33 school districts in the Leon County School District would have received exactly the same grade as they did when student test scores were taken into account.

That says to me what we have been essentially testing in Florida is not what the school contributes, but the socioeconomic status of the children who come into that school.

Professor Tshinkel went on to say if, in fact, you did assess on value added, what the school had contributed, you had almost a reversal of results. Schools that got F's actually should have gotten A's because they did the most to advance the students for which they had responsibility, and the schools that got A's should have gotten F's because they started with a very advantaged group of students and did not make that great of a contribution to their educational advancement.

RRR provides accountability for what the schools can be held accountable for, what they can reasonably contribute to a student's development and hence a student's performance.

Another topic discussed at our Tampa roundtable was professional development. It was very helpful that most of those who participated were current classroom teachers. These teachers are yearning for new avenues for professional development, for the time to be able to take advantage of these opportunities. The RRR will allow this to happen with a major new national focus on seeing that all of our teachers—those who are entering the profession and those who are at an advanced position as professional educators—have an opportunity to continue their professional development and enhancement. We can only do this in a comprehensive manner.

We believe strongly these principles are a key to achieving the challenge that America faces to provide the knowledge necessary for all Americans to be able to compete effectively in this rapidly changing world in which we live.

If this line on the chart of the increased need for knowledge to be self-sufficient in the world as it exists today is a harbinger of where that line would go in the 21st century, the challenge for American education and the challenge for this Congress to be responsive to the Federal role in education is a stunningly great challenge that requires the most serious attention of the Senate.

I thank all of my colleagues who have contributed to this debate, who have worked to bring forward to the Senate a proposal I believe is worthy of our task. Every 6 years we have a chance to analyze the programs that affect American children, from kindergarten to the 12th grade. This should be an opportunity not just to tinker around the edges, not just to make minor course corrections, but to look at the challenge we face to assure all American children, particularly those who enter the classroom with the least advantages, will have an opportunity to be successful, and through their success to contribute to the success of America.

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 12:44 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. KYL].

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT—Continued

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3126

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 2:15 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will proceed to vote in relation to amendment No. 3126. The yeas and nays have not been ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3126. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. ROTH), and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. THOMPSON) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 94 Leg.]

YEAS—97

Abraham	Enzi	Lugar
Akaka	Feingold	Mack
Allard	Feinstein	McCain
Ashcroft	Fitzgerald	McConnell
Baucus	Frist	Mikulski
Bayh	Gorton	Moynihan
Bennett	Graham	Murkowski
Biden	Gramm	Murray
Bingaman	Grams	Nickles
Bond	Grassley	Reed
Boxer	Gregg	Reid
Breaux	Harkin	Robb
Brownback	Hatch	Roberts
Bryan	Helms	Rockefeller
Bunning	Hollings	Santorum
Burns	Hutchinson	Sarbanes
Byrd	Hutchison	Schumer
Campbell	Inhofe	Sessions
Chafee, L.	Inouye	Shelby
Cleland	Jeffords	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Johnson	Smith (OR)
Collins	Kennedy	Snowe
Conrad	Kerrey	Specter
Coverdell	Kerry	Stevens
Craig	Kohl	Thomas
Crapo	Kyl	Thurmond
Daschle	Landrieu	Torricelli
DeWine	Lautenberg	Voinovich
Dodd	Leahy	Warner
Domenici	Levin	Wellstone
Dorgan	Lieberman	Wyden
Durbin	Lincoln	
Edwards	Lott	

NOT VOTING—3

Hagel	Roth	Thompson

The amendment (No. 3126) was agreed to.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. BREAUX. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3127

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I believe we have an agreement on the time on our side. Am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Two and a half hours on the Lieberman amendment equally divided.

Mr. KENNEDY. I think we had an understanding with our colleagues that the distinguished Senator from Arkansas was going to be recognized to speak at this time for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Thank you, Mr. President. I also would like to thank all of my colleagues who have worked so diligently on these issues, and particularly Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator BAYH who I have been working alongside on the proposal that is before us right now. I also would like to compliment Senator KENNEDY's staff for all the work they have put in, as well as the wonderful bipartisan spirit that has been shown by Senators GREGG, COLLINS, GORTON, and HUTCHINSON in trying to bring about this issue of great importance on behalf of our Nation and on behalf of our children.

I am proud to join my colleagues on the floor today to talk about a bold, new education plan that we hope will provide a way out of the current stalemate over reauthorizing ESEA. I must admit that I am disappointed because so far we have turned one of the most important issues we will debate this year into yet another partisan standoff.

I can't tell you how frustrated I am that we face the real possibility that our children will be forced once again to the back of the bus while partisan politics drive the legislative process off a cliff.

I would like to focus on a comment that was made by one of my colleagues earlier in this debate. Senator LANDRIEU mentioned that we had one chance at reaching each of these individual children in our Nation who are the greatest blessings in this world.

Each year we fall behind in making the revolutionary changes to move our educational system to where it needs to be in order to provide our children with the source of education they need in order to meet the challenges of the coming century. Each year that we fail to do that—if that happens this year—is one year in a child's life that we cannot replace; one year in a child's life that cannot be reproduced or given back to them in terms of what they need to know to be competitive.

If I have learned one thing since my first campaign for Congress in 1992, it

is that when voters send you to Washington to represent them they mean business. They expect leadership and they want results, and rightly so because they deserve it.

As parents, we certainly all understand one of the things that we will fight the hardest for, and that is benefits for our children.

The American people want us to get serious about educating our children in new and innovative ways that will allow them to learn and meet the challenges of the future.

I firmly believe we have a responsibility to pass a reauthorization bill this year that will improve public education for all children. That means working together until we reach an agreement a majority on both sides can support. Waiting to see what happens in the next election should not be an option.

Last week, I supported one alternative to S. 2 offered by Senator DASCHLE. It didn't contain everything I wanted, but after I and other Members expressed some initial concerns, we reached an agreement that reflected my key priorities on accountability, public school choice and teacher quality. Every Senator on this side of the aisle supported that proposal, but we didn't get one Republican vote.

At the same time, I don't know any Member on our side who is prepared to support the underlying bill that the President has indicated he will veto unless substantial changes are made. So it is clear that both sides have to give some ground in this debate if we have any chance of crafting a compromise proposal that the President will sign into law.

The Three R's amendment we proposed today helps bridge the gap on both sides of the debate over the role of the federal government in public education. Our bill synthesizes the best ideas of both parties, I believe, into a whole new approach to national education policy.

It contains three crucial elements to improve public education—tough accountability standards to ensure students are learning core academic subjects, a significant increase in federal resources to help schools meet new performance goals, and more flexibility at the local level to allow school districts to meet their most pressing needs.

Essentially, under our proposal, the federal government would concentrate less on rules and requirements and focus instead, on what I know every Member of this body can and will support—higher academic achievement for every student.

In addition to being smart national policy, the Three R's proposal would dramatically improve education in my home state of Arkansas.

As I noted earlier, the RRR bill significantly increases the Federal investment in our public schools and carefully targets those additional dollars where they are needed the most. We, as a moderate group, find ourselves in an unusual position of trying to change the law to actually enforce the original intent of that law—title I funds actually being targeted to the schools and to the students who need those resources the most. There is no doubt that we can only be as strong as our weakest link. That is why it is essential that in those poor school districts we make sure title I dollars actually get to where they were intended to go.

Statistics consistently demonstrate that, on average, children who attend low-income schools lag behind students from more affluent neighborhoods.

This is certainly true in Arkansas where the most recent test results indicate that students in the economically prosperous northwest region of the state outperform students in the impoverished Delta. These results also indicate that the disparity in student achievement between minority and non-minority students in Arkansas continues. It proves that in the past several decades we have not been eliminating the gap and disparity between haves and have nots.

I believe strongly that every child deserves a high-quality education and that the federal government has a right to expect more from our nation's schools. But we also have a responsibility to give public schools the resources they need to be successful.

The ''Three R's'' acronym can also apply to our efforts to improve teacher quality. In fact, this plan can best be summed up by Four R's: recruiting, retention, resources, and above all, respecting our teachers.

The difficulty schools experience today in recruiting and retaining quality teachers is one of the most enormous obstacles facing our education system.

In my State of Arkansas, somewhere around 30 percent or more of our teachers are under the age of 40. We are going to hit a brick wall eventually as our teachers begin to retire with no more younger teachers in our school systems.

If we do not provide the funds in order to make sure that teacher improvement and quality and retention are there, we will not have the teachers. We cannot expect students to be successful if they don't work with quality teachers. We can't expect quality teachers to stay in the profession if they don't get adequate training, resources, or respect.

In our bill, we include a 100-percent increase in funding for professional development for teachers. I think that is absolutely essential in supporting our educators for them to be able to provide for our students. That is why I believe we in Congress must do our best to help schools meet the challenges we are setting forth today.

Most experts agree teacher quality is as important as any other factor in raising student achievement. The amendment we are debating would consolidate several teacher training initiatives into a single formula grant program for improving the quality of public school teachers, principals, and administrators. This proposal would increase professional development funding by more than 100 percent, to $1.6 billion annually, and target that funding to the neediest school districts. In my home State of Arkansas, this will mean an additional $12 million for teacher quality initiatives. In my book, that is putting your money where your mouth is.

In addition, the RRR would give State and school districts more flexibility to design effective teacher recruitment and professional development initiatives to meet their specific needs. No two school districts are alike, and there is no one size fits all for the school districts of this country.

One overreaching goal we propose today is to require all teachers be fully qualified by 2005. Even the best teachers cannot teach what they don't know or haven't learned themselves. To be successful, we must work harder to reduce out-of-field teaching and require educators to pass rigorous, State-developed content assessments in the subject they teach, not a Federal test but those that are designed by the State.

I have the highest respect for the teachers, principals, and superintendents who dedicate their talent and skills every day to prepare our children for tomorrow. I think they have some of the hardest and most important jobs in the world. Our Nation's future, in large part, depends on the work they do. We should be reinforcing them. Our teacher quality proposal is an example of how, by combining the concept of increased funding, targeting flexibility, and accountability, we can join with States and local educators to give our children a high-quality education.

There is much more to say today about this approach of the amendment of Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator BAYH that Members such as myself have sponsored. I know there are others who want to speak.

Before I close, I truly think this is the question we must ask ourselves: What, honestly, is the best thing for our children in this country? I say to my colleagues, if you want accountability from local schools, our proposal has it. If you want more targeted, effective national investment, take a look at the amendment that was produced by Senator LIEBERMAN. Do we want more qualified, better trained teachers, investing in their professional development, with flexibility at the local level? Do you want higher minority student retention rates, which should be the objective of all Members? We have those answers in this amendment and in our bill.

We have one chance at producing something on behalf of our most treasured blessing in all this world, our children. Please, colleagues, let's don't lose that chance. Let's not disappoint our children in this country and, more importantly, the future of this country. Let's put party politics aside. I think

the RRR in the LIEBERMAN-BAYH proposal is the right approach to improve student achievement in every classroom.

I thank my colleagues for their involvement in this amendment and certainly in this debate. More importantly, I encourage all Members to remember what it is we are here to do and who, more importantly, we are here to do it on behalf of, our children.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself a moment.

