

HEAD START PROGRAM  
REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I now turn to a topic not as good as what I just talked about. In the final hours of the Congress, as we have here today—maybe going into tomorrow—I am always amazed at how those who are well off in our society, those who are doing quite well, how they always get taken care of in the final hours when the Congress closes down. Tax extenders—why, there is stuff for everybody in there, for the people who are doing well. A continuing resolution will come through, basically taking care of all the running of Government. We have a few other cats and dogs coming through here. It is always at this time that I am amazed at how often it is that people who are at the bottom rung of our ladder economically speaking fall through the cracks and no one cares. Hey, we have business to do here. We have to get the tax extenders through. We have to get out of here and go home.

Because of the failure of the Appropriations Committee in the House, because of their failure to do a small extension, which I will explain in a second, because of their failure, beginning in January, 54,000 kids will not be able to go to Head Start Programs in this country. Fifty-four thousand kids have been in Head Start Programs in December and November, but in January, January 3—they probably won't be going to Head Start. Now, again, they will only be out for a couple of months because once we get back in here and we do another extension, either a CR—a continuing resolution—or an omnibus bill, we will take care of it. The authorizers aren't opposed to it; I have checked with them. The appropriators aren't opposed to it. But it wasn't put in the bill. They filed the rule in the House, and they can't change it, they say, now.

Let me describe what I am talking about, why 54,000 kids—poor kids—won't get Head Start beginning in January. What happened was on January 18, 2001, a rule was promulgated from the Department of Health and Human Services. A rule was promulgated which said that by January 18, 2006—last January 18—it required that all Head Start children be transported only on buses that are or very closely match school buses. Well, I have pointed out continually since that time that this is very onerous for a lot of kids who are now transported on paratransit buses. These are transportation vehicles which are not school buses, but they are paratransit vehicles which usually take the elderly to places or they take people with disabilities to work or to shop or whatever. They are paratransit vehicles. They are usually smaller vehicles, but they are not a "schoolbus." But they are effectively used, and have been for many years, to transport kids to Head Start Programs. Of course, the children are transported in child safety seats that are placed on the paratransit buses.

Well, they estimate there are about 54,000 kids in America today who get transported to and from Head Start using paratransit. The rule which said they had to go on schoolbuses was supposed to go into effect last January 18. Well, it didn't. Why? Because a lot of us here bipartisanshiply said: Wait a minute, this is not right. This is not right. We need to fix this.

Well, how do you fix it? You fix it with Head Start reauthorization. The last Head Start reauthorization was in 1998. We thought there was going to be a Head Start reauthorization this year. We thought, finally, this year we are going to get a Head Start reauthorization bill and we will take care of this mess created by this rule of the Department of Health and Human Services. So we extended this deadline from January 18; we extended it until June.

Well, they still hadn't passed a Head Start reauthorization, so on the Katrina supplemental we extended it until December 31 of this year. So what we did was we extended a moratorium, an abeyance of that rule until December 31 of this year so that kids—Head Start kids had been riding paratransit buses to and from Head Start since—well, for years but since January 18 of this year when that rule was supposed to go into effect, the rule that said they can't ride them anymore, which, again, is nonsense—nonsense. It is much cheaper, it is just as effective, and there are a number of other reasons why riding these paratransit buses are fine for these kids. So we put it off. We held this rule in abeyance until December 31; that is, this December 31. Once again, we didn't get a Head Start reauthorization, so we wanted to extend it again past December 31. So how do you extend it? You extend it on the appropriations bill, the continuing resolution.

Now, had we done our job and gotten the various appropriations bills up, we would have put this in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. We would have extended the time probably until next September 30 to give us time to pass a Head Start reauthorization. So I called over last night. I talked to the staff director of the House Appropriations Committee. I told him about this: Can't you put it in? There is no opposition to it. Well, they didn't put it in. I called him today. He said, well, he checked with the authorizing committee and he said the authorizing committee was opposed to it. I couldn't believe it. So I called the chairman of the authorizing committee, Congressman McKEON from California, with whom I have worked in the past. I talked to him about it. He got back to me and he said: I don't have any opposition to it. I checked with the appropriators; the appropriators didn't have any opposition to it on either side of the aisle. They thought: Yes, this is fine. But it was left out.

