He is a magnificent person with an unbelievable degree of dedication to learning. He has gone from one of the greatest teachers I have known to one of the best principals one would know.

There are people like that all over the system. We are not helping them. This governmental regulation and bureaucracy is making it worse and making their lives more difficult. We can improve that, but not the way we are going. We are going to need some changes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

STANDING UP FOR TEXAS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I see the distinguished senior Senator from Massachusetts has been at it again, trying to bring the Presidential campaign to the Senate floor and misrepresenting the record in Texas. Once again, as promised, I am here to stand up for the record of the Governor of Texas and to stand up for the State of Texas.

I ask my distinguished colleague, the Senator from Massachusetts, if he would consider in the future not misrepresenting Texas for two reasons:

One is, I don't think it is persuasive to anyone in America to continue to hear the downgrading of a State in our country, and I certainly don't think it affects the Presidential race. Secondly, I just don't think that it is necessary or proper to downgrade a great State such as Texas or any other State in America.

Of course, I am from Texas; of course, I love my State. But I think, objectively speaking, a lot of other people do because we have just surpassed New York to become the second largest State in America. People are not moving there because they think we have a terrible education system. They are not moving there because they think we don't treat our children well. They are not moving there because we don't have health insurance for our children. They are not moving there because we have a bad environment. They are moving there because it is a wonderful place in which to live, and it has gotten better since George W. Bush became Governor.

So let me just set the record straight. We have a patients' bill of rights in Texas. It is the model upon which other States are now basing the laws that they are beginning to pass or look at passing. We have a very good patients' bill of rights because it has an independent review mechanism. You have an internal review and you have an external review. It is an independent review so that the bottom line that we all want will occur, and that is that a patient will get the care the patient and the doctor believe is in the best interest of the patient. That is what a patients' bill of rights is. We also have caps on limits for lawsuits which are allowed after the exhaustion of the internal and external reviews. There are caps on pain and suffering and noneconomic damages. That makes sure that we don't have a plethora of lawsuits, and it would keep the patient and the doctor making the decisions for health care in the forefront of our interest. So it is a model law. It is a good law. Whatever misrepresentations have been made about it, the Governor allowed it to become law. It happened on his watch.

Secondly, we are very proud of the improvements we are making in our public education system. Most States are not satisfied with where they are in public education. Texas is working very hard to improve our public education system, and under the leadership of Governor George W. Bush we are winning. Test scores are going up and, most especially, the test scores are going up in the minority communities. That is one of the focuses that Governor Bush has made in my home State of Texas because we all looked at the high school dropout rate. We were all unsatisfied with that number. We said, what can we do, especially in our Hispanic community, where the high school dropout rate is the highest per capita? We said, we have to go back to the basics.

That is what Governor Bush did. He went back to the basics and he put the resources into it. That is about $8 million more than had been spent before. He said, we are going to go to the third grade level and that is going to be the firewall. We are going to test children in preschool; we are going to test them in the first grade and in the second grade. But if they can't read at grade level in the third grade, they will not be promoted to the fourth grade because we know that if children can't read at the early stages, they will never be able to reach their full potential in the public education system. That was the initiative of Governor Bush and, I might add, along with a great house speaker, Pete Leahy, a Democrat, and a Lieutenant Governor—at the time it was Bob Bullock, a Democrat; today, it is Rick Perry, a Republican. But we do work in a bipartisan way in the legislature. We always have in Texas. That is something that we have done since the days I served in the Texas legislature. We worked together, Democrats and Republicans. It is why I was so surprised when I came to the Senate and it didn't work that way here. We are not used to doing business that way.

With all due respect, I think Texas has it right because after the elections in Texas, we come together—the Governor and the legislature—to do what is best for the children and the people of Texas. Wouldn't it be refreshing if that were the case in Washington, DC? Wouldn't it be refreshing if the leadership that Governor Bush has shown, along with Pete Leahy and Bob Bullock, could be transferred to Washington, DC, with President Bush and TOM DASCHLE and RICHARD GEPHARDT? Wouldn't that be refreshing? That is what Governor Bush would like to do because we think it works. We know it works because the test scores show that it works.