I commend my friend from Arkansas. The Senator from Arkansas has a varied and wide agenda of public policy issues. I think all Members in the Senate know the issue of teacher quality and recruitment and also how to get quality teachers in rural areas and underserved areas. That has been an area of great specialization. Those who had the alternative have benefited from her knowledge, including Senator LIEBERMAN, as well from her energy in these particular needs and by the very sound judgment of her positive suggestions. I thank the Senator. She has placed the important aspect of education on her agenda and we have benefited from her interaction and her recommendations.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield 10 minutes to Senator BUNNING.

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask unanimous consent the principal author of the amendment be recognized for 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts.

I thank my friend and colleague from Arkansas, Senator LINCOLN, not only for a superb statement on behalf of this amendment but for the work the Senator has done as we developed the proposal, for the practical experience and common sense she brought, specifically for her genuine advocacy for children, particularly rural poor children.

I thank the Senator for that and for her excellent statement.

I ask that Senator FEINSTEIN of California be added as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, this brings to double figures the cosponsors. We now have 10 cosponsors. We are proud to have the Senator from California with us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, we have been debating the future of the Federal role in education. Specifically, we are looking at who will take the lead role in educating our children. Will it be the Federal bureaucrats in Washington, DC, or will it be the teachers and parents who are closer to the children and understand their needs better?

Last week, President Clinton went on an education tour that I think can answer those questions. His tour took him to four cities: Davenport, IA; St. Paul, MN; Columbus, OH; and Owensboro, in my home State of Kentucky.

That is, we think the President visited Owensboro. I am one Kentuckian who is not sure the President ever made it there. The President's web site has something of a travelogue on his trip, the supposed trip the President made, that says President Clinton's school reform tour started in Owensboro, KY. Look closer and one will notice something is wrong. Apparently, Owensboro is not in Kentucky anymore. In fact, it looks like Kentucky isn't Kentucky anymore; it has moved to Tennessee. I find this terribly interesting.

We Kentuckians have nothing against Tennessee except, of course, when the Wildcats are playing the Volunteers. We like Owensboro in Kentucky, right where it is.

While he was in Owensboro, if that is where he really was, the President spoke about his Federal programs that require States to spend Federal money on Washington's priorities. The President thinks this is a good approach. When I look at the President's map that approach troubles me, and it is not just because the White House cannot tell Kentucky from Tennessee. If you will notice, western Kentucky is no longer there; it has been annexed by Illinois: No more Paducah, no more Mayfield, no more Murray.

I have some good news for my friends down there, and I have some good friends down there who have sent me word that they want to stay in Kentucky. I wonder if they know this administration sold them off to Illinois. The truth is, some of us do not know where President Clinton was for sure. We know we have newspaper stories and video clips which report that he was seen in Owensboro plain as day.

But, on the other hand, we have the Federal Government, the source of all wisdom, which the President would have us entrust with the education of our children, telling us the President and the entire city of Owensboro, KY, is actually in Tennessee.

I trust the teachers and the parents in Owensboro, KY, with the education of their children. They know what is what.

When presented with a choice between handing over control of their children's education to the Federal bureaucracy in Washington, DC, or letting those decisions be made by someone who personally knows the names of those children, I trust they will make the right choice.

Mr. KENNEDY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BUNNING. I will, after I have finished.

This administration says they care for the children in Owensboro, KY, but they do not even know their names. Parents and teachers know their names and the needs of their children and students. I trust them. As the Senate continues this debate on this education bill, I urge my colleagues to support education policies that truly return power to the people and away from the Federal bureaucracy.

Of course, it is very obvious there is one new Federal program needed, a program that is desperately needed—a geography class for this White House—because, quite literally, this administration cannot quite find Owensboro, KY, on the map.

Now I will be glad to yield to the Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague. I will take 2 minutes. I thank the Senator for yielding.

I had the pleasure of talking with the President of the United States on Wednesday evening after he came back from his trip. He told me about the school in Owensboro. I want to just give the assurance to the Senate that he told me it is one of the schools with the highest number of children receiving nutrition programs, which defines the disadvantaged children. They have a superb literacy program. They had small class size. They had a great emphasis on teacher training. It moved from one of the lower level schools, in terms of academic achievement, up to one of the top ones in Kentucky.

Is that correct?

Mr. BUNNING. That is very accurate. It is also accurate, there are very many other schools, not only in Owensboro but down along the border at Williamsburg and throughout many counties in Kentucky that have improved their educational facilities.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on my time, I welcome that fact. I think it is worthwhile to take note about what has been happening in Owensboro and to try to share that kind of success story, which the President of the United States was extremely impressed with and quite willing to talk about. I have the notes back in my office about the percentage of progress that was made.

What he was talking about was well trained teachers, smaller class size, and support programs for children who are in need. Those are concepts we have tried to have in this program. I know we have some differences on that, but I wanted any reference to the President's trip to Owensboro also to relate the quality and very strong improvement in the education he witnessed down there. I think it is worthwhile taking note. We all ought to know what works and be encouraged by it.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. BUNNING. I would like to conclude by saying a former colleague of the Senator from Massachusetts is a little struck also, Senator Wendell Ford, because Owensboro happens to be his hometown. It is definitely in Kentucky.

I yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, if there are no supporters of the bill, I would like to yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. REED addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. I understood we would go back and forth.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I think I represent those in opposition. If the Senator is in support of the amendment, then I believe he is right.

Mr. REED. I would like to speak about the amendment, not necessarily in support but speak about the amendment.

Mr. KENNEDY. I will yield 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Tennessee.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. I want to object. I thought we might be going back and forth on this. If the Senator is on a particular schedule, I will ask the Senator from Rhode Island to withhold, but he indicated to me a preference.

Mr. FRIST. I will be glad to yield 5 minutes on the other side's time and be happy to follow that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, then, the Senator from Rhode Island is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I thank Senator FRIST, Senator KENNEDY, and Senator JEFFORDS.

I commend Senator LIEBERMAN and his colleagues for presenting a very thoughtful and principled alternative to discuss today. There are elements in this legislation which I support enthusiastically, and then there are other elements I do not accept and have great questions about. But the proposal of Senator LIEBERMAN along with colleagues underscores some critical points.

First of all, they underscore that the approach of S. 2—simply transferring money with very limited and ambiguous accountability provisions of the State—is not the way to reform accountability. Also, they recognized there is a legitimate State and local partnership that could be maintained and should be maintained, particularly in the context of title I.

They are also advocating a greater investment in education. That is something I know I agree with and I know many, if not all, of my colleagues on the Democratic side passionately agree with. Also, they advocate greater targeting of these funds into those low-income schools that need more assistance and, in fact, represent probably the best example why unconstrained State and local policy sometimes leads to bad outcomes.

If you look at the funding and the performance of schools in urban areas and low-income rural areas, you will see the combination of the property tax and local policies will lead to results, to outcomes we do not want. We at the Federal level have the opportunity and the resources to help a bit, at least, to change that outcome. Also, it recognizes the importance of class size reduction and school choice. All of these are very important.

In addition, it recognizes very strongly the notion and the need for accountability. Senator BINGAMAN has offered an amendment. He worked on this measure, not just in this Congress but in the preceding reauthorization. I joined him in that work as a Member of the other body. This provision is an important one. It is not part of the Lieberman proposal. I think it is something we should emphasize.

I do, though, disagree with the approach they are taking to consolidate certain programs because one of the issues with consolidation is that you tend to lose both the focal point and also we typically design specific targeted programs to do those things which States are unwilling to do or are not doing at the same level of resources which are necessary to accomplish a national purpose.

We can see examples throughout our policies. School libraries, I use, inevitably, to point out the fact that back in 1965 we did have direct Federal resources going to help collections of school libraries. In 1981 we rolled them into a consolidated block grant approach, and, frankly, if you spoke to school librarians, they would point out the status of their collections, which are very poor, with out-of-date books, and they would also say how difficult it is to get any real resources from the localities or States. Frankly, that is the type of acquisition they can always put off until next year and next year, and before you know it, it is 5 and 10 years and these books are out of date.

I believe, too, the proposal the Senator from Connecticut and his colleagues are advancing does not recognize some of the other challenges facing our schools. The fact is, we do need to help the States and localities, apparently, to fix crumbling schools. One of the things I hear repeatedly from the other side is the wisdom of State and local Governors about public education. If that is the case, why are there so many decrepit school buildings throughout our country? Why are there so many children going to schools to which we would be, frankly, embarrassed to send children? It is not because people are either ignorant or evil at these local levels. It is because when you have a limited tax base, when you have many other priorities, when most of the local budgets are consumed by personnel costs, it is awfully difficult without some outside help—i.e., Federal help—to do certain things. One of them, apparently, is to ensure that school buildings are maintained at a level where we would not be embarrassed to send children.

There are schools in Rhode Island that are over 100 years old. They are crumbling. They need help. Every time I go into these communities, I do not have local school committee people and mayors saying: Go away; take your terrible, terrible Federal rules and regulations away from us. I have them imploring me: Can you help us get some resources from the Federal Government to fix up our schools? That is the reality, not the rhetoric and mumbo jumbo about big education bureaucrats and everything else. There is potential in the Lieberman amendment. Unfortunately, this aspect of putting all these programs together defeats the purpose.

I have two other quick points.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I request 1 more minute.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield 1 minute.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont and the Senator from Tennessee for their graciousness.

I commend them particularly for bringing up the issue of increased resources and targeting. One of the ironies is, we who have been doing this over the last few years fought through the last reauthorization. Targeting of resources of title I programs is intensely divisive politically. Particularly Members of the other body do not want to see their allocation in title I funds decreased, even if they represent fairly affluent communities. It is one thing to talk about targeting, but it is something else to have the political will to engage in that. I tried it in 1994, along with others. We made moderate success. I would be happy to join the battle of targeting again, but I would be remiss if I did not point out the real challenges of getting a bill such as this through both Houses of the Congress.

Again, I thank the Senator from Tennessee for his graciousness, and I yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield the Senator from Tennessee 10 minutes.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the Lieberman amendment, although let me say right up front that there are several principles that are underscored in the amendment in which I believe wholeheartedly and that are reflected in the underlying bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The whole idea of being able to collapse programs into a manageable number and the emphasis on student achievement are two concepts which are very important as we look forward to how best to educate the current and future generations of children in areas in which we are failing.

I remain very concerned, though, with the specifics of the Lieberman amendment in terms of the formula, the impact it has on a number of districts in Tennessee. The focus on teachers, which I believe is appropriate, in terms of it being critical that we develop an opportunity for every child to be in a classroom with an excellent quality teacher is an important one, although maintaining this whole approach of 100,000 teachers and dictating that from above is something I simply cannot support.

We just voted on an amendment which I believe directs us in a much better, more optimistic, potentially more beneficial direction, and that is empowering teachers, attracting teachers, and recruiting teachers through the alternative certification process in that amendment. Careers to Classrooms is what it is called.

We have not had the opportunity to adequately explain the importance of this now-accepted amendment, but it is important to understand and for us to spend a few minutes on it because it does underscore the importance of having high-quality teachers, attracting teachers, keeping them in that position because of the demographics and the shift we are going to see in teachers and retiring teachers.

