

to make sure no child is left behind, every child must learn to read, and every child must learn to add and subtract. So in return for Federal dollars, we are asking States to design accountability systems to show parents and teachers whether or not children can read and write and add and subtract in grades three through eight.

The fundamental principle of this bill is that every child can learn, we expect every child to learn, and you must show us whether or not every child is learning. I read a quote one time from a young lady in New York. She said, "I don't ever remember taking an exam. They just kept passing me along. I ended up dropping out in the seventh grade. I basically felt nobody cared."

The story of children being just shuffled through the system is one of the saddest stories of America. "Let's just move them through." It's so much easier to move a child through than trying to figure out how to solve a child's problems. The first step to making sure that a child is not shuffled through is to test that child as to whether or not he or she can read and write or add and subtract.

The first way to solve a problem is to diagnose it. And so, what this bill says, it says every child can learn. And we want to know early, before it's too late, whether or not a child has a problem in learning. I understand taking tests aren't fun. Too bad. *[Laughter]* We need to know in America. We need to know whether or not children have got the basic education.

No longer is it acceptable to hide poor performance. No longer is it acceptable to keep results away from parents. One of the interesting things about this bill, it says that we're never going to give up on a school that's performing poorly, that when we find poor performance, a school will be given time and incentives and resources to correct their problems. A school will be given time to try other methodologies, perhaps other leadership, to make sure that people can succeed. If, however, schools don't per-

form, if, however, given the new resources, focused resources, they are unable to solve the problem of not educating their children, there must be real consequences. There must be a moment in which parents can say, "I've had enough of this school." Parents must be given real options in the face of failure in order to make sure reform is meaningful.

And so, therefore, this bill's second principle is, is that we trust parents to make the right decisions for their children. Any school that doesn't perform, any school that cannot catch up and do its job, a parent will have these options: a better public school, a tutor, or a charter school. We do not want children trapped in schools that will not change and will not teach.

The third principle of this bill is that we have got to trust the local folks on how to achieve standards, to meet the standards. In Washington, there's some smart people there, but the people who care most about the children in Hamilton are the citizens of Hamilton. The people who care most about the children in this school are the teachers and parents and school board members. And therefore, schools not only have the responsibility to improve; they now have the freedom to improve. The Federal Government will not micromanage how schools are run. We believe strongly—we believe strongly the best path to education reform is to trust the local people. And so the new role of the Federal Government is to set high standards, provide resources, hold people accountable, and liberate school districts to meet the standards.

I can't think of any better way to say to teachers, "We trust you." And first of all, we've got to thank all the teachers who are here. I thank you for teaching. Yours is indeed a noble profession, and our society is better off because you decided to teach. And by saying we trust local folks, we're really saying we trust you. We trust you. We want you to have as much flexibility as possible to see to it that every