

our election process on November 7, the failure of a process which generated some \$3 billion in spending by candidates and barely brought out a scant majority of voters in the United States who participated. Think of all the attention paid to that Presidential campaign and election after November 7 with the recounts, the court cases, the Supreme Court, on and on and on. Half the people in this country really didn't have much of a reason to watch it because they hadn't voted in the first place. They were observing something that was as foreign as watching an Australian rules football game, trying to understand what this is all about.

We ought to be reflecting on the fact that so few people participate in our elections. I think it is important to think anew in this new millennium, in this new century, as to how we will make America not only more democratic in name but more democratic in practice; what we can do to make our elections more effective, to bring more people to the polls. I think we ought to approach it with an open mind.

Why do we vote on Tuesday? I don't know. Somebody thought Tuesday was a good day at one point in time. But is it a good day now for most Americans, or is there a better day? Could we find a way to vote on a weekend without, perhaps, raising some religious objections from some groups? I hope so. Can we find ways to vote that are more convenient for voters? In States such as Oregon and Washington, more and more people vote by mail. In fact, in Oregon virtually all the ballots were cast by mail. My brother-in-law lives in the State of Washington. He is a permanent absentee voter. He always receives his ballot by mail and returns it. You can do that in Illinois, but it is pretty difficult. We should be trying to establish a national means by which people can vote without these obstacles.

And let's talk about the voting machinery. In my home State of Illinois, and in 40 percent of the polling places across America, they have these infamous Votomatic punch systems. I have been through enough election contests as a staffer, as an attorney, and as an elected official, that by the time I finish punching my ballot out, I stop for a minute, turn it to the light, I knock off the chads. I know what to look for. I know what can disqualify my vote. How many Americans know how to do that? Probably more today than last year. Still, an awful lot have gone to the polls and made a personal sacrifice to do their civic duty to cast their vote and have their vote be heard, when it comes to the election of the President, only to learn afterwards that tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of ballots have been voided, possibly their own. That is not fair. It is not American. It is not something we ought to tolerate. I think it is more than a coincidence that the biggest breakdown in disqualification of these ballots turns out to be

in inner-city precincts. I don't think that is any accident. In many instances, that is where we have the oldest voting equipment, we have less attention paid to the education of voters, and, as a consequence, folks who are making a genuine effort to do their best and do their civic duty are denied that opportunity.

By and large, this decision on how to run a campaign and how to manage an election is a State and local responsibility, as it should be. But my colleague from the State of New York, Senator SCHUMER, who sits next to me, has proposed that we bring forward a fund for electoral reform across America and create incentives and opportunities for States and localities to upgrade their voting equipment.

Let me tell you about a piece of voting machinery that is used in South America. It is a piece of machinery where you have indicated the name of the candidate and the office and a symbol for the candidate's party. When you vote and push on the screen for your choice, up pops the picture of the candidate to verify that you picked the person for whom you want to vote. Doesn't that sound modernistic and futuristic? You may be surprised to know the equipment is produced in the United States. It is sold in South America, but it has not become popular here in this country. But think of the unlimited possibilities for us to create a system that is honest and fair and helpful to voters, instead of one creating obstacles and problems that can be strewn in their paths so they would leave the polling place uncertain and maybe frustrated.

During this great debate over the election of November 7, 2000, with this electoral vote next Saturday and the swearing in of President George W. Bush on January 20, in just a few weeks, if we do not stop to think about the long-term impact of the integrity of voting in America, I think we are derelict in our duty as elected officials. I hope, if we are not going to amend our great Constitution to eliminate the electoral college, we will at least dedicate ourselves, on a bipartisan basis, to modernizing the machinery of elections across America so the next election in 2 years or beyond will be a fair election, a more honest election, and one that creates more opportunities.

I do not believe there is a partisan spin to this. I believe Republican candidates, Democratic candidates, and independent candidates alike can all be disadvantaged by the uncertainties of the current election system. We need to encourage more people to be involved, and we need to say to them: We are doing everything within our power to use the technology and resources of America to make elections in this country an even better experience for all Americans.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. EDWARDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### OKLAHOMA SOONERS—2000 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the Oklahoma Sooners, the football team which defeated the Florida State Seminoles last night by a score of 13-2, the seventh national championship for the Sooners.

This was also the Sooners' 17th appearance in the Orange Bowl. In 1980 and 1981, our friend and colleague from the House, J.C. WATTS, was quarterback and did a great job. I remember those Orange Bowls in 1980 and 1981. J.C. WATTS was not only an outstanding quarterback but also is an outstanding Congressman. I was with him last night to watch the Sooners win their seventh, well-deserved national championship.

The Sooners went to the Orange Bowl with a perfect 12-0 record. They defeated several outstanding teams including the once number one ranked Nebraska, the University of Texas, and Kansas State. Although we did not play them before last night, Bobby Bowden, head coach for Florida State has an outstanding football team and an outstanding program.

I congratulate the Sooners.

I congratulate Coach Bob Stoops, who only in his second year at the University of Oklahoma was named the "AP Coach of the Year"—a well-deserved honor, and it is certainly a well-deserved honor for the entire Oklahoma Sooner football team.

In addition, I wish to congratulate my friend and our former colleague in the Senate, David Boren, who is the President of the University of Oklahoma. All people in Oklahoma can say he is doing a fantastic job not only scholastically but athletically as well.

My congratulations to the team and to their leader.

From the entire State, we are all very proud of the University of Oklahoma for once again becoming the national champions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MURRAY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I want to give a report on the progress