This careers-to-classrooms approach complements what is in the underlying bill, that part of the bill that applies to teachers and is called the Teacher Empowerment Act. I have worked carefully and closely with Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON from Texas in crafting this careers-to-classroom aspect of the bill.

As we look forward, it is important to understand the importance of that high-quality person, not just a person at the head of the classroom, but that high-quality teacher.

This aspect of the bill expands the national activities section of the underlying bill to allow additional funds for States that want, that wish, that choose to attract new people into the teaching profession through what is called an alternative certification process.

We have all heard about the impending teacher shortage. It is something that has been discussed on the floor. It is something that Americans today do understand. The Department of Education estimates we will need about 2.2 million new teachers over the next decade. That 2.2 million is necessary for two reasons: No. 1, because of enrollment increases and, No. 2, to offset the large number of teachers, the so-called baby boomer teachers, who will be retiring over the next several years.

It is interesting to note that the severe shortages tend to be in areas that are either the most urban or the most rural. Even more interesting is if you look at the alternative certification processes that have been in effect, for example, in New Jersey, where there has been such a program for 15 years, it is in those most urban areas and those most rural areas that the alternative certification process has had the most beneficial and the most powerful impact. The underlying focus in the bill, made stronger by this amendment, is that it is not only numbers of teachers but, indeed, it is the quality of those teachers we have in the classrooms.

This amendment, and now the bill, directs resources to strengthen and improve teacher quality. There is a professor at the University of Tennessee whose name is William Sanders. He pioneered this concept of a value-added system of measuring the effectiveness of a teacher. His research clearly demonstrates that it is teacher quality more than any other variable that can be isolated, including class size, including demographics, that affects student achievement. He says the following:

> When kids have ineffective teachers, they never recover.

At the University of Rochester, Eric Hanushek has said, and I begin the quotation:

> The difference between a good and a bad teacher can be a full level of achievement in a single year.

The research of the importance of the quality of the teacher goes on and on. Again, as the statistics have shown, we have 12th grade students in the United States ranking near the bottom of international comparisons in math and science; where today most companies that are looking for future employees dismiss the value of a high school diploma; where we know that high school graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed as college graduates.

The statistics go on and on. No longer can we afford as a society to have this increasingly illiterate population continue.

It comes back to having a good quality teacher in the classroom, and today too many teachers in America lack proper preparation in the subjects they teach. Tennessee, my State, actually does a pretty good job overall, I believe, because they say a teacher has to have at least a major or a minor in the subject they are going to teach. Therefore, when we have these gradings of States on how well they do, we always get an A in this category of having a major or a minor.

Even in Tennessee, 64 percent of teachers teaching physical science do not have a minor in the subject. Among history teachers, nearly 50 percent did not major or minor in history. Other States do much worse.

Mr. President, 56 percent of those teaching physics and chemistry, 53 percent of those teaching history, 33 percent of those teaching math do not have a major or minor in the field they teach. We know this content is critically important to the quality of that teacher.

In closing, let me again say what this amendment does. It seeks to position a State, if they so wish, to have as good an opportunity as possible to recruit teachers. It actually helps States to recruit students and professionals into the teaching profession if they have not been in the teaching profession—both top-quality students who have majored in academic subjects as well as midcareer professionals who have special expertise in core subject areas. We want teachers teaching math to have majored or have an understanding of the content of math. We want teachers teaching science who have majored in and truly love science. It makes for a better teacher.

What this amendment does is help draw students and professionals into teaching, attracting a new group, a new pool of people into the field of teaching, different kinds of people, all through this alternative certification process.

We all know it is hard today, among our graduates, to attract the very best into teaching, given the barriers that are there, given the traditional certification process. Through this amendment Senator HUTCHISON and I have drafted, we provide resources to States that wish to offer these alternative certification programs to help them establish such new programs to recruit students, professionals, and others, into the teaching profession.

I am very excited that this amendment has strengthened the underlying bill. These alternative certification stipends will help provide a seamless transition for students and professionals who make that change, that movement from school or careers, and embark upon a new career in teaching.

Shortly, this afternoon, Senator HUTCHISON will come down and elaborate on this particular program. Again, I am very proud to be a part of helping this new generation of teachers and future teachers address the problems we all know exist in our education system today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, if we go into a quorum call, is the time equally divided?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It would take unanimous consent to equally divide it. Is the Senator requesting unanimous consent?

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield myself 5 minutes under the time allotted to the manager of the bill on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I am going to be opposing the amendment offered by my colleague, Senator LIEBERMAN. He, I know, has thought a great deal about education issues. I admire his commitment to education. But we come at this from slightly different perspectives.

I want to speak not so much about the amendment that is before us but a bit more about the underlying issue that brings us to this intersection of the debate on this bill.

We know that in this country the education system needs some repair

and adjustment. I happen to think many schools in this country perform very well. As I have said before on the floor of this Senate, I go into a lot of classrooms, as do many of my colleagues. I challenge anyone to go into these classrooms and come out of that classroom and say: Gee, that was not a good teacher. I have deep respect and high regard for most of the teachers I have had the opportunity to watch in the classrooms in this country.

But there is almost a boast here in the Senate by some that we do not want to have any national aspirations or goals for our education system. I do not know why people do that. Our elementary and secondary education system is run by local school boards and the State legislatures. That is as it should be.

No one is proposing that we transfer control of school systems to the federal government. But we are saying that, as a country, as taxpayers, as parents, as a nation, we ought to have some basic goals of what we expect to get out of these schools. Yet there are people who almost brag that we have no aspirations at all as a country with respect to our education system.

I would like to aspire to certain goals of achievement by our schools and by our kids across this country, so I am going to later offer an amendment, part of which is embodied in the Bingaman amendment, dealing with accountability, saying that every parent, every taxpayer ought to get a report card on their local school. We get report cards on students, but we ought to get a report card on how our schools are doing. It is one thing to tell the parents the child is failing. We certainly ought to know that as parents. But what if the school is failing? Let's have a report card on schools, so parents, taxpayers, and people in every State around this country can understand how their school is doing compared to other schools, compared to other States.

The issue of block granting, with all due respect, I think is ''block headed.'' Block granting is a way of deciding: Let's spend the money, but let's not choose. We know there are needs, for example, for school modernization.

I heard a speaker the other day at an issues retreat I attended who made an appropriate point that I know has been made here before. Not many years ago, we had a debate in the Senate about prisons and jails. Some of the same folks who stand up in this Chamber and say, we cannot commit any Federal money to improve America's schools, were saying, we want to commit Federal money to help State and local governments improve their jails.

Why is it the Federal Government's responsibility to help improve jails and prisons for local government, but when it comes to improving schools, we say that is not our responsibility? I do not understand that. Jails and prisons take priority over schools? I do not think so. It seems to me there is a contradiction here.

All of us have been to school districts all over this country. We have seen young children walk into classrooms we know are in desperate need of remodeling and repair. Some of them are 40, 50, 60, 80 years old. I was in one the other day that was 90 years old. The school is in desperate disrepair, and the school district has no money with which to repair it. What are we going to do about that?

Are we going to say those kids don't matter? Are we going to say that we are going to commit Federal dollars to education, but we don't want to know where those dollars are going? Are we going to say we don't want to direct funding to deal with the issues we know are important, such as school renovation and repair or decreasing class size by adding more teachers? Are we going to say we don't want to reach some sort of national goals because we are worried someone will mistake that for Federal control of local schools?

Hear it from me. I do not think we ought to try to have Federal control of local schools. The school boards and State legislatures do just fine, thank you; but there are areas where we can help, and school modernization is one of them. We were perfectly willing to jump in and renovate prisons and jails for State and local governments, but now it comes to schools and we say, no, that is not our job. It is our job.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 5 minutes have expired.

Mr. DORGAN. Schools are certainly more important than prisons and jails when it comes to the subject of renovation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 5 minutes. We are awaiting Senators either on that side or on this side. I will withhold when they arrive. I yield myself 5 minutes.

I have heard the Senator from North Dakota speak to this issue about the General Accounting Office report that estimates we have about $110 billion worth of modernization or rehabilitation of schools. Is the Senator familiar with that report?

Mr. DORGAN. I sure am. The GAO reported about the disrepair of schools, on Indian reservations, in inner cities, all across the country. You go to poor school districts that don't have a large tax base, and you find that we are sending kids into classrooms in poor shape. We can do better than that. The GAO documents that very carefully in study after study. We must, as a nation, begin to make investments in our schools.

Mr. KENNEDY. Would the Senator not agree with me that we tell children every single day that education is important, a high priority, the future of our country depends upon it, your future is essential to the meaning of this country and what this country is going to be throughout the world? What kind of message does the Senator think a child gets who goes to a school that has windows open in the wintertime, an insufficient heating system, or a dilapidated electrical system so they can't plug in computers? What kind of subtle message does the Senator think that sends to the child where, on the one hand, we say it is important to get a good education, but on the other hand the child goes to a crumbling school, whether it is in the urban or rural areas, or Indian reservations?

Mr. DORGAN. The message is pretty clear. We talk about education, but then if the schools are in disrepair and adults do not seem to care about it, students feel that education and they themselves do not matter. I toured a school about a week ago with 150 kids. It had two bathrooms and one water fountain. It was in terrible disrepair.

The teacher said, ''Children, is there anything you would like to ask Senator Dorgan?'' One of the little kids who was in about the third grade raised his hand and said, ''Yes. How many bathrooms does the White House have?'' Do you know why he asked that? I think it was because that is an issue in their school. They have long lines to wait to go to the bathroom—150 kids and two bathrooms. Why is that the case? Because these kids are sent to an old school. The school district has no tax base. When we send them through the classroom door, we cannot, as Americans, be proud of that school. We must do better than that.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator for his comments. I agree with them 100 percent. We will have an opportunity to consider this in amendment form. Senator HARKIN intends to address this issue in an amendment later in this debate—hopefully soon, if we can move along on some of our votes.

Again, as the good Senator has mentioned, what we are trying to do is target scarce resources on problems that we know exist, and with scarce resources we can make a difference that is going to enhance academic achievement. I thank the Senator and I yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Texas.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the pending Lieberman amendment. Senator LIEBERMAN is a friend of mine, and I know he has spent a lot of time with many colleagues trying to put together a substitute that could have bipartisan agreement. I think the Senator's amendment does make some good attempts, but there are concerns that will also force me to vote against his amendment.

I think the amendment is overly prescriptive. The reason I feel so strongly about this is that the amendment we just passed—Senator LOTT's amendment—which included my and Senator FRIST's careers-to-classroom provision—the whole purpose of that is to give more flexibility. I think what we are doing is drawing the bright red line

between the philosophy of what the Democrats are hoping to do and what the Republicans are hoping to do. The Republicans are trying to withdraw a lot of the redtape that we hear complained about by teachers everywhere we go in our States. When I go to a town hall meeting, in an urban or rural area, they complain about the redtape and the regulations that keep them from being able to do the job they want to do, which is to teach children in the classroom.