Madam President, we are making a huge leap in the right direction for improving public education, and we are going to the heart of the matter. We are making sure our children in the third grade can read, and we are focusing on the basics. We are focusing on reading, writing, arithmetic, history.

All of us have seen these polls of young people in our country where the television person walks up to the young person and says: What is the only State in America that is totally surrounded by water?

The young person can't answer the question. We know Hawaii is the answer, but I think we should focus on the basics—geography and history. That is what we are trying to do in Texas, and that is the kind of leadership we need for this country.

So I hope that we will examine the record in Texas in a positive way—or even in a neutral way, for Heaven's sake—because if you are neutral, you would see that Texas is a great place in which to live; that we have a great quality of life. Do we have problems? Sure. Are we working on those problems? Yes. We are doing it under the leadership of our Governor, George W. Bush.

Let me say, too, that we are also making great strides on the environment. We have a particular problem, particularly in Houston, TX, where 50 percent of the chemical refining plants in the world are located—the petrochemical refining plants. Fifty percent of the petrochemicals in the world are located on the gulf coast between Houston and Victoria.

I see that my time is up. I will step back and allow others to speak, but I will not step back if the record of Texas is misrepresented. I am here to stand for the facts and the good record of our Governor and our great State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. KENNEDY. Parliamentary inquiry. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Of course.

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand we will have some time. The House has not concluded with the continuing resolution. I understand it is agreeable with the leaders that the time remaining will be divided equally. Is the time remaining equally divided between the two sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The previous order provided that the remaining time until 7:30 would be equally divided.

The Senator from Oregon.

GORE-CHERNOMYRDIN AGREEMENT

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise as one Senator in this body

and as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee to express the hope that by noon tomorrow the State Department will provide for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the document that it has rightfully requested so that it might know the truth with respect to the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement.

Since I have been a Senator these last 4 years, I have had occasion to meet with the Vice President and Mr. Chernomyrdin when they came to Capitol Hill to trumpet what was represented to us as the great successes of their relationship and our outreach to Russia and to help Russia in its transition to democracy. In every way possible, we have hoped to conduct our business with Russia on better terms than we have in the past.

I think it is appropriate for this Republican to say that, without question, no one should question the motives of Vice President GORE with respect to what he has tried to accomplish in this relationship. However, there is reason to believe that some of what has gone on with the best of motives may, in fact—I emphasize ''may''—have violated a law and a statute of this country, if not a constitutional requirement in article II of the Constitution that agreements be reviewed by appropriate congressional committees.

I am told that with respect to the Gore-Chernomyrdin relationship a House committee was informed. Congressman Hamilton said he received some information to that effect. DICK LUGAR, the Senator from Indiana, has said he knew in general terms what they were trying to achieve.

But then all of us were taken aback a couple of weeks ago by an article in the New York Times in which this agreement was specifically quoted. I do not know of any Congressman or Senator who has yet to say they have seen the particulars of this arrangement. That is the point of the Foreign Relations Committee's inquiry of the State Department.

Let me read briefly a sentence from that New York Times story that quotes what the Vice President pledges to do. He pledges to ''avoid any penalties to Russia that might otherwise arise under domestic law.''

There is nothing in the Gore-McCain law of 1992 that allows the executive branch to unilaterally waive the law. Their duty under that law is to impose sanctions, and then to waive them if that is the judgment of the executive but not to do it in a way that keeps Congress in the dark and violates specific terms of American law.

Why should we care? Many of our friends on the Democratic side said this is all just about politics. You shouldn't be raising that now.

I point out to them that the Vice President, the executive, and the State Department have had 5 years to take this out of politics and to simply disclose, as is rightfully our right to know, those documents and those particulars as to agreements.

