

the school day—a minimum of 5 hours or as long as a typical day in the K–12 system.

Never before, not even in No Child Left Behind, has the Federal Government told school districts in Maryville or Murfreesboro or Memphis how to run their schools in such detail.

The bill also includes requirements that sound a lot like what hasn't worked so well under No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and waivers, such as: that States must ensure that preschool teachers have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education—sounds a lot like the Highly Qualified Teacher provision; that States must establish early learning and development standards and age appropriate standardized tests aligned to the State's academic standards under No Child Left Behind, which for more than 40 States now means Common Core.

Furthermore, that these standards, curriculum, and tests must be: developmentally appropriate; culturally and linguistically appropriate; address all domains of school readiness, including physical well-being, et cetera.

Then there are an assortment of vague requirements on States, which will depend on the Department of Education issuing hundreds of pages of regulations and guidance of histories to define and implement, such things as: vision, dental, and health services; mandatory family engagement such as parent conferences; nutritious meals and snack options—what they consist of; physical activity programs that are evidence-based according to guidelines; evidence-based health and safety standards; regular classroom observations and coaching for teachers.

Finally, the bill also includes new maintenance of effort standards. We know what happened with those in Medicaid, during the last 5 or 6 years.

As State economies tumbled, States were forced to continue to spend more on Medicaid by maintenance of effort requirements. And that resulted in less money for higher education and driving up tuition rates.

Washington would pay 90 percent of the program's cost for the first year for the Democratic proposal, but the required share of State spending will increase each year, eventually half the bill to Governors after 8 years. And that also has a familiar ring.

Sounds a lot like Medicaid, where the State average is about 43 percent and most of the rules are Federal, even though the States pay nearly half.

What has happened with that model? Well, when I was Governor in the 1980s in Tennessee, Medicaid was 8 percent of the State budget. Today it's 30 percent of the State budget.

Americans don't want a national school board. We'd like to move in a different direction. I'd like to take, as an example of why we should, the testimony of a witness at a HELP Committee hearing on this issue.

Superintendent John White of Louisiana testified that the "greatest bar-

rier to achieving these conditions that we want in early childhood education—no less than financial resources themselves—is the fragmentation of our country's early childhood education system."

He went on to say: "You can't claim to be providing full access and full choice when you have separate centers, separate funding streams, separate sets of regulations that literally require no coordination in the offering of seats, even within the same neighborhood."

That's the situation in Louisiana, and the Government Accountability Office says it's true around the country.

Forty-five different programs support early education and child care. Thirty-three of those permit the use of funds to provide support or related services to children from birth through 5. Twelve programs have the explicit purpose to provide childhood and preschool or child care services.

Then there are 5 tax provisions that subsidize private expenditures in the area of early childhood and preschool programs.

This year, Congress appropriated roughly \$15 billion for the 12 programs explicitly focused on early childhood, Head Start, Race to the Top, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

And then there's another \$3 billion in tax credits.

An earlier witness before our committee estimated that when you add up the 33 programs, the total Federal spending in this area is now about \$22 billion.

So, we believe a better way to give all children the best early learning experience is to provide States with the flexibility to use some or all of the more than \$22 billion in Federal money that we already spend and allow States to use it in the way that best suits their needs.

Under my proposal, Superintendent White would be able to take Louisiana's share of the \$22 billion that the Federal Government spends on early childhood and preschool programs—about \$300 million—and do just that. In Tennessee, we'd have about \$440 million a year.

If we were given this kind of flexibility, we could increase the vouchers for child care from 39,000 to 139,000; or the State-funded voluntary preschool program, from 18,000 4-year-olds to 109,000. Or we could expand Head Start, from 17,000 children to 56,000 or some combination of that. We could create Centers of Excellence and otherwise leave to Tennessee to figure out what works best for Tennesseans.

So, the question is not whether, but how best to make early childhood education available to the largest possible number of children. The answer to that question is to not create a national school board for 3- and 4-year-olds to go along with the one we've effectively established for K–12 education.

