

One of Judd Gregg's contributions to this bill was, he advocated supplemental services and the resources to back them up. He basically said that parents whose children go to failed schools must be given different alternatives. These children must be given an opportunity to receive additional education if the status quo is unacceptable. And so, when we say no child is left behind, the cornerstone of that is accountability, coupled with consequences in the accountability system.

The third principle involved in this bill is, you've got to trust the local people to make the decisions for the schools. The people of New Hampshire understand how to run their school system. This bill passes power out of Washington and provides flexibility for the Governors who, in turn, I hope, provide flexibilities for the local districts.

Listen, we have the Teacher of the Year here, and I want to thank her, and I want to thank all the teachers who are in this auditorium. There is nothing more that expresses our confidence, that says more about our confidence in you, than saying, "We're going to give you all the power you need to make the right decisions for the classrooms in which you teach."

Local control, flexibility, less strings from Washington really means that parents and teachers and community activists must not be bystanders when it comes to making sure every child learns. It's really important.

A lot of people after 9/11 said, "What can I do to help in America? What can I do to make America a better place?" You can support your public schools. You can mentor a child. You can teach a child to read. You can make sure your child turns off their TV at night, so they can learn to read better. You can make education the number one priority in your neighborhood.

And while we're waging war overseas, we're after illiteracy here at home. One of the most appalling statistics of our great land is the illiteracy rate amongst poor chil-

dren. It's really high at the fourth grade level, and that's unacceptable. I think Chairman Boehner said about 70 percent of the fourth grade impoverished children can't read. If you can't read in the fourth grade, you're likely not to be able to read in the eighth grade. And if you can't read in the eighth, you're likely not be able to read in high school. And if you can't read in high school, you're likely to fall into a life that—a life of despair and hopelessness. And that's not right in America.

And so therefore, this bill pays attention to reading. It's got a lot of money in it to develop programs that work. I'm tired, and I know these congressional leaders are tired of putting money into programs that don't work. Well, in reading, we know what works. It's time to fund curriculum and teacher training programs and reading programs not based upon what sounds good or some theory but based upon what works, so that children can learn to read in America.

We are focusing on early reading initiatives, so that the country can achieve this goal: Every child be reading at grade level by the third grade. That's an achievable goal. It's one that's going to insist upon making sure we've got accountability standards, flexibility, resource—focusing our resources, and using the things that work, proven curriculum. But we can do that in America. We can achieve this objective. We can meet this goal. And when we do, America will be a much better place.

You know, after 9/11, a lot of us have taken a hard look at how we live our lives, you know, the meaning of life. And that's good for our country. It's been an incredibly positive experience for Americans to sit around their dinner table and moms and dads to take a look at their kids and say, "You know something, being a mom or dad is the most important job I'll ever have." It's been good for our country to—for people to go to their houses of worship and pray for guidance. It's been good for our country for people to say, "Gosh, I want