I think Senator LIEBERMAN's amendment fails to provide the flexibility and the accountability for our States and public schools, which really is the hallmark of the bill that is before us today. I am concerned about the revised formula for title I. I am concerned because title I will take millions of dollars from many of the rural and other schools in Texas and across America.

While I certainly understand the goal of providing money for low-income schools, I don't think it should come at the expense of our Nation's rural schools. They also have a great need, and oftentimes they lack the resources to give the quality education they need and want for their children.

I am also concerned about the provision in the Lieberman substitute that effectively requires certification for teachers' aides and other paraprofessionals. I think this is something best left to the States and the local districts. In fact, to go back to the amendment we just passed, Senator FRIST and I have been working, along with Senator GRAHAM from Florida, on a different concept that goes away from the overcertification issue and says we want professionals in the classroom, and we want to encourage school districts to put professionals in the classroom, even if they didn't major in education in college.

Now, I have to take a step back and say that I am very proud that my alma mater, the University of Texas, is actually beginning to do some testing on education degrees to see if we can focus more on the area of expertise that is going to be taught in the classroom and less on the ''how to make lesson plans'' part of the education degree. So far the tests have been very positive of the students who have gone more in the area of expertise for which they are going to be the teachers and less into the ''how to be a teacher''—not that you do away with that because it is important; but you lessen the focus on that and go more for the actual expertise that is going to be transferred to the children in the classroom. That is the exact concept of the careers-to-classroom amendment, which is cosponsored by Senator FRIST and myself.

It is very similar to what Senator BOB GRAHAM and I had worked on as well. Basically, it says to the midlevel professional who may be looking for a career change or who may be retiring because they have done well in their field, we want you to come into the classroom and give the benefit of our knowledge and expertise to children who are in schools that have teacher shortages or are in rural areas.

Here is an example. A friend of mine majored in French in college and taught French in private schools. She moved to a small school district in Greenville, TX. They wanted to offer French in Greenville High School. She wanted to teach it, but she didn't have a teacher certification. So she was not able to be put into the classroom in Greenville High School, and the students in that high school were deprived of that option because she was not certified.

Now, what she did—because she wanted to do this so much—she commuted 30 miles to the nearest teacher college and she eventually got her certification; but it took her several years because she was also raising children. During that period, those children who wanted to take French could not have that option at Greenville High School.

I think that is wrong. I don't want her to have to jump through that many hoops in order to give a great opportunity to that school district that they otherwise would not have. So our careers-to-classroom provision takes rural schools and schools that have teacher shortages and matches them with people who have professional expertise—especially in the fields of math, science, and languages. We can enhance education to a greater degree if we have qualified teachers.

We give encouragement. We give authorization for funding for school districts that will give alternative certification, which is expedited certification to these teachers who want to go into the classroom and help enrich the experience that our children will have all over our country.

We hear a lot on the Senate floor about the need to hire more teachers and reduce class size. There is a growing problem in America.

It has been estimated by the National Council on Education Statistics that the United States will need an additional 2 million teachers in public schools over the next decade. During the 1970s and 1980s, the American school age population grew at a relatively slow rate. But increased immigration and the new baby boomers have turned these numbers around. In 1997, a record 52.2 million students entered our Nation's public schools. Between 1998 and 2008, the population of secondary schools is going to increase an additional 11 percent. This is most pressing in our inner cities and rural communities.

We are trying to address these concerns by giving more flexibility and taking away some of these disincentives to get good professionals into the classrooms. I think our amendment, which has been agreed to by the Senate, is a better concept than the Lieberman approach, or Senator KENNEDY's approach, which I think have the effect of putting more restrictions and more redtape in the system.

I think we have tried the other way. While I believe Senator KENNEDY and Senator LIEBERMAN are very sincere in wanting better public education, I think we diverge on how we get there. I think we have tried the ''everything emanates from Washington'' approach to get Federal funding. I think now we ought to try something new. Let's try giving States flexibility by putting the money into the classroom where it does the most good rather than building up the Federal bureaucracy that has the effect of retarding the ability to be creative. Let's have the capability to put more teachers in to fill the teacher shortage with qualified teachers as well.

I want to end by saying that I believe in public education. I am a total product of public education. I know that is what makes America different from other countries in the world because we don't say to certain people: you will get a good education but other people in society will not have the same opportunity.

We have said in America that we want every child to reach his or her full potential with a public education. We want every child to have a choice. Many children choose private education. I support that, too. But it is our responsibility to have public education for children who cannot afford a private education or who do not want that kind of experience to be able to succeed and be the best with that public education.

The underlying bill and the Lott-Gregg-Hutchison-Frist amendment gives the tools to our country to create the public education system of excellence that is required to keep America a meritocracy and not an aristocracy.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume from the amendment. I thank the Chair. I thank my friend and colleague from Texas for her thoughtful statement. I would like to respond to it.

It is interesting in this debate how common the usage of terms is on both sides. You have to really get down into the details.

The Senator from Texas talked about her support of flexibility for school systems at the local level. That is a centerpiece of the amendment that is now before the Senate, which is to consolidate a whole series of current Federal categorical grant education programs and give the local school systems some flexibility in the use of that money. But I think the difference between our proposal, the proposal before the Senate now, and the underlying bill is the difference between flexibility with purpose and essentially a blank check.

In our proposal, we have taken a series of categorical grant programs and put them together into four broad titles. We call them performance-based

partnership grants—not block grants. As I understand block grants, they are basically pooling money and sending it back to the States and localities to be spent for education as they would wish.

As others have pointed out before, and Senator KENNEDY particularly, at the outset of the ESEA program, the Federal Government essentially gave block grants to the communities and States. It was found that the money was being spent for what most in Congress at that time did not think were priority educational goals. They were not being spent for the focused purpose of the ESEA, which was to help disadvantaged children. Block grants don't target the disadvantaged children, and they don't have enough accountability for results that are ongoing. There is no guidance from the Federal Government. I think this is a broad category of how the money should be spent. This is the difference between the underlying bill and the amendment before us now.

Yes, we believe that Washington doesn't have all the answers. Yes, we think that some of the current categorical grant programs are too focused with too much micromanagement. So we fold them together. But we feel very strongly that if we in Congress and the Federal Government are authorizing and appropriating literally billions of dollars to be spent by the States and localities on education, it is not just our right but our responsibility to set overall standards, categories, and goals for how that money should be spent.

When we say we create performance-based partnership grants, that is what we mean. They are partnerships between the Federal, State, and local governments to achieve national educational goals.

I will get to that in a minute.

They are performance-based because there is an annual measurement of how students are doing. That is what this is all about. Is adequate yearly progress being made on these various proposals? If not, we ought to rush in with some extra help. If it continues to not be made, then we ought to impose some sanctions.

We have taken these four titles and asked that the localities spend in areas that we think enjoy broad support in the Nation as priority educational areas.

First and foremost, I think we granted title I for disadvantaged children. But of the other four, first and foremost, here is more money than the Federal Government has ever sent to the States and localities before for the purpose of improving teacher quality.

Second, here again, it is more money than the Federal Government has ever sent back before for the purpose of improving programs in limited-English proficiency, commonly known as bilingual education. It is a critical need. Too many children for whom English is not the first language are not getting the education they should get.

Third, public school choice—a great concept that is being adopted at the local level; again, a new funding stream to create new charter schools and to create new experiments in public school choice. Let parents and children have some choice within the public school setting by creating competition and forces that will improve the overall quality of education.

Finally, a broad category of what might be called public school innovation, including afterschool programs, summer school programs. Whatever the localities may decide is an innovative idea, we want them to be able to test.

There is a big difference between sending a blank check from Washington back to the States and localities, saying here is a substantially increased check but we are asking that localities spend it in one of these four priority areas and we are going to hold localities accountable every year for the results of that spending.

Ultimately, that is what matters. It is interesting and not unimportant to talk about performance-based partnership grants, but ultimately it is important to consolidate categorical grants. What is most important is, What is the result? Are our children being better educated? If not, we in Washington will set up a system that does not accept failure, that does not allow the Federal Government to sit back and accept failure, but pushes into the debate and the action to encourage success for our children.

The second broad point of response is on the question of teacher quality. As we all know, we have a rising need for new teachers—2 million over the next decade. We also want to make sure those teachers are the most able. There are a lot of ways to do this. In my State of Connecticut, the legislature adopted a program a decade or more ago that has worked. It begins with the State of Connecticut setting standards for paying teachers more money. It is true we get what we pay for. There are a certain number of people who have devoted themselves to teaching, regardless of salary, because they had a sense of mission. It is what gave them satisfaction. In an increasingly competitive economy, one of the ways we make it easier to attract the best people to teach is by paying more money.

The second is to create opportunities in midcareer for people to come into teaching. I point out to my friend from Texas, title II of our proposal on teacher quality specifically urges the States to open up alternative paths for people. In our proposal, title II encourages the localities to do exactly what Senator HUTCHISON advocates, which is to create alternative paths to teacher certification for people in midcareers so we can get the best people to better educate our children.

We think this is a balanced proposal. We ask our colleagues to consider it and hopefully support it as we come close to the time for voting.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield the Senator from Washington 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I am delighted to be on the floor in the presence of my friend, the Senator from Connecticut, the primary sponsor of this proposal. For well over a year, the Senator has shared his thoughtful ideas with me and with other Members on this side of the aisle.

While this is certainly not my proposal—it is not Straight A's by any stretch of the imagination—it does represent, in the view of this Senator, a genuine and thoughtful approach to the proposition that we haven't been doing everything right for the last 10, 20, 30, 35 years and that there is a newer and better way to provide education services to our children directed at seeing they get a better education and their achievement improves.

The proposal the Senator from Connecticut has before the Senate is a thoughtful and imaginative approach to our innovation in education. There have been a number of comments during the course of the day and earlier that the Senator from Connecticut and some of his friends and allies have been working with this Senator and others to see if we could marry most or many of the propositions contained in the current amendment—relating to Straight A's, to the Teacher Empowerment Act, and to portability —in a way that would reach across the aisle not with a half a dozen Members on each side of the aisle supporting the proposition but perhaps with a majority of the Members of the Senate.

While I can't say I am a supporter of the proposition exactly as it appears before the Senate, it does offer very real possibilities not only for a constructive debate on education policy but for a constructive resolution to the better education that every Member in this body, whatever his or her philosophy, seeks. I hope there may this afternoon even be a symbol of the fact we are beginning to work together.

I must say, there are clear differences even in negotiations over a middle ground. It is certainly possible they will not be surmountable. This Senator, however, hopes they will be. I think the Senator from Connecticut does. At the same time, there may be Members who do not desire a partnership that has involved matters other than this from time to time in a way that has upset certain Members of this body.

I thank the Senator from Connecticut for his thoughtful and sincere efforts and express the hope publicly that they may lead to something which will unite, rather than divide, members of both parties.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank my good friend and colleague from the State of Washington for his gracious words and for the discussions we have been having for almost 2 years about this particular reauthorization,

in which I have learned a lot. I appreciate his openmindedness.

These discussions continue more broadly now. As he said, there are gaps remaining, but it has been a very good faith and worthwhile process. I look forward to continuing it with him and others in the days ahead toward the aim, which we hope is not going to elude us, of having a bipartisan reauthorization of ESEA.

