

Doug Swingley began mushing in 1989 with plans of running the Iditarod. He ran his first Iditarod in 1992 and was the top-placing rookie hat year. He has competed in every Iditarod race since 1992 and won the event for the first time in only his third attempt. I am sure that Doug's second victory will disappoint my good friends Senators STEVENS and MURKOWSKI, because Doug is the only non-Alaskan to win the Iditarod. He has proven that a kid from Montana can take on our friends from the North and beat them at their own game and win.

Like his first victory, Doug pulled his team away from the competition, and showed incredible speed through the final stages of this demanding race. I am impressed by his dedication and hard work, and I am proud to know that Montana is full of people like Doug. ●

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, as the primary sponsor of S. 280, the Education Flexibility Partnership Act (Ed-Flex), I am pleased that the Senate passed this legislation by a 98 to 1 margin on March 11, 1999. In addition, the House of Representatives passed the companion bill on the same day by a vote of 330 to 90. This bicameral, bipartisan support for Ed-Flex is a positive first step for education reform in the 106th Congress.

This first step in education reform is desperately needed. Critics of our education system note that the federal government provides only seven percent of funds in education, but requires 50 percent of the paperwork. In addition, more often than not, well-intentioned federal programs come with stringent regulations and directives which tie the hands of school officials and teachers. As the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee's Task Force on Education, I have heard the pleas from states and localities for greater flexibility in administering federal programs in exchange for increased accountability. This theme has been echoed as I travel around Tennessee visiting schools and holding education roundtable discussions for teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, school board officials, and other interested members of the community.

The First Ed-Flex bill passed by Congress will provide greater flexibility coupled with increased accountability for our nation's schools. Specifically, this bill will allow every state the option to participate in the enormously popular Ed-Flex demonstration program already in place in twelve states. The twelve state currently participating in the program are: Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Vermont.

Ed-Flex frees responsible states from the burden of unnecessary, time-con-

suming federal regulations, so long as states are complying with certain core federal principles, such as civil rights, and so long as states are making progress toward improving their students' performance. Under the Ed-Flex program, the Department of Education delegates to the states its power to grant individual school districts temporary waivers from certain federal requirements that interfere with state and local efforts to improve education. To be eligible, a state must waive its own regulations on schools. It must also hold schools accountable for results by setting academic standards and measuring student performance. Using this accountability system, states are required to monitor the performance of local education agencies and schools that have received waivers, including the performance of students affected by these waivers. At any time, either the state or the Secretary of Education can terminate a waiver.

The twelve states that currently participate in Ed-Flex have used this flexibility to allow school districts innovate and better use federal resources to improve students outcomes. For instance, the Phelps Luck Elementary School in Howard County, Maryland used its waiver to provide one-on-one tutoring for reading students who have the greatest need in grade 1-5. They also used their waiver to lower the average student/teacher ratio in mathematics and reading from 25/1 to 12/1.

A Texas statewide waiver to allow more flexible use of Federal teacher training funds has allowed districts to better direct professional development dollars to those areas where they are needed most. In Massachusetts, a school that had been eligible for Title I funding in the past was ineligible for the 1997-98 school year, but was expected to be eligible again for 1998-99. Massachusetts was able to use Ed-Flex waiver authority to give the school a one-year waiver and assure continuity of service rather than disrupt services for a year.

Support for Ed-Flex is broad. The President has called for Ed-Flex expansion, as well as others including the Secretary of Education, the National Governors' Association, the Democratic Governors' Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Education Association, and the National School Boards Association.

Ed-Flex is a move in the right direction. We must empower States and localities by giving them the flexibility they need to best combine Federal resources with State and local reform efforts. I am pleased that the 106th Congress has acted quickly on my bill to ensure that every State will have the opportunity to participate in this successful program. Ed-Flex is a commonsense, bipartisan plan that will give States and localities the flexibility that they need while holding them accountable for producing results.

Now, the challenge for this Congress is to build on Ed-Flex's themes: flexi-

bility and accountability. As we consider the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act later this year, we must continue the push to cut red tape and remove overly-prescriptive Federal mandates on Federal education funding. At the same time, we must hold States and local schools accountable for increasing student achievement. Flexibility, combined with accountability, must be our objective. The end result of our reform effort must spark innovation—innovation designed to provide all students a world-class education. ●

TRADE FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to cosponsor S. 261, the Trade Fairness Act of 1999. I believe this legislation is crucial to our attempts to save American jobs from unfair competition and dumping.

Specifically, Mr. President, we must implement this legislation to protect our steelworkers from imports dumped into our domestic markets by our Russian, Asian and Brazilian competitors.

American steelworkers have proven that they are our nation's backbone. They provide the materials on which our shipping, manufacturing, indeed our entire industrial base rely. In my state's Upper Peninsula two mines, the Tilden and the Empire, employ almost 2,000 Michiganians. Last year the workers in these mines produced over 15 million tons of iron ore pellets. They paid \$8 million in taxes. Time and again they have stood up for America, and it is time for America to stand up for them.

We must stand up for these hard working men and women, Mr. President, because they face a very real threat to their livelihoods. Let me cite a few numbers. By October of last year Japan had already doubled its imports to the United States from the year before. Just in that month of October, Japan sent 882,000 tons of steel to the United States, an all-time record. Finally, in that month alone 4.1 million net tons of steel were imported to the United States.

The reasons for this steep increase in imports are threefold. First, the Federal Reserve's longstanding tight money policy produced actual deflation in commodity prices, deflation from which our steel industry has yet to recover. Second, the Asian, Russian and Brazilian economic crises are forcing those countries to rely on exports to keep their economies afloat. The U.S. is the world's biggest market, and so they have targeted us. Third, the International Monetary Fund convinced these countries to raise interest rates and devalue currencies, which allowed their steel to undercut our prices.

Combined, these factors have encouraged the unfair trade practice of dumping, selling steel in the United States at prices below the cost of production. This practice threatens disastrous consequences for our steelworkers and for