

a priest, a chaplain, and a humanitarian.

Congress finds that His Eminence, John Cardinal O'Connor, was a man of deep compassion, great intellect, and tireless devotion to spiritual guidance and humanitarianism.

I think it is a special note that the Cardinal joined the Navy Chaplain's Corps in June of 1952 during the Korean conflict. He served with elements of both the Navy and the Marine Corps and saw combat action in Vietnam.

He later served as chaplain of the United States Naval Academy and was appointed Chief of Chaplains of the Navy with the grade of rear admiral, from which position he retired 4 years later.

In May 1979, he was ordained a bishop by Pope John Paul II. He then served as Victor General of Military Ordinance—now the Archdiocese for Military Services—until 1984.

This son of a working-class laborer, a union man from Pennsylvania, found himself, on the one extreme, in the jungles of Vietnam saying mass in foxholes and asking himself, as he saw the deaths on all sides of all the combatants, why?

He came back with that same courage to the Archdiocese of New York. There are 2.37 million of us, and we have been rancorous from the first, and continue so. He quickly adapted to that environment and adopted some of those characteristics.

But he was a wonderful priest. As my friend, Senator SCHUMER, said, he was a healer and a man who reached out to others.

He is in his heaven now. As we mourn his passing, we celebrate his life.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this has been an interesting and certainly a thoughtful debate about education. This is exactly the topic we ought to be discussing in the Senate. We have a lot of folks in this country who care about the state of education and the condition of America's schools. They say America's schools are failing its children. What shall we do about that?

Before us is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We debate this law every 6 years, and at that time we talk about what kind of policies we believe will work for America's schools and what kind of policies will give us the kind of education system we can have pride in. Are our children walking through classroom doors that give them the best opportunity for a good education?

Let me also say that I am a little tired—not only in Congress but in politics and in discussions generally—of the notion in this country of blaming America's teachers first.

I visit a lot of classrooms. I see a lot of teachers and a lot of students. In

most cases, the teachers I see in America's classrooms are extraordinary men and women who do a wonderful job with our children in America's schools. They have a very tough job. Their students come to schools all over this country with problems that affect how well they will learn. There are children who are hungry, without a caring parent, who are regularly faced with violence, guns, behavior issues. All sorts of issues come to school with children. We have to respond to those and deal with those issues. But this notion of somehow blaming America's teachers is wrong.

Let me talk for a moment about who has new ideas. I was listening a while ago to a speech that I thought was interesting. But the notion was that only the majority party had new ideas, and somehow the Democratic caucus in the Senate was offering proposals that are just the same old thing.

The majority party offers, as its version of how to fix our education system, to provide block grants. Is there anything new about block grants? Block grants aren't new. In fact, this is the oldest idea in politics, and it is an idea that doesn't work.

We have very serious problems with our schools that we need to help solve. A lot of schools are in radical disrepair.

I was at a school Monday in North Dakota. It is a school whose student population is almost exclusively Native American. These young Indian children are attending a school that is not in good repair. They know it. I know it. The teachers know it. The school board knows it. This is a school that doesn't have much of a tax base because it is on an Indian reservation. It is a public school district, but does not have much of a tax base.

This is a school that doesn't even have an athletic field. Is there a place for these children to go out and run? Is there a place for them to play football or to practice soccer? No. This is a school without an athletic field.

As we were going through the classrooms in this school, the principal said to me: Senator, is there any chance you could help us try to get an athletic field for these kids? They have too much energy. They have so much energy and want the opportunity to go out on an athletic field to play football, or play soccer, or perhaps run track. But we don't have the money.

Again, this is a school without a tax base so they don't have the money.

As I was touring the school, the teacher said: Now, children, are there any questions you would like to ask the Senator?

One little kid in the third grade raised his hand real high, and he said: Yes. Mr. Senator, I would like to know how many bathrooms there are in the White House.

I thought: Gosh, that is a funny question. How many bathrooms are there in the White House?

One little kid on the other side of the room said: I think there are 18.