I am grateful that the Senator from Virginia has come to the floor to speak on behalf of the amendment that is before the Senate. Senator ROBB is a cosponsor. He has been very active in our discussions of this proposal and, as always, he brings to these discussions the clear-headed vision based on experience— in this case, not only his experience as the Senator but valuable experience as the Governor of Virginia.

I yield whatever time Senator ROBB needs to discuss this proposal.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, so Members will know what is happening here, the minority and majority have agreed there will be a vote at 4:50, and on our side, the Senator from Virginia would have 20 minutes, Senator EDWARDS would have 10 minutes, Senator KENNEDY 5 minutes, and the majority would have 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, we may not have any more important debate this session than the one we are having now on the reauthorization of the major piece of federal legislation affecting K–12 education, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I was pleased to support the Democratic alternative last Thursday because it contained many of my highest priorities for education. It continues our commitment to class size reduction, an initiative that will give our children more individualized attention with a qualified teacher. It provides substantially more money for professional development for teachers and administrators, so we can help build our teachers up, rather than tear them down. It contains more money for schools to make urgently needed safety-related repairs to their facilities, so our children are not in schools with leaky roofs or fire code violations. It contains increased investments in equipping our schools with modern technology, so our children can learn the language of the new economy—the information technology language. It contains increased funding for school safety initiatives, because we can't have good schools, unless we have safe schools. I am pleased that the New Democrats were able to work with our Democratic Caucus to significantly enhance and strengthen the accountability measures contained in the Democratic alternative. Although the amendment was defeated, I believe it contained a better approach, frankly, to the reauthorization of ESEA than that which has been offered by our distinguished colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

The Senate new Democrats under the leadership of the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, Senator LIEBERMAN, and the Senator from Indiana, Senator BAYH, and others, as has already been stated, have been working for many months on a proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in a way that will truly help our Nation's students and improve our Nation's schools. We have offered this proposal as an alternative to the way we think about the Federal role in K–12 education. The goal of this alternative approach is the principle reason why we should have an Elementary and Secondary Education Act at all: to improve student academic performance and readiness. Two critical factors on the federal level in achieving this goal are investment and real accountability.

In 1994, Congress took a monumental step toward encouraging standards-based reform across the states—a movement which really began in 1989 when President Bush convened a summit in Charlottesville, VA with our Nation's Governors to explore ways to improve our public education system. When we considered the Goals 2000 legislation in 1994, we reiterated the principle of that summit: that education is primarily a State and local responsibility, but it is also a national priority. We recognized that if the Federal Government is to be a meaningful partner in education reform, we must give greater flexibility to States in the use of their funds in order to foster innovation and to help States design their own standards-based reform plans.

During the floor consideration of Goals 2000, I voiced my support for Goals 2000 funding and said:

> [w]ith this new funding States can, if they choose, work to establish tough academic standards, create a system of assessments to put real accountability into our schools, and expand efforts to better train teachers and give them the tools they need to teach our kids.

As a result a result of Goals 2000, 48 States have now developed standards and many are in the process of aligning their curricula and assessments to those standards. But we need to help even more than we are now, because only about half of the States this year will meet their student performance goals. And what is more troubling is that there continues to be a startling achievement gap between low-income students and more affluent students.

Now that the vast majority of our States have standards in place, we need to help them meet those standards. Our Three R's amendment emphasizes the need to reinvest in our schools, to reinvent the way that we partner with States and localities, and to recognize that we, as a Nation, have a responsibility to ensure that our children are receiving the very best education that all levels of government can collectively provide. For the first time, this amendment attempts to hold States accountable not for filling out the right forms or for writing good grant proposals, but for actual increases in student achievement.

The Three R's approach ensures that States are held accountable for yearly improvement in student academic performance. States will set their own yearly targets for improvement. Our hope is that these performance goals will help all children become proficient in reading, mathematics, and science. States will be required to take dramatic corrective action in the event that school districts in their States chronically fail to make the grade. Failing schools can be shut down. They can be reconstituted with new administrations. They can be turned into charter schools. There are a variety of options available, but the point is simple: failing schools are failing our children, and our children deserve more. States that meet or exceed their performance targets will be rewarded with even more flexibility in the use of their funds.

But a demand for more accountability must be accompanied by increased investment—increased investment in our students, increased investment in our teachers, increased investment in our administrators, and increased investment in our schools themselves. This amendment calls for an unprecedented $35 billion increase in elementary and secondary education funding over the next 5 years. Currently, the Federal Government only spends $14.4 billion per year on K–12 education. To put that in some perspective, last year we spent $230 billion to pay interest on the national debt. The fact that we pay 15 times more money on debt that is akin to bad credit card debt, when we could be building schools, or training teachers, or hiring school safety officers, is shameful.

Our amendment would increase our current spending by $7.2 billion next year alone. Instead of pumping this money into more programs, our amendment distributes most of the new Federal funds to States based upon a formula, rather than to those States and localities who can afford to hire savvy grant writers. The distribution of funds is targeted to where the funds are needed most—to our neediest schools and students, that are so often left behind. The Three R's approach increases teacher quality funding to $1.6 billion, which is a $1 billion increase from our current spending. It substantially increases aid for economically disadvantaged students by 50 percent—from $8 billion to $12 billion. We continue our commitment to reducing class size by providing a guaranteed stream of funding for this important initiative which has so far provided States with enough funding to hire over 29,000 new teachers. And we get serious about helping Limited English Proficient students not only master English, but achieve high levels in core subjects as well. Our funding for LEP students is increased

from $380 million to $1 billion. Finally, we provide $2.7 billion to expand after-school and summer-school opportunities, to enhance school safety, to improve the technological capabilities of our students, teachers, and schools, and to fund innovative school improvement initiatives designed at the local level.

We need to invest in our teachers so they are the best in the world. We need to invest in our schools so they are safe and modern. We need to invest in our students so they will develop the skills they need to succeed. The Federal Government can provide these resources and we believe that it should. At the same time that we do this, we need to ensure that the Federal role in K–12 education is one that actually promotes improvement in academic achievement.

That is accountability with real meaning.

This amendment is also meant to provide a starting point for a bipartisan effort. Our education debate has a tendency to devolve into partisan battles with the extremes on both sides drawing hard and fast lines that either abandon public schools by promoting vouchers or continue the status quo by funding myriad small programs—programs which, however well intentioned, often dilute the effectiveness of the limited Federal dollars we have to spend on education. We have to get beyond these differences to better serve our children.

There is more to the education debate than just these priorities. Last month, the Senate new Democrats held a hearing about the RRR approach. The panelists were former Reagan Education Secretary William Bennett; former Chief Domestic Policy Advisor to President Clinton, William Galston; Seattle Superintendent Joseph Olchefske; Amy Wilkins, principal partner of the Education Trust, an organization dedicated to the education of disadvantaged children; and Robert Schwartz, president of Achieve, Incorporated, an organization formed by the Nation's Governors and corporate leaders to improve public education.

Despite the philosophical diversity among the panelists in many areas, all of the panelists agreed that focus on increased investment in exchange for real accountability was necessary and prudent.

Perhaps William Bennett summed it up best by saying:

> The Three R's has the potential to bring about a new era for the Federal Government and education, an era that actively emphasizes results over process and favors success over failure.

I believe our RRR amendment combines the principles upon which so many of us can and do agree. It is perhaps more aptly described as the ''III''—investment, innovation, and improvement. This really should be the model for the Federal role in elementary and secondary education in our country. I hope colleagues from both sides of the aisle will seriously consider this approach.

I yield the floor and reserve any time remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from North Carolina has 10 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I want to speak to three subjects today: first, to the subject of education in general; second, to some of the things we have done in North Carolina in the area of education of which we are very proud, particularly in our public schools; and, third, to talk specifically about the Lieberman-Bayh amendment.

First, the single test we should apply in determining what to do with our public school system is what is in the best interest of the kids—not what is in the best interest of either political party, not what is in the best interest for either candidate for the President of the United States, but what is in the best interest in improving the lives and education of our young people.

Anywhere one goes in North Carolina, if one were to ask folks what is the most important thing we do as a Government, they would tell you over and over: Educate our young people. If one were then to tell them the reality, which is that we spend less than 1 percent of the Federal budget on over 50 million school children in the United States, they would be absolutely flabbergasted. The single issue that the American people believe is the most important thing their Government does takes less than 1 percent of the Federal budget. They believe more needs to be done.

I believe strongly that our school systems should be run at the local level, that people at the State and local level know much better than people in Washington how our school systems should be run. That does not mean, however, there are not things we can do as the Federal Government to partner with State and local government officials in educating young people. That is what we need to be doing.

There is nothing in our Constitution that says we cannot devote more than 1 percent of the Federal budget to public education. We have to be willing to devote the resources to make education the priority it is for the American people, to put the resources into it, to put the effort into it, and to help State and local officials do the job they so desperately want to do.

I will say a word about some of the things we have done in North Carolina. We believe North Carolina is, in fact, the education State. For example, we started a program in early childhood development called Smart Start. The basic idea of Smart Start, which now exists in every county in North Carolina, was to get all kids into an early childhood development program and to get them on the right track so they later could be kept on the right track. Smart Start got them at a time when it had the most influence over them, which is before they reach the age of 6 or 7 and begin elementary school.

Smart Start has worked. It has had a dramatic effect in our State of North Carolina. Smart Start, most importantly, is an example of what happens when we are willing to think outside the box. We have to be willing to constantly examine whether what we are doing is working, whether there are new, innovative, more creative ways to educate our young people. Again, the test ought to always be the same: What is in the best interest of the kids? What is going to be most effective in giving our kids the best education we can possibly give them?

Smart Start is a perfect example of that. It is new. It was innovative when it came into play. It has worked. We have to be willing to continue to think about programs such as Smart Start.

The way we dealt with failing schools in North Carolina is another example. We went across the State and identified those schools that were failing; that is, they were not doing the job that needed to be done. Talk about accountability, this is accountability in its purest form. If a school was failing, we essentially replaced the administration of that school. In other words, we put people in charge of running the school for the purpose of turning it around.

The results have been absolutely phenomenal. Almost without exception, those schools have been turned around, the kids' grades have improved, and their performance has improved. Again, this is another example of being willing to think outside the box, to think creatively and innovatively.

Recently, I was in North Carolina meeting with some folks who were working on the cutting edge of public education. They showed an example of a computer program that can be used by kids in the early grades of elementary school.

They can take kids, particularly disadvantaged kids, and put them in front of a computer in an environment where they feel safe, where they do not have to perform in front of the other children so they do not feel as if they are a failure from the very beginning. It gets them engaged. The single most important thing with young kids is to get them engaged, to make them believe they have some control over their own destiny; that they can, in fact, compete; that they can effectively compete against all the kids; and, more important, it gives them self-esteem. It makes them feel as if they can actually do something about their lives.

This computer program had a phenomenal effect on the performance of disadvantaged kids. Once again, the test remains the same: What is in the best interest of the children? Are we willing to constantly challenge our approaches, how they can be better molded to fit the needs of the children? The computer program I just described does that; Smart Start does that; that is

what our mechanism for dealing with disadvantaged and failing schools did in North Carolina.