That is why I opposed the Democratic proposal and instead offered a proposal to enable States to take responsibility for developing the early learning systems that best meet their needs and to use up to \$22 billion of existing federal dollars to help fund that.

BELARUS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, the 2014 Ice Hockey World Championship began on May 9 in Minsk, Belarus, one of the last vestiges of authoritarianism in Europe. By hosting a global sports competition that promotes integrity and observes uniform regulations, Belarus should take this opportunity to show the international community that it will follow suit and support the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens.

This year also marks the 20th year of President Lukashenka's iron-fisted Presidency whose elections have been marred by the detention of political opponents and civil society actors, as well as the lack of an open and free press. During his rule, he has eliminated all political opposition, eroded the rule of law, and curtailed the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association.

President Lukashenka, the international community calls on you to support the right of every Belarusian citizen to be free. We call on you to take decisive steps towards making Belarus an open and democratic country where the rules of politics, as well as those of sports, are governed by free and fair standards.

NATIONAL TOURETTE SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I wish to recognize National Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month, which runs from May 15, 2014, through June 15, 2014. This annual observance is an opportunity for us to help the many Americans affected by Tourette syndrome by raising awareness and encouraging expanded investments in research.

Tourette syndrome, or TS, is a neurological disorder that typically develops during childhood. TS is characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics, which can range from mild to severe and disabling. The National Institutes of Health, NIH, estimates that 200,000 Americans have the most severe form of TS and as many as 1 in 100 Americans exhibit milder symptoms such as chronic motor or vocal tics. Additionally, people with TS often have other co-occurring mental or behavior health conditions. A child diagnosed with TS has a 79-percent chance of being diagnosed with another condition such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ADHD, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, OCD, anxiety or depression.

An often misunderstood and stigmatizing disorder, TS can have a profound and negative impact on the quality of life of those affected. Research indicates that TS may be hereditary and that abnormal signaling between brain circuits plays a casual role, but the cause of the disorder remains unknown. Treatments for TS are also limited, although several agents have proven effective in mitigating tics and improving social functioning.

Expanding our national research efforts on TS can help us to identify the cause, discover new treatments, and find a cure. Last session, I introduced the Collaborative Academic Research Efforts, CARE, for Tourette Syndrome Act, which builds upon our national research efforts in two major ways. First, the bill expands and intensifies data collection on the prevalence of TS and the availability of medical and social services for those with TS and their families. Second, the bill establishes centers of excellence to conduct in depth, multidisciplinary research into the causes, treatments, diagnosis, and prevention of TS.

National Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month, which runs from May 15 to June 15, presents us with an opportunity to advocate for the passage of the Collaborative Academic Research Efforts, CARE, for Tourette Syndrome Act (S. 637). We must provide the NIH with the tools necessary to further our understanding of TS. Through greater awareness, expanded information, and enhanced therapies and treatments, it is my hope that we will improve the quality of life for all people touched by TS.

HARRISBURG REGIONAL CHAMBER ANNIVERSARY

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I wish to recognize the Harrisburg Regional Chamber on its 100th anniversary.

The Harrisburg Regional Chamber was established in 1914 by a group of local businessmen whose goal was to promote and grow Harrisburg's manufacturing and distribution industries. Since then, the Harrisburg Regional Chamber has been a catalyst for smart public policy, job creation, and business growth in central Pennsylvania. Starting with 200 initial members, the Harrisburg Regional Chamber has grown to represent 1,300 members who employ nearly 100,000 people in the capital city region.

Over the course of its 100 years, the Harrisburg Regional Chamber has played a key role in the planning and development of numerous construction and infrastructure projects in the region. Without the chamber's assistance, historic structures such as the Penn-Harris Hotel may not have ever been built. The chamber was also instrumental in developing the region's first airport in 1930. Additionally, the chamber backed U.S. military construction projects at Olmstead Army

Air Depot in Middletown, the U.S. Army General Depot at New Cumberland Army Depot, and at Carlisle Barracks.