Another little boy said: I think there are 46.

I said: You are both probably right. It is probably between 18 and 46.

Do you know in that school, with 150 kids, they have only two bathrooms, a boy's bathroom and a girl's bathroom? I guess he was thinking it would be a luxury to have a lot of bathrooms.

That is the sort of question that comes from a third grader. But it relates to the condition of the school. The third grader knows that he is not walking into the same kind of school that other kids are. This school needs repair.

One of the new ideas we proposed—that has been opposed, incidentally, by the majority party—is to provide the opportunity to repair, renovate, and rebuild America's schools that are in disrepair all around this country. But there is not much interest in that. Instead, the response is, let's send them block grants, and then pray that someone will use it for the right thing.

We have some experience with block grants. In fact, title I started out as a block grant a long time ago. However, Congress quickly learned that the funding was not helping the poor children who were intended to be the beneficiaries.

Let me give just a couple of examples of what title I was used for: They bought three tubas in one school. Another one used it for band uniforms. Another bought 18 portable swimming pools. That is block grants.

Of course, these block grants won't go directly to the schools. The block grant funds will go to the Governors. Then the school districts are going to have to go begging to the States asking: Can we get some of that Federal money you have back there in block grants?

We think maybe a new idea would be to say, let's renovate, remodel, and rebuild those schools that are in disrepair around this country, and let's help the local governments that do not have the resources to accomplish that task. We think a new idea might be to say, let's help those schools that are radically overcrowded, with kids sitting with an inch between their desks in a classroom, with 35 students taught by 1 teacher. We know better teaching goes on in the classroom when you have 1 teacher and 15 students or 1 teacher and 20 students, so let's decide to help schools reduce the size of their classes.

When someone says there are no new ideas, it is just that they have not heard them. We have talked about them. They have not heard them. They have not been willing to vote for them.

There are a lot of things we can do to improve education. I agree that we cannot throw money at problems, but I also believe we cannot withhold the resources necessary to fix this country's schools. We cannot send kids to inferior schools and ask why we didn't get a good student out of that school. We

cannot send kids into crowded classrooms and wonder why test scores are not higher.

As I said before, some of the most wonderful, dedicated people I have met are the teachers in classrooms, spending their days with our children. We can and should make some changes on the question of the teacher certification process. We ought to have alternative certification programs for people who later in life want to go back into a classroom and teach kids. They shouldn't have to go through a teacher's college or a curriculum that is long and difficult.

Let me give an example. There was a rather wonderful major league outfielder who played ball for the Baltimore Orioles who was going to teach physical education at a school in New York. Wouldn't you want your kid being taught how to hit by a major league outfielder? But he didn't have the proper teacher certificate so he wasn't kept in the school system.

What if Bill Gates decided he wanted to come into your school and teach a class on computers? He doesn't have the certification. What if Michael Jordan was willing to teach your child to play basketball in a physical education program? Do you think Michael Jordan and Bill Gates are not qualified? Of course they are.

We can find mechanisms by which we provide alternative certification for professionals and others who want to go into the classroom to help in this country. We can and should do that.

But to those people who spend all of their time beating up on America's schools, I wonder how they think we got to where we are in this world with our education system? How on Earth did we do that? Is there a place in the world anyone wants to trade places with? I don't think so. Do we want to trade our education system for the one in Haiti, Zambia, or Bangladesh? I don't think so. How about Germany? How about France or Italy? Do we want to trade it? I don't think so.

This country has invested a substantial amount of money in something called universal education. We did it because we don't believe in segregating kids and deciding some kids have talent to go here and other kids have the talent to go there. We decided all kids ought to have the opportunity to make the most of their education.

I have two children in school this morning. They are both the most wonderful children in the whole world. I love them to death. I want them to have the best education possible. I don't know what they will be when they grow up. My son, when he was 10 years old and we were going over an English lesson together, that he didn't need to study English because he was going to be a miner. I said: A miner? He said: I'm going to mine gold and I don't need to read and spell. I said: When mining gold, you have to be able to read and sign contracts. Over time, he changed his occupation choice, and he has had several other choices since then. We spend time every night with

our children doing homework because we believe education is a priority for them. I want them to go through a classroom door I am proud of. I want them to go into a school I am proud of. I want them to have teachers I am proud of.