That brings me to the Lieberman amendment, which is just another example on the national level of being willing to address issues creatively, innovatively, and to think outside the box, to think about what is in the best interest of the kids and what is the most effective way of addressing the needs of kids.

I will freely admit there are some provisions in the Lieberman amendment which caused me some concern when I first saw them, but it does many positive, creative things. First and foremost for me is the willingness to invest in title I, to provide more resources and more funding and to target those funds to the kids who most need the help.

If my colleagues do what I have done over the course of the last 2½, 3 years and go to schools across my State of North Carolina, the one thing that becomes immediately apparent is our kids do not compete on a level playing field. That was the original idea behind title I: trying to create a level playing field so no matter where a kid went to school, no matter where they were enrolled in school, whether it was in the country in rural North Carolina or Charlotte, Raleigh, or Greensboro, they had an equal opportunity to achieve and equal opportunity to learn.

I have to give tremendous credit to Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator BAYH, and all the moderate Democrats who worked so hard on this amendment. What they have done is identified the kids who most need the help—the place where the achievement gap exists—and gone about thinking creatively how we can make these kids achieve, how we can give them the best possible chance to be able to perform because we have to be willing to do something.

We have consistently underfunded title I in the past. There has been a lot of rhetoric about our willingness and interest in helping disadvantaged kids. Now we get a chance to step up to the plate. That is exactly what Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator BAYH have done. They have said: We are willing to put our money where our mouth is. We are willing to put the resources in place that need to be there to help these kids, these disadvantaged kids, to give them a chance to compete.

That is all they ask for. That is what the computer program is about. That is what reducing class size is about. We have to give these children, who have not been achieving, who have not been responding to the traditional ways of educating young people, a chance to compete. We have to be willing to think outside the box. We have to be willing to say to ourselves that maybe we have been wrong in the past, maybe there are new and better ways to do this.

That is exactly what the Lieberman amendment is aimed at doing. That is the reason the Lieberman amendment is supported by the moderate Democrats. The Lieberman amendment is just another in a long line of examples—except in this case it is at the national level—of new and creative ways of addressing the needs of our young people.

As we go forward with this debate, and as we go forward with addressing the needs in educating our young people, we have to be willing to do what has been done in my home State of North Carolina, what has worked so well—programs such as Smart Start, programs dealing with failing schools, these computer programs that have been so effective, and now, in this case, on a national level, the Lieberman amendment.

We have to be willing to question ourselves. We have to be willing to put the money in place that is needed to educate our young people, which is more than 1 percent of the national budget, and that, ultimately, we are committed to making the first decade of this century the education decade, and that we are committed to making our schools the envy of the world. We have the best economy, the best roads, the best technology in the world; it is high time we be able to say to the world, our schools are the envy of the world.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. JEFFORDS. I yield the Senator from Arkansas 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I listened with great interest to my distinguished colleague from North Carolina. I applaud his willingness to look at new and innovative approaches. I think his embrace of the Lieberman amendment is reflective of that desire for change.

I note, as I listened to the Senator's comments, he spoke of the North Carolina experience and some of the things they have done in North Carolina—some of the innovative, creative, and constructive programs in North Carolina.

I applaud the State of North Carolina. And I think that makes our case for Straight A's. I think the idea of giving those kinds of States which are doing good and innovative things more flexibility in carrying out those programs is exactly the direction we ought to be moving.

I believe the Lieberman proposal moves us in that direction, that it is a constructive effort, that it has been a positive effort, that there has been, on the part of the moderate Democrats who have spoken on behalf of the Lieberman amendment, a recognition of the need for change. There has been a candid recognition of the failure of the top-down, one-size-fits-all approach that we have taken for 35 years to the Federal role in education.

I must say that I still have a number of concerns and reservations, and have opposition to some of the provisions in the Lieberman proposal. I still think there is too much regulatory effort from Washington. I think there is a failure to embrace the kind of bold steps we need that are in the underlying Educational Opportunities Act and that it would be a shame for us, while recognizing the need for change, recognizing the need for adequate funding, to only take a half step or a baby step in the direction of reform. That is why I believe the underlying bill is far preferable.

I am pleased, however, that there have been ongoing discussions among those who believe that we need change on both sides of the aisle, that we need to provide greater flexibility, that we need to consolidate programs, that we need to streamline programs, and that there has been an effort to accomplish that. But I am very concerned that we still centralize too much power in the name of accountability. We still give too much authority to the Department of Education.

Members have been talking about the importance of accountability all week and last week. If we are to have accountability for Federal education funds, we must first ensure that accountability is occurring not only at the local level but at the Federal level as well.

So when I heard Senator LIEBERMAN earlier say these are billions of American taxpayers' dollars that we are sending back to the States and to the schools; therefore, we have a right and a responsibility to require specifics on how that money is spent, that sounds very good, but I say that we should require the same kind of accountability from the Department of Education which oversees these programs that it administers.

For the second year in a row, the U.S. Department of Education has been unable to address its financial management problems. Those management problems are very serious. In its past two audits, the Department was unable to account for parts of its $32 billion program budget and the $175 billion owed in student loans. They were unable to account for parts of that budget. Before we entrust the Department with administering more funds and creating more new programs, we must ensure that they are properly accounting for the funding they already have.

The Lieberman amendment, though a step in the right direction, still leaves more power in the hands of the Federal Department of Education and provides a modicum of improvement for State flexibility that, in my opinion, is not enough.

The House Education Committee has been holding hearings on the financial problems at the Department of Education and has found instances of duplicate payments to grant winners and an $800 million college loan to a single student. That is rather amazing.

In its 1998 audit, the Department blamed its problems on a faulty new

accounting system that cost $5.1 million, in addition to the cost of manpower to try to fix the system. A new accounting system will be the third new accounting system in 5 years.

The most recent 1999 audit showed the following: The Department's financial stewardship remains in the bottom quartile of all major Federal agencies. If you stack them all up, you find the Department of Education down toward the bottom in the job they are doing in fiscal responsibility. The Department sent duplicate payments to 52 schools in 1999, at a cost of more than $6.5 million. And perhaps most significant, none of the material weaknesses cited in the 1998 audit were corrected when the Department was reaudited in 1999.

So they have failed to take the kind of corrective measures that might reestablish confidence and faith in the Department of Education. These problems make the Department vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse. I have submitted an amendment to this bill that would require an investigative study by the GAO into the financial records of the Department of Education.

No one is suggesting we should eliminate the Department. No one is suggesting that having a voice for education at the Cabinet table is not critically important. But it is equally important that we require high standards of fiscal responsibility for the Department that oversees billions of dollars in taxpayer money. We entrust them with funding. We expect local schools to handle their funds properly. We should have the same kind of demand on the Department of Education.

In addition, I have an amendment to provide increased flexibility among Federal formula grant programs for States and local school districts. It is identical to language included in legislation in the House to reauthorize ESEA.

One of my concerns about the Lieberman amendment, although I do believe it is a step in the right direction and will provide expanded flexibility, is that it does not provide the kind of flexibility the States and local school districts are crying out for.

This amendment would give States and local school districts the authority to transfer funds among selected ESEA programs to address local needs as they see fit. Covered programs would include professional development for teachers, education technology, safe and drug-free schools, title VI innovative education block grants, and the Emergency Immigrant Education Program.

In addition, States may transfer funds into, but not away from, title I funding for disadvantaged students. So they would have the ability to take funds from these other programs and move them into title I for the benefit of disadvantaged students, but not the other way around.

It would not be only money flowing into the title I but would provide greater flexibility for the local school district to move money between programs—transferability. States may transfer all of the program funds for which they have authority, except for the administrative funds. Local school districts may transfer up to 35 percent of the funds they receive without obtaining State permission, and all other funds under these programs, if their State approves.

So this would provide for all of those States that are not fortunate enough to be included in the Straight A's Program, which the Presiding Officer has authored and expended so much energy and resources in promoting, but we still know that we have only 15 States in the underlying bill that are going to be able to participate in that program. So for those States not fortunate to be in the Straight A's Program, this would give them the ability to have some increased flexibility in devoting funds to arising needs in their schools. Local school boards know that needs often change from year to year. This gives them the authority to flexibly use their Federal funds to address those changing needs. As we all know, these local school boards are elected by the people just as we are in the Senate. I trust them to know the specific needs of their schools from year to year.

I believe that the debate for now more than a week has been very illuminating to the American people. The course of the debate has moved us a long way toward reaching, if not consensus, at least a strong majority of this body recognizes what we sought to do in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in producing the Educational Opportunities Act, which is supported by the American people and what we need to do—greater flexibility, greater local control, more child centered in our effort, high-performance expectations, a determination to see the achievement gap close between advantaged and disadvantaged students. And while initially we heard many on the other side simply defend the status quo in very plain terms, saying that we had to stick with the tried, true, and tested programs that have ''worked so well'' during the past 35 years, though with the expenditure of $120 billion, we cannot show that the achievement gap is closed.

I believe the debate has moved a long way, and I look forward to seeing the opportunity to pass the Educational Opportunities Act, including the Straight A's provision.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I have remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the Lieberman amendment. I want to be sure that all my colleagues understand that what the amendment would do is wipe out everything in S. 2—the bill we have been debating for the past week. The amendment would put in the provisions of S. 2254, a bill which was introduced about two weeks after the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions completed its work on S. 2.

I believe that my colleagues should also understand that, if the Lieberman amendment is adopted, all amendments which were approved over the past week will be discarded along with S. 2. Moreover, no further amendments would be in order. I know that many members have prepared amendments which they wish to see considered. Should a substitute amendment be adopted, this will simply not be possible.

There may very well be ideas in the Lieberman amendment which are worth considering, but using it as the basis to scrap 18 months worth of hearings and other committee deliberations and to rewrite the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on the floor of the United States Senate is hardly the way to pursue those ideas.

A major function of the committee system in Congress is to assure that a bipartisan group of members have the opportunity to devote extra time and study to particular issues.

There may be disagreements among committee members and Members who do not serve on the committee may disagree with some of the conclusions reached by those who present a bill for the consideration of the full Senate. Nevertheless, there is a clear understanding of the issues at hand—so that a rational debate of differences can be held.

The danger in dismissing the work of a committee entirely in order to adopt something which may appear more appealing is that serious problems may well go unnoticed. I believe there are numerous aspects of the substitute amendment which illustrate this point.

For example, the amendment makes significant changes to the title I formula. Proposals to alter the formula by which title I funds are distributed are among the most difficult to analyze.

Changes which at first glance appear to represent sound policy often have unintended consequences that do not become evident until actual runs are performed.

Senator LIEBERMAN has proposed a significant change to the way that title I funds are to be distributed within states. Currently, the vast majority of funds are distributed through the Basic Grant Program 85%, and the Concentration Grant Program, 15%.

No funds have been made available for either the Targeted Grant Program or the Education Finance Incentive Grant Program. Importantly, the amount received by each state is determined by totaling amount that each eligible school district within the state is eligible to receive.

If the Lieberman amendment were adopted, the most dramatic changes would be experienced at the school district level. Under current law, the states distribute 85% the money to local educational agencies, LEAs, in

accordance with the Basic grant formula and 15% of the money through the Concentration Grant formula. This structure is retained under the committee bill. Importantly, the amount of funding to each state is based upon the amount that eligible school districts within the state are entitled to receive.