Some of my colleagues have said these aren't agreements; that these are understandings. If it quacks like a duck and waddles like a duck, to me it is a duck.

In my opinion, when you see specific responsibilities and considerations on both sides and end dates, folks, that is an agreement, and the Congress has a right—and particularly the Senate—to see this document, and in confidence if necessary. But we have a right to documents that have been requested of the State Department.

I hope that it exonerates the Vice President. But let me tell you why I am concerned that it may not.

The Washington Times, a week ago, ran a story in which a letter was leaked from the State Department—not by the Republican Party but by the State Department somehow to a reporter of the Washington Times—a letter from the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, to the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov. You have to read these words to, frankly, understand it and really believe it. I don't know how words can be any clearer that the administration is admitting to a violation of law.

This is what the Secretary wrote to the Russian Foreign Minister:

> We have also upheld our commitment not to impose sanctions for these transfers disclosed in the Annex to the Aide Memoire. The Annex is very specific in its terms, and we have followed it strictly. . . . Without the Aide Memoire, Russia's conventional arms sales to Iran would have been subject to sanctions based on various provisions of our laws. This possibility still exists in the event the continued Russian transfers after the December 31 termination date.

Madam President, the Secretary of State has said here that they have violated the law.

What the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the majority in this party are asking for is to have the proof of the State Department's assurances to us that they haven't violated the law. That is all we are asking for. If they haven't, we will be glad to say that to the whole world. But what we have received so far is their assurances that they haven't violated the law.

Guess what. I want to believe them. But I am entitled as a Senator to see the document so I might know that they have not violated the law as the Secretary of State has said.

Should we know that? I think we should.

Does that mean the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement isn't a good deal? I don't know that. It may be a great deal.

But it is not a deal where the means justify the ends to violate American law and treat the Senate with disrespect. It does not warrant that. We are a country of laws, and we need to obey them.

We are simply asking, as a signatory to this letter, that the administration comply with the law authored by the Vice President himself.

In addition to SAM BROWNBACK and myself, the signatories to this letter are the majority leader, TRENT LOTT, the majority leader whip, DON NICKLES, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, JESSE HELMS, JOHN MCCAIN, FRED THOMPSON, the chairman of Governmental Affairs, RICHARD SHELBY, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, JOHN WARNER, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and RICHARD LUGAR, who, by the way, wouldn't mind knowing the truth of what has been represented to him, too. He is curious about indeed what the facts are.

I regret that this is close to an election. I don't believe politics should be international. I think they should stop at the water's edge. But I think the responsibility lies with the administration to foster a bipartisan foreign policy. That is clearly not happening here.

We are entitled to know the truth. If the law has been complied with, this is over with. If it has not, then, frankly, that ought to be known by the American people as well.

Whether or not a Kilo-class submarine is a dangerous weapon, frankly, is a judgment the administration is entitled to make. But there may be other weapons on that, as the Secretary suggests, that were subject to sanctions.

We have a right to know whether or not we have been treated as mushroom farmers—keep them in the dark and shovel the manure on them.

That is not how it is supposed to work—not according to our Constitution, not according to our statutory law and various provisions.

We are entitled to know the truth. As one Senator, I plead with the State Department to show us the documents and this goes away. But you have to show us the documents. We are owed it. We deserve it. We are entitled to it. It ought to happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, I ask to be able to proceed for 8 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. We are operating under a time agreement until 7:30.

AIDE MEMOIRE

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, I have great respect for my friend from Oregon. I know he knows I think he is dead wrong on this issue. For two reasons I think he is dead wrong: On the facts and I think he is dead wrong on the approach he has taken.

The fact of the matter is, the administration at the time this aide memoire—a fancy phrase for saying this agreement—was signed by GORE and Chernomyrdin, a follow-on to a verbal agreement made by Clinton and by Yeltsin in 1994—that agreement was made known to the public; it was publicly stated, and that was actually offered. The House of Representatives was briefed at the time.

Here we are less than 10 days before an election and it has become a cause