

which is really the main debate we will be having.

Is the Federal Government going to be involved in education and just giving the money unfettered—how I would characterize it—to the States or to the school districts or, rather, we should say: Here is a need and here is some money; We are not forcing you to use it; This is not a mandate; But if you want the money, you have to meet certain rules, certain standards, and apply under certain standards.

The greatest area I have experience with in this realm is the issue of crime. We tried the block grant route with crime. It was a fiasco. Governor after Governor, locally-elected official after locally-elected official—the LEA program, the law enforcement assistance grant, a block grant devised by Jimmy Carter and certainly supported by many Democrats—just wasted the money.

We had instances of a tank being purchased by one State. I think it was in the State of Indiana where the Governor purchased an airplane under LEA so he could fly to Washington to discuss crime issues. Money was wasted.

A few short years after LEA was passed and the money was appropriated, it was withdrawn with its tail between its legs. That issue could be repeated in education. I wasn't around. I was actually in high school when we passed the block grants in 1965. Again, this was done by Democrats. Imagine it is 1965—it was a Congress that was overwhelmingly Democrat—and the same thing that happened to crime happened in education; money was just wasted.

Here is an example. There were blank checks: \$35,000 was spent on band uniforms, \$2,200 was spent on football uniforms, \$63,000 was spent to purchase 18

portable swimming pools, and \$16,000 was spent on construction of two lagoons for sewage disposal.

Do we want to repeat that? Do we want to see that kind of waste and patronage when we give a locality money? They don't have to sweat to raise the taxes for it. They are getting free money, and we say, basically, spend it on what you want. It is a formula for disaster. That is what it seems we are headed towards. It is just incredible to me.

There is an even deeper point, which is this:

We are all critical of our present educational system. We say it is not working the way it should. Instead of changing, instead of trying to improve it, instead of saying here are ways, such as reducing class size, or making classrooms better, or having better teachers, or having standards, or having some accountability, we just give the money to the very same school districts we criticize and say: Do whatever you want with it. It is illogical.

The only way there should be a block grant is if we think the school districts are doing a great job and simply don't have enough money.

That is not a conservative argument. You hear more of that from the liberals. Yet the conservatives in this body are supporting block grants—no standards, little accountability, no direction, spend it on what you wish. I am utterly amazed.

I think there are a lot of good debates we can have. I understand the desire to keep schools locally controlled. But a block grant, a formula for waste, and much of it going to the Governors so that money doesn't even trickle down?

If you ask the American people if they prefer a block grant or prefer

tethered money to reduce class size, or to raise standards, or to improve the quality of teachers, there is no question what they would desire.

I hope my colleagues will listen to the debate we are going to have on this bill. As I said before, I hope it is a fulsome debate. I hope it is a long debate. We cannot spend time on any issue that is more important than education.

I hope they will look at the proposals I have brought forward to improve teachers. They are not ideological. Some involve tax breaks, some involve raising standards. I hope we will decide that the role of the Federal Government should be to raise the bar—because enough localities have not—and help people get over that bar rather than just give them a sack of coins and say, "Do what you will."

I look forward to this debate. I think it is one of the most important we can have.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in adjournment until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 3, 2000.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:21 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 3, 2000, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATION

Executive nomination received by the Senate May 2, 2000:

THE JUDICIARY

JAMES EDGAR BAKER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ARMED FORCES FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS TO EXPIRE ON THE DATE PRESCRIBED BY LAW, VICE WALTER T. COX, III, TERM EXPIRED.