Under the Lieberman proposal, money would be received by the state on the basis of one formula and then distributed to LEAs on the basis of a modified version of the Targeted Grant Program. This establishes a new precedent and raises basic questions of fairness. For the first time, the amount that a state receives will be based upon the eligibility of school districts which shall not be given the funds. Let me state this again. States will receive money on the basis of the eligibility of certain school districts. These school districts will not, however, receive the money. The money that the state received on the basis of their eligibility will be diverted to other school districts within the state.

It may be argued by some that this improves targeting by sending money to high-poverty school districts. An examination of the actual numbers reveals that the proposal would establish deep inequalities among school districts across the Nation. It turns out that not all poverty is treated equally. In fact, it depends upon which state you happen to be fortunate enough to reside in and even which school district governs your school.

Let me provide some examples. These examples were selected simply by going through the LEA lists in alphabetical order to select districts with comparable poverty rates.

In Alabama the Thomasville City School District has a poverty rate of 30.3% and would lose 21.6% of its title I funding. In California, Burnt Ranch with a poverty rate of 30.5% would only lose 16% of its funding. New London School District in Connecticut with a poverty rate of 30.6% would receive an increase of 11.9% while Bridgeport with a poverty rate of 35.5% would be cut by .5%. The disparity in the dollar amounts of the reductions is even greater.

My point is this. Many school districts which currently receive funding under the Basic and Concentration Grant Programs would receive steady annual cuts in their title I funds under this proposal. These would not be potential cuts—these would be real cuts. Cuts that would have to be made up by raising property taxes or cutting services.

The Congressional Research Service has done runs for each LEA in each state. These runs reflect annual projected increases or decreases for each of the next three years. There is nothing magic about three years. Districts which are gaining funds would presumably continue to gain them and districts which are losing funds would presumably continue to lose them until an equilibrium is established in the out years.

Our goal during this reauthorization should be to strengthen educational opportunities for all students. This proposal pits poor children in one school against poor children in another and should be soundly rejected.

Proponents of the Lieberman substitute have spoken to the need to increase accountability. I do not believe there is any disagreement at all in this body that recipients of federal education funds must be held accountable. As I noted in my opening remarks when we began floor consideration of this bill, through a bipartisanship effort in 1994, we in the Congress decided that title I should carry out its mission of improving learning by assisting state and local efforts in the development of standards and assessments.

Congress completely rewrote Title I in 1994 and made the program more rigorous—requiring States to develop both content and student performance standards and assessments.

Congress gave the states seven years to complete this difficult task. We are mid-stream in this process.

In the name of accountability, the Lieberman substitute rewrites many of the standards, assessment, and school improvement provisions that were included in the 1994 law. I fear that rewriting these sections will not lead States down the path toward greater accountability, but rather will create detours for the states and school districts that have already spent several years going in the right direction. Developing and implementing standards-based reform and assessments is not a simple task. It requires sustained and consistent effort. Loading up States and school districts with new regulations, new reporting requirements, and more mandates is a distraction at best and a step backward at worst.

Finally, I believe it is important to point out that most of the individual programs authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act outside of title I are repealed by the Lieberman substitute. A notable exception is that the amendment does authorize the President's class-size reduction program as a separate activity. Apparently, some merit is seen for that separate program which is not seen for programs such as the Reading Excellence Act, Gifted and Talented Education, Reading is Fundamental, or Character Education—to name just a few of the programs which are repeal by the substitute amendment.

It is my understanding that the funds from the various programs which are repealed are to be used within four general categories: school improvement, innovative reform, safe learning environments, and technology.

For example, the substitute amendment would repeal title IV of ESEA , the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities program. title IV funds would be pooled with the other funds allocated to repealed programs, and 15% of the funds in the pool are to be used for safe learning environments. The substitute amendment completely tosses overboard the Title IV reforms in S. 2 which were developed by a bipartisan group of members—spearheaded by Senators DEWINE, DODD, and MURRAY. These reforms were designed to assure that drug-free schools funds are used for proven, effective programs—rather than being used in some of the frivolous ways we have seen in the past. The Lieberman amendment sets back the clock on these important revisions to the bill.

As I indicated at the outset, it is important that we take great care in crafting changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The programs in this Act represent virtually all the support provided by the Federal Government in support of elementary and secondary schools. Although the federal share is small relative to the contributions made by States and localities, it is a substantial investment—approaching $15 billion a year.

I believe that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions has taken its responsibilities seriously in developing S. 2 over the past 18 months. We held 25 hearings on all aspects of the Act and have spent considerable time discussing the issues it includes—with much of this work being done on a bipartisan basis. I am pleased to have heard so much today about bipartisan cooperation with respect elementary and secondary education. Although the final vote out of committee was on a party-line basis, the fact of the matter is that much of the bill was developed through bipartisan discussions.

I have spoken many times on this floor on behalf of bipartisan efforts to help our nation's school children, and I remain willing to engage in such efforts. I am not, however, willing to turn my back on the work the committee has put into S. 2 in order to embrace a proposal which reduces title I funding for many school districts throughout the country, imposes additional reporting burdens on States and localities, and repeals many programs which have been of value to our nation's schools and students.

I want to say again that I strongly oppose the Lieberman amendment.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of the Lieberman amendment, which is based on our bill ''The Public Education Reinvestment, Reinvention, and Responsibility Act of 2000''—better known as ''Three R's.'' I believe that this bill represents a realistic, effective approach to improving public education—where 90% of students are educated.

For the past 35 years, when the time has come for the Senate to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it has done so with bipartisan support. However, over the past week, most of what we've seen on the Senate floor has been partisan wrangling—from both sides of the aisle—over how to reform education. I think

that's tragic. Our nation's children deserve a serious debate and real reform—not partisan bickering and election-year gamesmanship.

Mr. President, addressing problems in education is going to take more than cosmetic reform. It will require some tough decisions and a willingness to work together. We need to let go of the tired partisan fighting over more spending versus block grants, and take a middle ground approach that will truly help our States, school districts—and most importantly, our students.

During the past several weeks, I am pleased to have been part of a bipartisan group of Senators who have put partisan politics aside and are seeking to find such a middle ground. Our group has been working to meld the best parts of all of our plans—in the hope that we can actually get a bill passed this year. In a short period of time, we have made tremendous progress and found more agreement between our two parties than the past week's floor debate has shown. I am hopeful that we will soon reach agreement on a bipartisan compromise, but even if we do not, we have laid the groundwork for the future. At some point, the entire Senate will have to put politics aside and deal with education reform. Our plan can serve as the foundation for that compromise—and I look forward to working with our group to make that happen.

Mr. President, I believe the Federal government must continue to be a partner with States, school districts, and educators to improve public education. But it is time to take a fresh look at the structure of Federal education programs—building upon past successes and putting an end to our past failures.

The amendment before us now—our ''Three R's'' bill—does just that. Three R's makes raising student achievement for all students—and closing the achievement gap between low-income and more affluent students—our top priorities. To accomplish this, our bill centers around three principles.

First, we believe that we must provide more funding for education—and that Federal dollars must be targeted to disadvantaged students. Federal funds make up only 7% of all money spent on education, so it is essential that we target those funds on the students who need them the most.

Second, we believe that States and local school districts are in the best position to know what their educational needs are. Three R's gives them more flexibility to determine how they will use Federal dollars to best meet those needs.

Finally—and I believe this is the lynchpin of our approach—we believe that in exchange for this increased flexibility, there must also be accountability for results. These principles are a pyramid, with accountability being the base that supports the federal government's grant of flexibility and funds.

For too long, we have seen a steady stream of Federal dollars flow to States and school districts—regardless of how well they educated their students. This has to stop. We need to reward schools that do a good job. We need to provide assistance and support to schools that are struggling to do a better job. And we must stop subsidizing failure. Our highest priority must be educating children—not perpetuating broken systems.

Mr. President, the ''Three R's bill takes a fresh look at public education. I believe it represents a real middle ground, building upon all the progress we've made and tackling the problems we still face. This bill—by using the concepts of increased funding, targeting, flexibility—and most importantly, accountability—demonstrates how we can work with our State and local partners to make sure every child receives the highest quality education—and a chance to live a successful, productive life. I urge my colleagues to support the Lieberman-Bayh amendment.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, the quality of education in this country is of enormous concern to the American people, and is a defining issue in Congress this year. I believe that few priorities are more important than the future of our Nation's youth. When Americans lack education and skills, demands on Government support rise, and the long-term financial costs to the Nation are enormous. Our primary goal during this debate is to find the best way to bring every one of our students up to a high level of academic performance, in order that they may be successful, contributing members of the national and global economy.

As a former Governor of Nevada, I believe that education is first a State and local responsibility. Creative and innovative education programs have been initiated by many governors at the state level, and the local school districts who interact with students and families in their communities on a daily basis are better positioned than federal bureaucrats to identify their schools' specific needs, and to target the appropriate resources to meet these needs.

The primary purpose of the New Democrat amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, introduced by Senators LIEBERMAN and BAYH and of which I am a cosponsor, is to deliver better educational results by helping states and local school districts raise academic achievement for all children. The amendment recognizes that the Federal Government has an important role to play in working with states and localities on education. It also calls on the Federal Government to work with states to strengthen the standards by which states and local districts are held accountable for increased student achievement, and at the same time, to give states the flexibility to choose the programs that work best for their districts and schools.

The Federal Government has assumed the specific responsibility of ensuring that all students, especially those students who face significant disadvantages, receive a quality education, thereby preparing them to function as successful adults and to lead fulfilling lives. The Lieberman/Bayh amendment fulfills this responsibility by setting clear national goals. These goals are to increase targeting to schools with highest poverty concentrations; to consolidate professional development and teacher training initiatives to improve teacher, principal and administrator quality; to help immigrant students become proficient in English and achieve high levels of learning in all subjects; and to stimulate ''High Performance Initiatives'' by giving states money to choose what programs work best for raising the academic achievement of their students. States can use this ''High Performance Initiatives'' money to focus on priorities they deem necessary to the education of their students; priorities such as innovative school improvement strategies, expanding after-school and summer school opportunities, improving school safety and discipline, and developing technological literacy. These are all important goals.

More specifically, the Lieberman/Bayh amendment operates under the philosophy that getting money to those students who need it the most is crucial, and it strengthens our national commitment to targeting aid to disadvantaged students and schools. Under title I, the New Democrat alternative's formula sends 75 percent of new money to states and local districts with the highest concentrations of poverty. The amendment also distributes teacher quality money based on poverty and student population, and distributes money to help immigrant students become proficient in English and achieve high levels of learning by targeting aid to states with high concentrations of student with limited English proficiency.

Within the parameters of the Lieberman/Bayh amendment, states and localities get flexibility to choose what programs and strategies work best to raise their students' achievement. The amendment strengthens the decisionmaking authority of state and local officials by eliminating some of the strings that come attached to federal dollars. Under this new approach, states develop their own academic standards, their own assessments for measuring annual progress in student achievement, and their own goals for improving school performance. States also choose which initiatives and programs are of priority, and which will work best to raise academic achievement.