You know, if this had been a provision to take care of some wealthy peo-

ple in this country, some special interest group, you can bet it would not have been dropped. It wouldn't have been dropped. But now 54,000 kids won't get to go to Head Start.

I mentioned that to someone today, and here is what they said: Well, why can't their mamas take them? I am not talking about kids who have BMWs or SUVs. These are poor kids. They don't have cars. They don't have vehicles. I am not talking about middle-income kids who live in the suburbs; I am talking about the poorest kids in our country going to Head Start Programs. They don't have mamas who can take them in an SUV or a carpool. So here we are.

So I put the word out. I said: Well, when that CR comes over here, it is amendable. I will offer an amendment to put it on there. There is no cost. Everybody is for it. Nobody wants to object. Now I hear that if I do, there will be a motion to table my amendment. They will table it because the House will send over their continuing resolution and then they are going to go home, adjourn and go home. So if I offered my amendment, and if it were to pass, it would mean the House would either have to stay in or come back.

Then they will tell me, Oh, you can't do that, HARKIN, because don't you know the Government will shut down. You see, the continuing resolution that we are on now funds the Government until midnight tonight. They will say if you do that, they will have to come back, it will shut the Government down, and blah, blah, blah. Mr. President, those 54,000 kids not going to Head Start, January, February, maybe March until we can get our bill through, I think is more important—I stand tonight to tell you and tell anyone who is watching, it is more important for those 54,000 kids to go to Head Start in January, February, and March than it is to allow 435 Congressmen to get out of town and go home. It is more important.

Once in a while I have gotten a reputation around here for doing things in the last hour. Usually it is because something such as this happens. It seems to me it is always true that at the end, the final hour, it is something such as this, and some on the bottom rungs of the economic or social ladder of this country get dropped and forgotten. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves. We can't fix this? We can't take care of this? Because they filed, they have a rule, this and that?

I tried to get this on the postal reform bill. There is a postal reform bill out there floating around someplace. Oh, we can't do it now. They are done writing it and blah, blah, blah. We just can't do it.

It is a shame, isn't it? It is a shame that we can take care of the rich and the powerful, it is a shame that we can take care of postal reform. It is a shame we can take care of continuing the resolution to keep everyone paid in the Federal Government. But, we can't

find it in ourselves somehow to take care of these kids, these Head Start kids. We are just going to say I am sorry, that is the way it is.

I haven't made up my mind yet whether I am going to offer this amendment tonight, or whenever that CR gets over. I have a right to. It will probably get tabled which means killed. The word has already gone out that we will probably have to table the Harkin amendment. I suppose people will say there goes HARKIN again. We want to get out of town and he has something else.

I don't know. I haven't made up my mind yet. I wanted to set the record straight. You are going to hear about it. Senators are going to hear about this in January. You are going to hear about the fact that Head Start kids for some reason can't get on these paratransit buses and we are wondering why it happened.

I don't know, I may offer the amendment tonight, and if someone moves to table, I may ask for a rollcall vote, and we will see how important 54,000 kids are compared to 435 Congressmen over there who can't come back in a moment to take care of these kids in January and February, the coldest parts of the winter in certain parts of our country. So we will have to see, we will see what happens to the CR when it comes over. I guess I want to tell my colleagues they will probably have to vote on this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

#### HONORING JEANE KIRKPATRICK

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise to pay homage to a very special lady. I mourn her passing today, a great American patriot, Jeane Jordan Kirkpatrick. She, of course, is best known as our Ambassador to the United Nations under the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, but her history was of a dedicated American in public service before that.

She first rose to international prominence as a foreign policy adviser to Ronald Reagan's first Presidential campaign. Although she considered herself a Democrat at that time, she always placed principle above partisanship. In Governor Reagan, she saw a man who shared her commitment to freedom and democracy and was willing to call evil by name.

As America's first female permanent representative to the United Nations, Jeane served President Reagan from 1981 to 1985, and was an eloquent promoter of American values. She once said, "I think that it's always appropriate for Americans and for American foreign policy to make it clear why we feel that self-government is most compatible with peace, the well-being of people, and human dignity."

