

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS), and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) would vote "aye."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 216 Leg.]

YEAS—89

Akaka	Dodd	Lugar
Alexander	Dole	McCain
Allard	Domenici	McConnell
Allen	Dorgan	Mikulski
Baucus	Durbin	Miller
Bayh	Edwards	Murkowski
Bennett	Ensign	Murray
Biden	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Feinstein	Pryor
Breaux	Fitzgerald	Reed
Brownback	Frist	Reid
Bunning	Graham (FL)	Roberts
Burns	Graham (SC)	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Grassley	Santorum
Carpenter	Gregg	Sarbanes
Chafee	Hagel	Schumer
Chambliss	Hutchison	Sessions
Clinton	Jeffords	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson	Snowe
Coleman	Kennedy	Specter
Collins	Kerry	Stabenow
Conrad	Kohl	Stevens
Cornyn	Kyl	Sununu
Corzine	Landrieu	Talent
Craig	Lautenberg	Thomas
Crapo	Leahy	Voinovich
Daschle	Levin	Warner
Dayton	Lieberman	Wyden
DeWine	Lincoln	

NAYS—2

Byrd

Inhofe

NOT VOTING—9

Bond	Hatch	Lott
Campbell	Hollings	Nickles
Harkin	Inouye	Smith

The conference report was agreed to. Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

E-RATE PROGRAM

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, as we are awaiting the final moments of this session of Congress, there are deliberations going on in the Capitol about an agreement to come forth with legislation—my understanding, already passed by the House—that will allow Internet service to be provided to schools and libraries. This is the very popular and widely acclaimed E-Rate Program that had been set up back in the nineties. The idea was that we lower the cost of providing Internet to schools and libraries so that students who would not otherwise have an opportunity of experience on the Internet would be able to get it at school.

I visited such a school last week in Tallahassee, FL. It is a school that is state of the art in all of the electronic provisions but yet, as part of the school system of that county, Leon County, is able to afford it because virtually all of their schools do have the Internet provided. This particular school, Roberts Elementary, in a rural section outside of Tallahassee in Leon County, has a diverse student population. It spans the socioeconomic spectrum and, indeed, there are a number of students at this school who, if they did not have Internet experience at school, would not have the opportunity to learn how to use the Internet and have available to them the services on the Internet.

The long and short of it is we would be depriving, because of socioeconomic status, a significant part of our student population an equal opportunity to an education, and that is a standard we all hold up as something that is worthwhile to strive for.

It all comes down to tonight. The E-Rate Program is going to stop, not because there is any diabolical movement here to take it away, because there certainly is not—it is widely acclaimed and widely popular—but because of a new accounting glitch in one of our agencies. I won't go into the details of this new method of accounting. It is, in essence, saying you are going to have to take away the fund that would supply the Internet to schools at a reduced rate. The alternative to that is—and this is not a very palatable alternative—that telephone rates for the Universal Service Program are going to go up to provide this money to continue to provide Internet service to schools and libraries.

It can all be taken care of so easily—and I do not know of any disagreement on the substance of the issue—if we pass this bill tonight. It is my understanding there are a couple of Senators who have a hold on this for completely different reasons unrelated to any of this subject matter. There are discussions going on in this U.S. Capitol Building right now over the lifting of those objections so at the last few minutes, the clock is showing, of this session of the Senate, we can take up the House bill and pass it. That is all we have to do and do it by unanimous consent with no objections.

If we do not do this tonight, then we are going to have to come back and go through the whole process again—pass it in the House, pass it in the Senate—and in the meantime have schools such as Roberts Elementary in Tallahassee, FL, be concerned whether they are going to have an e-rate, at the same time threatening telephone subscribers by thinking their bills are going to go up in order to pay for this worthwhile program, and none of that is necessary.

I call on cooler heads to prevail and allow this program that is so necessary for the education of so many of our children to achieve that objective we all embrace, which is an equal opportunity for an education for all children.

Before I yield the floor, Mr. President, I see the Senator from Montana has just come in. Just so I may inform him, I have just given this Senator's impassioned plea for the E-Rate Program and why we need to pass this bill tonight. I have laid out the reasons, and I want the Senator from Montana to know a specific example of a school I visited last Friday, Roberts Elementary in Tallahassee, FL.

The Senator well knows not only universal service and the importance of universal service to the rural areas of his State, as I do with mine—no matter how long the lines are that have to be run out there—but that in that Universal Service Program is this funding mechanism for providing Internet service to schools and libraries.

The final point I wish to make for the Senator, who missed my remarks earlier, is that this is so important because there are many students whose families cannot afford Internet at home, and, therefore, their only experience of this is going to be getting it at school. That was clearly evident to me at Roberts Elementary in Tallahassee, FL.

It is my hope that now with the mellifluous and golden tones coming forth from the Senator from Montana, that he would bring us some good news about the negotiations of passing this bill tonight.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. I appreciate what Senator NELSON had to say, also, on this legislation. This Congress should not go sine die without passing these three pieces of legislation. All three of them are very important. In fact, I would say the E-911, the enhanced 911 bill, is probably the most glaring public safety legislation we have worked on in many years. One would think this legislation that says we are going to take the money that is collected and it has to be spent in our PSAPS—in other words, our communications centers—to upgrade their technology, so that when a 9-1-1 call comes in from a cell phone we can locate the caller. We have that in wired lines, but we do not have it so much in wireless phones. I think it is time that we do that.

This is a great piece of public safety legislation, and we have been working on it for about 4 years. One would think that would be a no-brainer. It took us long enough to pass legislation to make a 9-1-1 call go into the nearest first responder. It used to be if one was out of their home territory and their phone was in roam, they could dial 9-1-1 and they were apt to get the 600 Cafe in Miles City, MT. That does not do one a lot of good when they are on the outskirts of Tallahassee, FL. It did not know where to go, and now it does.

So we think this is very important legislation. The E-911 caucus was established by folks who work in public safety and public communications every day. We keep hearing what we