

leading cause of heart disease and kidney disease in our society today.

With regard to children, teachers can tell the story. Teachers have the opportunity to see children in classrooms on a regular basis. They say they see kids out of breath simply walking up the stairs in school. They tell us about kids who, when they get outside of the school and go to the schoolyard, are out of breath or, they come back exhausted from a simple field trip.

Activities that we associate with exercise such as kick ball, jumping rope, climbing trees, for many kids today these are grueling exercises, grueling activities that are to be avoided at all cost because of their feeling of overexertion and being out of breath. Twenty-five percent of our Nation's children say they do not participate in any vigorous activity. That is one in four. Obesity is robbing them not only of enjoying the normal traditional childhood pastimes but it also is literally robbing them of their childhood years. By that I mean that obesity is associated with the early onset of puberty among girls. According to a study from the University of North Carolina, 48 percent of African-American girls begin puberty by age 8, over a quarter by age 7.

Indeed, this is a national health crisis. It is harming our children in ways we can readily observe. It is also harming our children in ways we do not so readily observe that will not become apparent until later in life. Yes, you observe the obesity but you do not see the side effects of the obesity until much later. Those side effects, as I mentioned before, are heart disease, amputation, blindness, a debilitating disease that condemns them to more illness, condemns them to a shorter life.

Again, this is a new phenomena. If we look at the history of medicine in this country, back a few hundred years, we are going along like this and in the 1960s or 1970s we have hit epidemic proportions. The reason I talk about it in the Senate and the reason why the bill just passed, the IMPACT Act, is so important is because this trend can be reversed. If we reverse it, we also reverse heart disease, lung disease, stroke, various types of cancer. That is what this body should be about. That is what this body is about and we demonstrated it by passing this so-called IMPACT Act that looks at nutrition, looks at physical activity, that focuses on young people. We are taking action; we are offering solutions. We cannot solve it all with this particular bill, but we show we are addressing identified problems; we are reversing problems that are apparent in our society.

In this session, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions unanimously approved the IMPACT Act, which we just passed in the Senate, the Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act. It was introduced earlier this year by myself with Senators BINGAMAN, DODD, and others.

This IMPACT Act uses a multifaceted approach that emphasizes youth education to jump-start healthy habits early. It funds demonstration projects to find innovative ways, creative ways, to improve eating and exercise. In addition—and this is critically important—it includes rigorous evaluation so we can learn what is best.

We see many different proposals. We cannot turn on television without seeing the latest fad, the latest diet or the latest cure. It is a huge industry. What we in the Government can do and should be doing is evaluating what works best in terms of what we implement through this program. This bill does not attempt to control what Americans eat or what Americans do not eat. This bill does not outlaw bad foods. It does not attempt to replicate in any way that \$1 billion diet and fitness industry. It does have a modest pricetag and that reflects the appropriate role of the Federal Government.

Working with the chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator JUDD GREGG, and Senator DODD, Senator BINGAMAN, and others, I am delighted—I am delighted—that we have, as authors, as sponsors, just seen this bill pass by unanimous consent.

I do hope the House of Representatives will join us early next year in sending this legislation to the President of the United States for his signature.

Again, this is not “the” solution. There is no single solution to this growing epidemic of obesity, but there are solutions. This epidemic can be reversed, and the start is awareness and then action. That is why, indeed, I am speaking at this fairly late hour on this particular issue, because we have just demonstrated, through action, that this body will work toward solutions, and to also state the importance of the awareness, especially awareness among children. And that is where this IMPACT bill will have a direct impact.

We know the consequences of obesity. We can and we should keep our kids safe by helping to keep them fit. Tonight, in this body, we demonstrated the start.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR PAUL SIMON

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I think it is fitting that the distinguished Senator from Illinois is in the chair. I know Senator FRIST either has or intends to say something about the tragic news we just received this afternoon.

I had the privilege, the honor, of working with Paul Simon for 12 years. He brought a decency, a sense of humor, to his life and to his work that I think has never been matched. True to his roots as an investigative journalist, he had a clear eye for injustice and an untiring devotion to using power to improve the lives of Americans.

At the same time, he recognized that in order to maintain citizens' support for Government, we needed to preserve their faith in the political process.

Paul Simon was among the more vocal and effective advocates of campaign finance reform, and his leadership helped clear the way for the McCain-Feingold bill, passed 5 years after his departure.

Even after his retirement, Paul Simon remained committed to raising citizens' understanding of and faith in Government and politics through his writings and his work to begin Southern Illinois University's Public Policy Institute.

Anyone who knew or worked with Paul will miss his probing intellect, his self-deprecating wit, his integrity, and his leadership. I will never forget one of the last days that Senator Simon served, all of us surprised him during a vote by coming to the floor wearing bow ties. I will never forget the look on his face. We tried to replicate Paul Simon's look, but we could never replicate his soul, his character, his personality, his drive, his intellect, his prodigious writing as the author of, I know, more than a dozen books.

Paul Simon was a friend. Paul Simon was a giant on whom we depended for the guidance, the leadership, and the courage that this Senate has come to expect of people as capable as he was when he served. We will miss him dearly.

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. FRIST. 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. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute and respect to Senator Paul Simon who, as we know, died earlier today following surgery at the age of 75. On behalf of the Senate, I do extend my deepest condolences to the Simon family. He was a wonderful man, a wonderful Senator, always thoughtful, always plain spoken, and a man of impeccable integrity.

Among his many accomplishments, Senator Simon was the chief Democratic sponsor of the balanced budget amendment. In 1990, his margin of victory over the challenger was the highest of any contested candidate in the Nation for Senator or Governor.

He authored 15 books. He received 39 honorary degrees. It was just a few

weeks ago that he came by my office, as he went by many Senators' offices, not stopping, not resting at all, but arguing for, making the case for a wonderfully innovative program that helps expand and express the understanding of Americans, of college students, of people just out of college for events around the world, to give people the opportunity to serve overseas for a period of time and then to come back and share that knowledge and experience.

The fact that he came by the office—and it seems like yesterday; it was several weeks ago now—and he had his flip charts. One by one, in that sort of scholarly, serious, academic way, expressing the truth, what he knew would work in a creative and innovative way impressed me. Indeed, it should be the goal of all of us, once we leave this body, to continue the process, participating as actively as he demonstrated several weeks ago.

He was a champion of the people and, indeed, a credit to the United States of America. To his family, to his friends, to his loved ones, our condolences go out to them over the coming days.

THE FIRST ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE ON CIVIC EDUCATION

Mr. DASCHLE. There is a great, possibly prophetic, story from the end of the Constitutional Convention in 1789. For weeks, delegates to the convention had labored in the Philadelphia heat to draft a Constitution. Every day, crowds waited outside Independence Hall for any news of their progress. Finally, a draft was agreed upon. As Benjamin Franklin emerged from the hall, a woman asked, "Dr Franklin, what have you given us: A monarchy? Or a republic?" Franklin famously replied, "A republic—if you can keep it."

Some of our founders would, no doubt, be surprised that we have indeed managed to keep this republic they dared to imagine and create more than 200 years ago.

What has enabled the United States to become the world's oldest surviving democracy is more than luck. It is more, even, than divine providence. It is also the result of deliberate work and effort by generations of Americans to understand and protect the principles on which our nation was founded, and to pass those lessons on, undiminished, to future generations.

That is the heart of what we mean by "civic education."

I know the majority leader shares my belief that Congress has an important role to play in ensuring that civic education in America remains strong and vital and that it reaches all Americans. For that reason, it was an honor for both of us, along with many of our colleagues, to attend the First Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education from September 20th to the 22nd of this year, in Washington, D.C.