Dating back to my great-grandmother who homesteaded on the prairies of North Dakota and raised children who raised children who raised me, this education system has been a wonderful boon to most Americans, including our family. My father had to quit school in the sixth grade because his mother died and his father was in an institution for tuberculosis. In sixth grade, he quit school in order to go to work to help his uncles raise his sisters. The proudest day of his life, it seems to me, is one day when, without ever having given us a hint, he told us at the supper table that he had, at age 55, just passed the GED test. Then he gave us a big smile. He didn't even tell us he was taking it. This meant a lot to him.

Education has enormous value. Every American family who cares about its kids understands that. This debate is not about two sides, one of which has new ideas and the other which has no ideas. It is a discussion about a range of approaches with respect to the education system and how we make it better.

I don't think our public school system is awful. I disagree with those who do. Go to school. I have been to schools that are awful schools, but do you know why? Because of all the other influences from which those kids come. I have been to schools with metal detectors at the front door. Shortly after I visited one of those schools, a kid was shot at the water fountain because another kid bumped him. The student who shot him got a gun through the metal detector, even though a security guard was sitting there.

That school has a crowd control problem as much as it has education problems. It is not because they are bad people running the school. It is because that school inherits all of the other problems of its surroundings. I think we need to understand that and help change it.

We can do better in education. I am not suggesting everything is great. We can do better in education. But I know my kids do more homework than I did. I graduated from a tiny high school class of nine in Regent, North Dakota. I am enormously proud of the education I received in that school. Are the kids there getting a better education today than I did? Yes, of course they are—more homework, more opportunities, bigger libraries, the Internet. They have access to any library in the world through the Internet.

As we look at what we do to improve our schools, I think the most important thing is to improve those crumbling facilities, reduce class size, and then require accountability. I am all for accountability.

There is a provision in Senator DASCHLE's substitute, which I will also

offer as a separate amendment, to provide parents with a school report card. I get a report card about how my son and daughter are performing. I want a report card for the public school they attend, a report card that every parent and every taxpayer in this country should get, comparing their school to other schools in their district, in their state, and in other States. How is that school doing? Is it passing or failing based on a series of criteria—student performance, graduation and retention rates, professional certification of teachers, average class size, school safety, parental involvement—which is critically important—student dropout rates and student access to technology. How is that school doing? We deserve a school report card as parents and as taxpayers.

That ultimately will provide the accountability we should get. Yes, we ought to hold our education system accountable. We will have an opportunity to vote on school report cards as part of the Bingaman amendment, and if the Bingaman amendment fails, on an amendment I will offer separately.

The secret to education is not such a secret. Successful education comes from teachers who know how to teach, students who want to learn, and parents who are involved in their child's education. When all three of these elements are present, education works and works well.

Evaluate this country—where it has been, where it is now, and where it is going—and ask yourself if we have accomplished things through our education system of which we are proud? You bet we have. We have spliced genes, we have invented plastic silicone and radar, built rockets, and developed vaccines to prevent polio and small pox. Have we done something significant, all of it coming from our education system? You bet your life we have. Can we improve it? Sure. But we will improve it with new ideas—not tired old ideas called block grants.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

AIDS AS A SECURITY ISSUE

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep disappointment in the failure of the conferees to the African Growth and Opportunity Act to accept the Feinstein-Feingold amendment regarding HIV/AIDS drugs in Africa. When the Senate was debating that legislation last year, Senator FEINSTEIN and I offered our amendment, which was accepted by the bill's managers, Senators ROTH and MOYNIHAN, to address a critically important issue—an issue relating to Africa's devastating AIDS crisis; an issue that has cast a dark shadow on U.S.-African relations in the past.

Our amendment was simple. It prohibited the United States Government