Since 2001, the Harrisburg Regional Chamber has completed 355 projects, which have had an overall economic impact of \$416 million and assisted businesses throughout the region create and retain over 12,500 jobs.

The Harrisburg Regional Chamber is dedicated to the success of the community and the members it represents. It continues to strive toward the fulfillment of its core mission by adhering to a set of fundamental values: excellence, leadership, inclusion, innovation, and fun.

Today, I want to recognize the significant contributions that the Harrisburg Regional Chamber makes to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I wish the chamber all the best as it continues its efforts to lead by example with a vision for a better future for all and as it continues to grow and serve central Pennsylvania. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT MICHELE L. JONES

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I wish to recognize TSgt Michele L. Jones, originally from Pawcatuck, CT, on the occasion of her retirement from the U.S. Air Force. Since enlisting in the Air Force on December 17, 1992, she has served honorably all over the world—Iraq, Japan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Korea—while participating in and directly supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Technical Sergeant Jones started her career as an information management apprentice at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, NE. Following that post, she was transferred in 1995 to Kunsan Air Force Base in the Republic of Korea, the first of many demanding overseas assignments. She then served at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama from 1997 to 1999.

Continuing her rise through the ranks, Technical Sergeant Jones served again in the Republic of Korea, at Osan Air Force Base, from 1999 to 2000. This was immediately followed by a 7-year tour in Japan with the 35th Civil Engineer Squadron at Misawa Air Force Base, where she served in the Big Sister Program and the Special Olympics.

As a noncommissioned officer, Technical Sergeant Jones was recognized as a top leader and expeditionary airman. While in Japan, she deployed to Saudi Arabia and Iraq and distinguished herself while serving with the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team in Baghdad. During this tour, she earned high praise from LTG David Petraeus, then the commanding general of Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq. In addition to the personal recognition she has received, Technical

Sergeant Jones' hard work and leadership helped her units earn awards as top commands in Japan and the Air Force.

Following these demanding operational tours, Technical Sergeant Jones transferred to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada in 2007. Assigned as the 563rd Rescue Group's information manager, she once again deployed to Iraq in 2008, serving as the noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Task Force 134 in Baghdad, Iraq. She returned to Nellis Air Force Base and served in the 53rd Test and Evaluation Group before deploying in 2010 to Qatar. There, she served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of protocol at Al Udeid Air Base, supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn.

Finally, during Technical Sergeant Jones' long and exemplary career, she has interacted regularly with Congress. While deployed to MacDill Air Force Base, where she supported U.S. Central Command, or CENTCOM, Technical Sergeant Jones coordinated Congressional delegation visits to the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility, which included Iraq and Afghanistan. The able travel assistance she offered to Members of Congress and senior Defense Department leaders earned personal recognition from the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and Vice President of the United States. Since 2012, Technical Sergeant Jones has provided additional outstanding support through her service in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs.

I am delighted to commend Technical Sergeant Jones for her more than two decades of distinguished service to our Nation. I wish her the best as she begins the next chapter of her life.●

TRIBUTE TO GIBB STEELE

• Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I am pleased to commend Mr. Gibb Steele of Longwood, MS, for his service and contributions to the State of Mississippi while serving as the 78th president of the Delta Council. On May 30, 2014, Mr. Steele will conclude his term as president. I am grateful for his leadership and dedication to improving the quality of life in the Mississippi Delta and the entire State. Since 1935, Delta Council has played an important role in the promotion of agriculture, flood control, and economic development in the delta, which is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world.

Mr. Steele's tenure as council president coincided with the development and eventual enactment of the 2014 farm bill. Throughout that process, he provided beneficial input from Southern rice, cotton, corn, soybean, and catfish producers, which helped Congress craft a new, 5-year agriculture policy bill. He was committed to meeting the diverse needs of producers from various regions of the country who face different risks when providing food and