The conference brought together education and civic leaders and others

from all 50 States and the District of Columbia and gave them an opportunity to compare notes about what is happening in their States to strengthen civic education. Each State team also adopted a State action plan, which they will implement before the Second Annual Conference, which will be held in December 2004, also in Washington. I have the South Dakota State action plan, which I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CIVIC EDUCATION PLAN FOR THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Members of the South Dakota delegation, who attended the First Annual Conference On Civic Education in Washington D.C. in September 2003, have devised a plan for analyzing and improving civic education in the state. The South Dakota delegation comprised of Glenna Foubert, President of the South Dakota State Board of Education, Representative Gerry Lange, Jack Lyons, Chair of the South Dakota Humanities Council, Bob Sutton, Executive Director of the South Dakota Community Foundation, and Senator Drue Vitter have planned a conference entitled "Dialogue On Civic Education in South Dakota." This event will take place in the capital building in Pierre on November 10, 2003.

A variety of state educators and state administrators have been invited to attend the conference that will focus on a historic overview of civic education, the current status of civic education, state certification requirements and teacher preparation, and successful programs. Members of the S.D. delegation will act as panelists for the event. Plenty of time will be allowed for observations and questions from those attending the conference.

The S.D. delegation has tentative plans for a follow-up conference to be held in the state in either the spring or summer. This event probably would be held in the Eastern part of the state.

The South Dakota delegation hopes to convey to its conference attendees the enthusiasm that they encountered at the Washington conference for improving and revitalizing civic education in the nation and the state.

Mr. FRIST. I was very pleased to join the distinguished Senator from South Dakota, Senator DASCHLE, and our leadership colleagues in the House of Representatives in hosting Congress's first Civic Education conference.

On behalf of the entire Senate, I want to recognize and thank the cosponsors of the first conference, the Alliance for Democracy and its members: the Center for Civic Education, the Center on the Congress at Indiana University and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

It is my understanding that there will be a total of five Congressional Conferences on Civic Education. These conferences will enable us to give civic education and civic participation the sustained, national attention they deserve but have not always gotten.

It is our hope to explore, at these annual conferences, the critical role civic education plays in promoting civic participation—which is really the lifeblood of any democracy.

We also want to find new and better ways to work with schools and with education leaders to create first-rate citizenship education programs in our nation's schools. I know this is an interest that the Senator from South Dakota shares.

I think this first conference provided an excellent start on that goal. I ask unanimous consent to have the State action plan for my State of Tennessee printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CIVIC EDUCATION PLAN FOR THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

"Civic education should be a central purpose of education essential to the well-being of representative democracy."

"Civic education should be seen as a core subject. Well-defined state standards and curricular requirements are necessary to ensure civic education is taught effectively at each grade level."

"Policies that support 'Quality teacher education and professional development' are important to insure effective classroom instruction and raise student achievement."

"Classroom programs that foster an understanding of fundamental constitutional principles through . . . service learning, discussion of current events, or simulations . . . are essential to civic education."

Mr. FRIST. With these four principles in mind, the Tennessee delegation has made the following Tennessee State Action Plan:

Reconvene in Tennessee to discuss further plans, an early December meeting is planned to include the entire delegation.

A follow-up meeting will include each delegate bringing "to the table" persons of influence that will help deliver our mission reviving "Civics in the Classroom."

Janis Kyser and Rep. Joe Towns will attend a Youth For Justice meeting to help with organizing a 501c3 organization to serve as a statewide clearing house for LRE services; Conduct an intensive state-wide LRE survey to determine what is happening, what needs to happen and where are the gaps in service; Plan and conduct a Statewide LRE conference.

Tennessee Delegation: Ms. Janis Kyser, State Facilitator; Senator Randy McNally, Tennessee State Senate; Representative Beth Harwell, Tennessee House of Representatives; Representative Joe Towns, Jr., Tennessee House of Representatives; Mr. Richard Ray, Chairman State School Board; Mr. Bruce Opie, Legislative Liaison, Tennessee Department of Education; Dr. Ashley Smith Jr., President Tennessee Middle School Association.

Mr. DASCHLE. I share the Majority Leader's belief that schools are critical in this effort. We must do a better job of educating our children to be the productive and involved citizens that our democracy, our country, needs.

Mr. FRIST. The Senator from South Dakota is correct. There are other important partners as well.

Democracy isn't something that just happens to us. It's something each of us must actively create. Citizenship gives us rights, but it also gives us responsibilities. Each of us has a responsibility to understand the great principles on which our great country was