleague from Montana, was barely a start. It was the best we felt we could do. It did not get the prices up there. It did not get the relief there. It was not all that we needed to do, but it was a credible start.

What has come out of this agricultural appropriations conference committee by the Republican majority—let me go on record and say this—is not a great step forward, it is a great leap sideways. It is not a step forward for family farmers, it is a great leap sideways. The family farmers in Minnesota and the people in greater Minnesota deserve better. They deserve better, and I am going to keep on fighting and raising heck on the floor of the Senate and in every other way I can until they get better. I believe I will be joined by many of my other colleagues as well.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a very eloquent piece by