At the same time that states have this new flexibility, national interests and federal goals are protected and advanced, both fiscally and educationally. The new Democrat alternative does this by holding states accountable

for meeting the standards they set. Money is not enough to raise student achievement. Along with the added money and flexibility in the amendment, states and districts are given the responsibility of setting performance goals for their students, and of demonstrating clear progress towards these goals.

Not all currently funded educational programs produce the great results we are looking for. The Lieberman/Bayh amendment sets measurable standards so that states and local districts can evaluate the programs they are using, and see what is and what is not raising their students' academic achievement. The states have the flexibility to choose the programs that work best for their student populations, but the Federal Government, under the Lieberman/Bayh amendment, holds them accountable for raising student achievement.

Under the new Democrat alternative, there are real consequences for chronic failure. For the first time ever, states that fail to meet the performance objectives under any title would be penalized. After 3 years of failure, a state's administrative funding would be cut by 50 percent, and after 4 years of failure, programming funds to the state under the ''High Performance Initiatives'' title would be cut by 30 percent. The Lieberman/Bayh amendment also requires states to impose sanctions on local school districts that fail to meet annual performance goals, and rewards states who exceed their goals by receiving even greater flexibility in using their program funding to meet their own specific priorities. In this way, Federal funding is directly linked to the performance of schools in meeting the goals the schools themselves have set.

In summary, the new Democrat alternative was written with the underlying philosophy that state and local officials are better positioned than Federal bureaucrats to identify their specific needs, and to target the appropriate resources to meet these needs. At the same time, the amendment sets clear national goals and holds states responsible for producing progress toward these goals. The current system is far less fiscally responsible than the Lieberman/Bayh approach because it does nothing to ensure that taxpayer dollars are getting a real return on their investment. In the Lieberman/Bayh amendment, the Federal Government maintains control and plays a role in setting national priorities in education. It also strengthens our national commitment to target aid to disadvantaged students and schools, and holds states accountable for producing results in exchange for the flexibility. In conclusion, I would like to express my support for the new Democrat alternative amendment, introduced by Senators LIEBERMAN and BAYH, because I believe it will significantly and positively reform the current education system, while successfully raising the academic achievement of all students.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the Lieberman amendment to ESEA. I am very supportive of the efforts of the Senator from Connecticut and my other colleagues who have worked so diligently on this amendment. This amendment is based upon a theory that I am very supportive of: increased flexibility in exchange for increased accountability. This means that States and school districts should have more flexibility in using Federal funds, but they must meet certain achievement measures, and most important, those achievement gains must hold true for children of all races, all ethnicities, and regardless of gender. Therefore, I am sorry that I am not rising in support of this amendment, because it includes many components of education reform that I firmly believe are necessary to improving the public education system for all students.

The Lieberman amendment would target the title I formula even more to the most highly disadvantaged students. This amendment would also dramatically increase our investment in the title I program. The Federal Government's number one priority should and must be to ensure that economically disadvantaged students are provided with supplementary educational resources, and I commend my colleagues for increasing this critical investment in this program.

The Lieberman amendment would also increase the accountability of Federal dollars, a component of education reform that I know is critical to improving the public education system. The Federal Government has an obligation to ensure that we are getting the most from our investment in public education, by holding our teachers, our schools, and our students accountable to the highest standards. This amendment would make a great step toward increasing the Federal Government's investment in accountability. Accountability is the third side of an education triangle that also includes standards and assessments. Now that many states have adopted high standards and tests to measure students' progress toward those benchmarks, they have turned their attention to making sure that performance matters. Achieving real accountability in our schools is a large part of what this amendment is all about and I believe increased accountability is critically important for the state of public education in this country. Again I commend my colleagues for focusing their amendment on this important element of public school reform.

The Lieberman approach focuses on public school choice, another element of public education reform that I support and know to be critical to improving educational attainment for all children. Public school choice is becoming more and more a part of the American educational system. In 1993, only 11% of students attended schools chosen by their parents. In 1999, 15% of students attended schools chosen by their parents. While still serving a relatively small percentage of students, charter schools and magnet schools are becoming an increasingly common tool to improve the education of our nation's children. In 1994, there were only 100 charter schools in this country. Today, there are 1,700. Currently there are over 5,200 magnet schools serving approximately 1.5 million students. Magnet schools foster diversity and promote academic excellence in math, science, performing arts and marketable vocational skills.

Parents deserve more choice in their children's public schools. Increasing parental choice will allow healthy competition between public schools. Choice, of course, necessarily implies that one thing is being chosen over another. As a result, choice means competition which is a force that often hastens change and improvement in any organization or system. All schools, district and charter, are forced by competition to examine why parents, students, or prospective teachers might be choose to go to other schools. Even teachers' unions and school board associations are signing on to the concept of publicly funded schools that operate outside most state and district regulations. In early 1996, the National Education Association promised $1.5 million to help its affiliates start charter schools in five States and to study their progress. I am pleased that my esteemed colleagues have made public school choice a primary component of this amendment.

This amendment also deals with an issue we have frequently discussed during this ESEA debate: the consolidation of many Federal programs. Let me say that I am not opposed to consolidating some Federal programs. I do believe that there are important programs that are not overly burdensome on states and schools and that have proven successful, and I believe that the success of these programs is due in part on the competitive grant process and Federal guidelines of the programs. I know the Federal Government does not have all the answers and that we cannot always anticipate the needs of states and local school districts throughout this country, and though I have some specific concerns about the level of consolidation in the Lieberman amendment, I support the streamlining of Federal programs and providing flexibility to states and school districts.

Despite my support for so many things in this amendment, I am ultimately unable to support the Lieberman approach. The Federal Government is the only entity that ensures funding is provided to the most disadvantaged populations in this country, like migrant children, homeless and runaway youth, and immigrant children. I am greatly concerned about the loss of Federal support for these vulnerable youth. Therefore, I cannot support the Lieberman approach despite my commitment to so many of its

provisions. The Federal Government's involvement in education has always been to ensure that vulnerable populations are provided the additional funds that are necessary to their educational success. And I have heard from those people in Massachusetts who work with homeless young people and with troubled youth. And they have told me how incredibly important this Federal money is to these children. These children have so much going against their ability to succeed, I believe we must maintain our commitment to those children.

I am encouraged by the work my colleagues have done on this amendment. I am supportive of their new approach to public education reform and their attempt to draft legislation that would attract the support of both Republicans and Democrats. I am frustrated and saddened by the very partisan nature of this year's ESEA debate, and commend my colleagues for their fresh approach to ESEA reauthorization and their attempts to attract support from both sides of the aisle.

I regret that I cannot support this amendment, but I look forward to working with many my colleagues to address the concerns that I and other Senators have. I hope we can resolve these concerns and that we can bring this divided Senate together on the issue of public education. I look greatly forward to working with my colleagues in the future and deeply appreciate their hard work and new perspective on this critically important issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator controls 5 minutes before the vote.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 4½ minutes.

Mr. President, first of all, I thank Senator LIEBERMAN and his cosponsors for the focus and attention they have given to really the central priority for all families in this country in the area of education. The restlessness those Senators and others have with regard to making sure we are going to try to reach every needy child in this country is something we all should embrace and support.

I am not sure at this hour of the day, so to speak, in terms of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, if it is possible to bring about the kind of change and focus that is desirable. But there are broad areas of support and agreement for that concept in terms of enhanced resources and enhanced accountability.

I certainly look forward to working with him in the future on this whole area of education.

I think the ideas that have been out there in terms of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, which has been basically a bipartisan effort in giving national focus and attention to that, and a sense of urgency, are still important to preserve. Senator DEWINE and Senator DODD worked out an effort in that area in our committee. I think it is important to preserve it. The progress we have made in technology I think is worth preserving. The afterschool programs are really the most heavily subscribed programs. They also have bipartisan support and are a matter of national urgency. I don't think they have gotten the kind of attention they should have in the Lieberman amendment.

Finally, there are several programs that are working very well in terms of being included in the consolidation program. One of them I have particular interest in is ''Ready to Learn.'' There is $11 million on ''Ready to Learn.'' It is done through the Public Broadcasting System. It reaches 94 percent of the country, 87 million homes, 37 million children, and received 57 Emmys. If you ask any public broadcaster in the 130 stations nationwide what the best children's program is, they will mention this one. I don't want to see that lost and sent back to any State thinking that could be recomposed.

The Star Schools Program works through nonprofits, again, led by strong bipartisan support, to try to reach out to schools that may not have a math and science teacher and up-to-date educational programs, and has been done through a number of States. It has been very effective through nonprofits. That is another program. It is a small program, but it has enormous educational values.

With reluctance, because I have great friendship and affection for my friend from Connecticut, I will not vote in support of it. But I want to certainly guarantee to him and to all of those who have been uniformly strong sponsors in our committee that I want to work closely with our colleagues on the other side to try to give greater focus and attention to the problems of the neediest students in the country.

I yield the remainder of my time.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded.

Do the Senators wish the vote to begin early?

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed with the vote.

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

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3127. The yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. ROTH), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. THOMPSON), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber who desire to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 13, nays 84, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 95 Leg.]

YEAS—13

Bayh	Graham	Lincoln
Breaux	Johnson	Moynihan
Bryan	Kohl	Robb
Edwards	Landrieu	
Feinstein	Lieberman	

NAYS—84

Abraham	Durbin	Mack
Akaka	Enzi	McCain
Allard	Feingold	McConnell
Ashcroft	Fitzgerald	Mikulski
Baucus	Frist	Murkowski
Bennett	Gorton	Murray
Biden	Gramm	Nickles
Bingaman	Grams	Reed
Bond	Grassley	Reid
Boxer	Gregg	Roberts
Brownback	Harkin	Rockefeller
Bunning	Hatch	Santorum
Burns	Helms	Sarbanes
Byrd	Hollings	Schumer
Campbell	Hutchinson	Sessions
Chafee, L.	Hutchison	Shelby
Cleland	Inhofe	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Inouye	Smith (OR)
Collins	Jeffords	Snowe
Conrad	Kennedy	Specter
Coverdell	Kerrey	Stevens
Craig	Kerry	Thomas
Crapo	Kyl	Thurmond
Daschle	Lautenberg	Torricelli
DeWine	Leahy	Voinovich
Dodd	Levin	Warner
Domenici	Lott	Wellstone
Dorgan	Lugar	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Hagel	Roth	Thompson

The amendment (No. 3127) was rejected.

Mr. KENNEDY. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. COVERDELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—AFRICA TRADE CONFERENCE BILL REPORT

Mr. LOTT. If I could get this unanimous consent request in, then we would understand what the procedure would be for today and tomorrow and even Thursday morning. So if my colleagues will bear with me one moment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, the Senate proceed to the conference report to accompany the Africa trade bill, that the report be considered as having been read, and the vote occur on adoption of the motion to proceed immediately, and following the vote and the reporting by the clerk, I be immediately recognized to send a cloture motion to the desk. I also ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote occur on Thursday, May 11, at 10:30 a.m., with the mandatory quorum having been waived.

This has been discussed with the Democratic leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?