Since leaving full-time Government service, Jeane Kirkpatrick has served as an educator, commentator, a wise

woman whose counsel has been highly sought after. She has continued to be a passionate advocate for human rights and has also actively supported missile defense, United Nations reform, and the war against Islamic fascism. Most recently, I have had the pleasure of working with Jeane on the Committee on the Present Danger, which Senator LIEBERMAN and I cochair, and on which she played an important advisory role.

America has lost a great patriot and defender in Jeane Kirkpatrick. She will be sorely missed, but she will certainly be fondly remembered.

#### HONORING CONGRESSIONAL SERVICE

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I also will say a word about a couple of my colleagues who are leaving, and I will be brief.

##### WILLIAM FRIST

I know we were all impressed with the comments of our majority leader, BILL FRIST, yesterday. I wish him godspeed in his new endeavors. He certainly has been a joy to work with as part of the Republican leadership because of his good temperament, his wise counsel, his knowledge of human nature, and his deep commitment to this body, the people of Tennessee and, most importantly, to the United States of America.

##### DENNIS HASTERT

I also want to acknowledge that we will no longer have as Speaker of the House of Representatives in a couple of weeks a colleague of mine when I first came to the House of Representatives, DENNIS HASTERT of Illinois. I saw DENNIS this morning at the White House with the President, who also acknowledged the great contribution of DENNIS during his period as Speaker of the House. Since we were colleagues coming to the House of Representatives in 1986, I will say a special word of thanks to DENNIS for his service.

##### KATIE ALTSHULER

Mr. President, I wish to make some comments about Katie Altshuler. Katie has been the head of the Republican policy committee the last several months and has served several of us here in this body, primarily with her work here on the floor of the Senate. Katie will be greatly missed by all the staff of the Republican policy committee but also by the staff of all of the Senate family here, who know that she was a very big part of that Senate family. She and her husband will be returning to Oklahoma. I know all of us wish her well. She is one of those little sparks of humanity who makes life a little bit more worthwhile at some of these long nights and weekends that we occasionally have to spend here in the Senate.

##### RICK SANTORUM

I also acknowledge that several of my colleagues will not be with us after we conclude our business tonight, tomorrow, the next day, or whenever we

are going to conclude our business here, colleagues with whom I have served with a great deal of pleasure. My friend RICK SANTORUM was serving in the leadership. We both served in the House of Representatives. He was a great inspiration to the Republican team here, and I know everyone, Democrat and Republican, respects him for his commitment, values, and ideals.

##### CONRAD BURNS

CONRAD BURNS is a fellow westerner with whom I have shared much and always enjoyed the humor that CONRAD brought to this body.

##### JIM TALENT

JIM TALENT from Missouri is another colleague from the House of Representatives. He is another serious and dedicated public servant whom I suspect we will see more of in the future.

##### GEORGE ALLEN

GEORGE ALLEN, a great colleague with whom I also served one term in the House of Representatives, and whose philosophy of "freedom first" is certainly one that I share. I know we are going to miss GEORGE and his sage counsel in the years to come.

##### MIKE DEWINE

MIKE DEWINE and I served together on the Judiciary Committee. We came together to the Senate at the same time and I will certainly miss MIKE's friendship as well.

##### LINCOLN CHAFEE AND PAUL SARBANES

Finally, LINCOLN CHAFEE. Although I mentioned Republicans in this list, I certainly don't want to forget, of course, PAUL SARBANES, who will be leaving at the end of this year, and others in the House of Representatives with whom I served as well. I know we all move on at some time and that none of us is irreplaceable. But by the same token, these colleagues of ours who will be leaving will be missed and they will be remembered for their great service to the Senate, to their States, and to the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, what is the current status on the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in a period of morning business.

#### VETERANS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND S. 3421

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have sought recognition in these waning hours of the 109th Congress to provide a summary of the good work accomplished over the last 2 years on behalf of America's veterans, and to comment on comprehensive legislation that is now pending in the Senate. I provide this summary in my capacity as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a title I will soon pass on to my friend, Senator DANNY AKAKA of Hawaii.

Before the 109th Congress convened, I made a decision to serve as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs