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**ABSTRACT**

This report provides a transcription of the speeches and written statements presented at a Senate hearing concerning the state of crisis within American education. The hearing examines whether the nation is meeting its education goals and reviews proposals to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. It focuses on problems and reforms in elementary and secondary education, the strengths and weaknesses of higher education, and student access to federal aid programs. Testimony is provided by the following individuals: Hameen Diggins, an 8th grader at Shoemaker Middle School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Anikee Ajagunna, Senior, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Claiborne Pell, U.S. Senator from the State of Rhode Island; Roy Romer, Governor of the State of Colorado; Constance Clayton, Superintendent, Philadelphia Public Schools, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Floretta McKenzie, President, the McKenzie Group, District of Columbia; Michael Timpane, President, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York; James L. Bush, sponsor of the "I Have a Dream" program at the Mather School, Dorchester, Massachusetts; Chester E. Finn, Professor of Education at Vanderbilt and Director, Educational Excellence Network, District of Columbia; and Robert L. Albright, President, Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, North Carolina. (GLR)

**CONDITION OF AMERICA'S SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

ED333778

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON**

**LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS**

**FIRST SESSION**

ON

**EXAMINING WHETHER THE NATION IS MEETING ITS EDUCATION GOALS AND TO REVIEW PROPOSALS TO REAUTHORIZE THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS AND REFORMS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND ACCESS TO STUDENT FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS**

JANUARY 9, 1991

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

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# CONDITION OF AMERICA'S SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 1991

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:41 a.m., in room SD-430, Senator Edward M. Kennedy (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kennedy, Pell, Simon, Bingaman, Wellstone, Kassebaum, and Durenberger.

## OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY

The CHAIRMAN. We will come to order.

This is the second in a series of hearing that the Labor Committee is holding to help set the committee's agenda for the coming Congress. As I said at the first hearing, the Nation's attention is clearly and properly focused on the Persian Gulf; but Americans are also suffering at home, and we must deal with their needs as well.

Too many citizens have already become victims of the economic downturn. Too many young people suffer in inadequate schools. Too many college students cannot get financial aid to meet the college bills. Too many American families suffer from inadequate health care.

Today, the committee will examine education issues. We all know where we are. American education is in a State of crisis. A decade after the effort to improve them began, our schools have changed very little. Consider a few of the facts.

One out of every four students leaves school without graduating. Nearly one-third of the Nation's secondary school students are enrolled in a math or science course taught by a teacher not qualified to teach that course. In an international study of 13-year-olds, the U.S. students ranked last in math proficiency. But 68 percent of the students said they were good at mathematics.

A year ago, the White House and the Governors laid out an ambitious set of educational goals for the Nation to achieve by the year 2000. These goals call for preparing children to be ready to start school. They call for increases in the high school graduation rate, for high levels of competency in challenging subjects, for making our students first in the world of math and science, for improvements in literacy and for eliminating drugs and violence from our schools.

(1)

Setting goals is the easy part. The hard part is achieving them. School districts can't do this alone. Students can't do it alone. The National Government can't mandate it. Our schools need help. Our communities need help. Our students need help. We must identify effective education programs and find efficient ways to pay for them.

When he was running for office, President Bush said he wanted to be the education President, but since he took office in 1989, education has largely disappeared from the agenda. The summit meeting with the Governors in Charlottesville and the establishment of national goals were commendable. But there has been no follow-up. The Nation is making far too little progress with respect to education goals. It's not just a question of money; it is also a question of political will.

In this morning's hearing, we are raising questions that must be answered by this Congress. What assistance is needed by elementary and secondary schools to achieve the national goals by the year 2000? What has been done so far to provide it? What can we do to improve access to higher education and encourage more students to pursue it?

We look forward to hearing from the experts and from the students who are here this morning, and we look forward to doing all we can to make this a productive education conference.

Senator Simon.

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR SIMON

Senator SIMON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I applaud your having this series of hearings. There is no area where we are really determining what the future of this country is more than this field of education.

It is very interesting that in fiscal year 1949, when we had the GI Bill, we devoted 9 percent of our Federal budget to education. Today, if you exclude the school lunch program, we are devoting less than 4 percent of our Federal budget to education. Something is wrong. We simply have to invest in our future as we are not investing in our future today. We have to do a much, much better job.

Just one question for example. If you were to be asked which is the greater threat to our country today, a Soviet invasion of Western Europe or our inadequate attention to our schools, I think it is very clear that the greater threat is our inadequate attention to our schools. The Soviet threat has all but disappeared. And yet if you are to believe GAO figures, the Federal government is spending about seven times as much today for a threat of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe as we are on our schools. Something is out of whack.

You are right, Mr. Chairman, when you say setting goals isn't enough, but we haven't even set the goals. We have to set some goals, and then we have to fight for them. Under your leadership, I hope we can do precisely that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I know we are expecting our chairman of our Education Committee, Senator Pell, who has been a real leader in education policy.