

is the Federal District of Columbia. It is part of the Federal Government. It is an area that we do not have a separation of Federal and State governments, where there is not a State's rights question about these matters. It is a matter within our jurisdiction, No. 1.

No. 2, the Mayor and the school board president want it. They asked us for it.

The people want it. They have children lined up to get into this program. I love educators, and I love and appreciate education. I believe the public schools do a terrific job for the most part in America. I have been pleased with the public schools my children have attended. But if they were not getting a good education there, one that was sufficient, I would have done what I could to make sure they got a good education. I think most Americans would. But for the poor, they don't have that option. They can't send their children to St. Albans. They can't send their kids to some other school if they are not happy, and I think we need to deal with that.

I salute the chairman, Senator DEWINE. I suggest the Feinstein amendment does many of the things that Senator LANDRIEU wants to do. I could support that, and I am comfortable with the Feinstein amendment. But if we are going to come up with an amendment that makes it so difficult for the schools in this area who have agreed to take children at a discount of 40 percent or more from the cost that is being expended for education in the District, that they will not accept them or it creates a bureaucracy—which is one of the things that makes it more difficult for public schools to perform well—if we are going to do that, I am not for it.

I know Senator DEWINE will be wrestling with that and listening to the Senators and their suggestions. But I would note we have a reality and that is there are two bodies, a House and a Senate. The House of Representatives deserves equal sway in these matters. That shouldn't change just because a few Senators believe something is important—I believe a lot of things are important and I have not been able to have them come out exactly as I want.

I think the Feinstein amendment does what Senator LANDRIEU wants. We have not seen the exact wording of Senator LANDRIEU's amendment, so I guess we will have to look at it to know. This body needs to act in the best interests of the schoolchildren of the District of Columbia. We have a Mayor elected to take care of them. We have a school board president who loves our children and wants them to succeed. They have said this program is the way to do it. This is what we need to improve their chances at a better life. I believe it is, too. I see no danger in going forward with it.

If the program turns out to be a failure, so be it. We will end it. I don't know that it will. Frankly, I think it is more likely to be a success than not.

I am glad the Senator from Ohio is leading this effort, and I look forward to working with him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Alabama for his very fine statement. I think he is absolutely right. This is a pilot program. But it is a chance we have to take. These are children who need this opportunity. Their parents need this opportunity.

As we have talked about before on the Senate floor, you have the Mayor of this city coming to this Congress and saying: Give me the tools. Give me the tools to help shape the educational system in the District of Columbia. For us to turn our back on the Mayor, to turn our back on children, and the parents, I think would be a very serious mistake.

We have the opportunity to do something very positive. I think we should take that opportunity.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business.

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

BILLING VETERANS FOR HOSPITAL FOOD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I take a brief few minutes to say a few words about a situation that I think is a slap in the face to a brave Nevadan but also to thousands of others who wear the uniform of our great Republic.

Bill Murwin is a deputy sheriff in Lyon County, one of 17 Nevada counties. It is a rural county, even though it is becoming more urban all the time with the tremendous growth in Fernley and Silver Springs. Still we think of it as a rural county, a little over 60 miles outside of Reno.

In addition to Bill being deputy sheriff, he is also a staff sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve. When his country called, he left his family and went to fight in Iraq. He was wounded a few months ago when a grenade exploded in a vehicle in which he was riding. He was treated at a military hospital in Germany and then because of the seriousness of his injury he spent 4 weeks at Bethesda. I am sorry to say this, but at Bethesda Naval Hospital he had to have part of his left foot amputated.

Obviously, we owe a debt of gratitude to Sergeant Murwin, just as we owe a debt of gratitude to all those who bravely fought for our freedom over the years, particularly in the sands and cities of Iraq.

Instead of gratitude—it is hard to comprehend—Bill Murwin got a bill from the Government in the amount of \$243. Three days later he got a second bill, along with a threat that his ac-

count would be turned over to a collection agency if he did not pay up immediately.

For what did he owe this large sum of \$243? I say that somewhat facetiously, but to him \$243 was a large amount of money. It was for the food he ate when he was having his foot amputated. It seems that military personnel who do not eat in a messhall, including those who have families, receive a monthly allowance for their food. But when our troops are wounded, they eat in a hospital, they are billed by the Government \$8.10 a day for their hospital meals.

I found out what happened to Sergeant Murwin when a coworker sent an e-mail to my office. I was disillusioned, disappointed, and somewhat upset to learn we have a policy and it has been in place for 22 years.

Our troops in combat who are eating field chow are already allowed to keep their food allowance. Certainly, the same policy should apply to those who are in a hospital recovering from the injuries they received in the field.

When a soldier is wounded in combat, we should not add insult to injury by making him pay for his hospital food. I am proud of Sergeant Murwin for coming forward to shed light on this mistaken policy.

Today, he told a member of my staff:

This isn't about me. There are guys in the hospital who are 18 or 19 years old and have been there for three months or longer. . . . Some of them are expecting bills of \$1,000 or more. They [are] really fretting those bills.

I think it is a national disgrace that anyone in this country has to worry about decent health care—and 44 million people have to worry about decent health care. But, really, when a soldier who is wounded in combat lies in a hospital bed worrying about a bill from his own Government for the food he is eating in the hospital, that is a little too much.

I also acknowledge my friend, the Congressman from Florida, Representative YOUNG. When he heard about this, he sent a bill to the Government to repay this bill for Sergeant Murwin. So I publicly acknowledge and appreciate what I read in the paper that my friend, Congressman YOUNG, had done.

I am proud to cosponsor Senator GRAHAM's bill that would correct this ridiculous policy. I salute, as I said, Congressman YOUNG for introducing a similar bill in the House and for paying the bill, literally, of my constituent.

I hope every Member of both Chambers will act quickly to correct this outrage. And it is an outrage.

TRIBUTE TO GREG MADDUX

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to salute a great Nevadan, a great human being and a great athlete, my friend, Greg Maddux.

Mr. Maddux pitches for the Atlanta Braves baseball club. Since he went to Atlanta almost 11 years ago, the