

We were well on our way. Louisiana was doing great. Then this administration came in and said: Your plan, although you like it and the people of Louisiana like it and you are making progress, I do not think it is strong enough. He, the leadership, pushed this country into an even stricter plan. The leadership, the administration, said: If you go there, I will be there. I will help and provide the funding in the budget for No Child Left Behind.

One of the reasons I am going to vote against this budget tomorrow is because that did not come true, because it is short \$9 billion. For Louisiana, it means about \$200 million.

I have schools that have been rated as in need of improvement. They are trying so hard, and they are doing a beautiful job. But they need to hire a few more teachers. This administration said it would be there to help hire the teachers. The President said that, but it is not in his budget, and it is not in the budget in the chairman's mark to help them.

Unfortunately, one of the small items that is in the budget which really pours salt on the wound is, while we do not have the \$9 billion for No Child Left Behind, I want to share with everyone what is in the budget, which is very hard to read. What is in the budget is \$50 million to send kids from public schools to private schools, basically. It reserves \$50 million for school choice initiatives that move children from public schools to private schools.

Now we have the situation where we are not going to fund taking children from lower performing schools to move them into higher performing public schools, but we are going to specifically provide additional money to move them into private schools.

For the record, in Chicago, under the President's plan, 125,000 students were eligible for transfer, meaning that 125,000 students found themselves in schools that did not make the mark.

They requested a transfer to a higher performing public school, which is one

of the promises of No Child Left Behind, but only 3,000 were transferred. Why? Because there is no space. Why? Because they do not have the money to hire additional teachers. Why? Because the President's budget specifically prohibits money from being used for school construction, because the Republican leadership, led by President Bush, does not want money spent on school construction.

I do not know how children are moved from a lower performing school to a higher performing school if the higher performing school is filled unless classrooms are added, expanded, or teachers are added. Because he flat-funded the teacher section and prohibits money from being used to build additional schools, I am not quite sure how our superintendents, Democrats or Republicans, are going to handle it, but they have a real challenge before them.

In Los Angeles, we have 230,000 children who are eligible for transfer. I do not think anybody in the Chamber could guess how many actually were transferred. One hundred students. Two hundred thirty thousand children are eligible, and 100 were transferred.

I learned today, and I am going to submit for the RECORD, if I can verify it—and if not, I will remove this from the Record—there has not been a new school built in L.A. in the last 20 years. That may not be correct, but I want to say it tonight. If it is not, I will remove it from the RECORD. L.A. is growing so fast, and these children have no place to go, and this budget does not help them get anywhere. It says instead of helping children go to new public schools, we are going to send them to private schools.

Of course, there are no spaces in the private schools, either, so I am not sure where we are going to send them.

In Baltimore, 30,000 children—that is this year—last year were eligible for transfer. Only 194 were transferred. In New Orleans, in my home city, 35,000 children were in failing schools. Only

400 were transferred. The rest were denied because of lack of space in higher performing schools.

My amendment is going to remove the \$50 million, and say no money can be spent in this budget sending children to private schools until we provide options for them to go to public schools. Many of these families would choose public schools, but according to this budget they cannot go because we will not help them add teachers, and they are strictly prohibited from using the money for school construction in this budget.

Those are the two amendments: One to help spouses in the military. I think we can find a few million dollars to help them and I am hoping to take this out of the budget so we can keep our priorities straight, which is helping all schools with the best we can, but living up to our promises of No Child Left Behind first.

When we have funded that effort, which is not just any other Government program—I know we do not fund every Government program at the authorized levels, but this is different. This was a special promise made. This was the foundation of a new beginning for our public schools. This was a promise that was made to the people of our country, and it is a promise that is not fulfilled in this budget, which is why, again, I will vote against it, and I will be pleased to offer these amendments in the morning.

I yield back my time.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:02 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 11, 2004, at 9:30 a.m.