

for many working families, providing workers the ability to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for family needs.

This meant working parents could take care of their newborns without fear of losing their jobs and sources of income. Workers could care for an ailing family member or care for their own serious health conditions without having to worry about whether they would be able to come back to their careers.

Before the Family and Medical Leave Act, being a working parent meant having to choose between your job and taking care of yourself and your family. Today, thanks to this legislation, this attitude has changed for many families.

Since 1993, American workers have used the leave provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act more than 200 million times. This legislation has helped balance workplace demands with family needs for millions of hard-working men and women across the country. And there is no doubt that these are achievements we should all be proud of.

But we need to do more.

As families change, so should the laws designed to help them—our workforce, our economy, and our family responsibilities have changed dramatically over the past two decades. Women now make up half the workforce, and many families depend on two incomes. Family caregiving needs are on the rise, and both men and women provide critical care.

But according to a recent Department of Labor survey, only 60 percent of employees have access to FMLA leave—and 8 out of 10 eligible workers cannot afford to take leave when they need it.

For too many Americans, unpaid leave is not an option—it is unaffordable. Just 13 percent of the workforce has paid family leave through their employers, and less than 40 percent have personal medical leave through an employer-provided disability program.

It is clear that we need to do more to ensure families can earn the support they need. I am proud that both Senator MURRAY and Senator GILLIBRAND have stepped up and introduced legislation this Congress to address these shortcomings. I hope we will continue to see support for these bills and get more of my colleagues from across the aisle to talk about these concerns.

The reality is ensuring paid family and sick leave would help keep new parents and family caregivers in the workforce and boost their earnings and savings overtime. Studies have already shown that mothers who are able to take paid maternity leave are more likely to return to their jobs and stay in the workforce. That just means more money for families to spend and put back into our economy.

Expanding paid family and sick leave makes moral sense, and it makes economic sense. It is about time we get it done.

As we mark the anniversary of this groundbreaking legislation, I hope we take the time to recommit ourselves to the values that inspired this law. Let's continue to lead on this issue and expand paid family and health leave to cover more families.

I will continue to fight and protect the benefits provided by the Federal and Medical Leave Act and help ensure fairer workplaces and healthier, more secure families.

RECOGNIZING HILL FARMSTEAD BREWERY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as a Vermonter, it is with great pride that I call to the Senate's attention the success of one of Vermont's fine businesses, Hill Farmstead Brewery, which was recently named the best brewer in the world by RateBeer for the second year in a row and for the third time in 4 years. The brewery's success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of founder and brewer Shaun Hill, whose philosophy revolves around brewing beer as an art rather than solely as a business. His drive to brew the best beer in the world has brought accolades and interviews in national publications from Vanity Fair to the New York Times; yet he remains staunchly opposed to following the path of most conventional breweries. Rather than focusing on boundless production, his business model gives value to what is created with integrity, grit, and perseverance.

Shaun's approach sets the Hill Farmstead Brewery apart from other, more commercial enterprises. Its location in Greensboro, VT, is situated in the Hill family's former dairy barn, surrounded by dirt roads and rolling hills. Despite its remote geography, beer lovers come from far and wide to experience the world-renowned beers, to take in the beautiful setting, and to buy some beer to take home. Because a visit to Hill Farmstead is a unique and intimate experience, it is no surprise that it is on the bucket list of beer lovers around the world.

As members of his team fill orders, it is not uncommon to see Shaun buzzing around the brewery, moving grain or stopping to talk with visitors. Even if they do not know it at the time, these visitors are taking with them something extremely special. Bottled with the beer is a taste of something greater: Vermont values, and a celebration of life, initiative, and hard work.

Experiencing dramatic growth in the last decade, the craft beers made at Vermont's 40 breweries have a reputation as being some of the best in the world. It is not uncommon for people to drive from New York City, Boston, or even Washington, DC, to spend a few hours or a weekend visiting Vermont breweries. So it is wonderful to watch an entrepreneur like Shaun, with such a passion for his work, grow his idea into a valued and sought after product from all over the country. While many

Vermonters still feel the effects of a recovering economy, there are a lot of good things happening in our State thanks to people like him.

When Shaun opened his brewery 5 and a half years ago, he said his goal was to brew the best beer in the world. Well, he achieved that goal and in an impressive short amount of time. Its consistent and exemplary performance over the years, combined with success in creating several phenomenal beers across various styles, have this brewery to shine above more than 22,500 other breweries worldwide. The distinct and nuanced beers pay homage to the art of brewing and to the ambition of their creator. They are a testament to the quality products produced in Vermont, by Vermonters.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES

• Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks last week to the National Council of Higher Education Resources.

The material follows:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES

I was smiling a little bit when you said that I probably knew more than anybody in Congress about student loans. That is probably true, but that may not be saying very much. This is a complex subject. And although I have been in and around it for a long time, I still spend most of my time listening and learning from you and others who deal with how we help students take advantage of the tremendous opportunities they have in this country.

I'm sure some of you were up late last night watching politics. I went to bed early, but 20 years ago I was right in the middle of it. When you have the privilege of running for president, you find out that you spend most of your time hoping nobody says to you what they said to the late Mo Udall—the congressman from Arizona—when he was walking into a barbershop in New Hampshire and he stuck out his hand and said "I'm Mo Udall running for president," and the barber says, "yeah I know, we were just laughing about that yesterday."

I watched with interest the results this morning—my sideline view is that Marco Rubio is somebody to watch in the next week. Twenty years ago, about two weeks before the New Hampshire primary, I was at 10 percent in New Hampshire polls, and I came in third in Iowa as Marco did last night. 26% Dole 23% Buchanan and I got 18. That 18 was such a surprise I ended up on the cover of Time magazine and was in first in New Hampshire within the week. So things can change rapidly, and what happens in the 8 days between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary should be very interesting—I have no idea what will happen.

I do think that 20 years ago it was said to be 3 out of Iowa, and 2 out of New Hampshire. And the financial limits on fundraising were such that it made that come true because you could only raise money from people up to \$1000 a person. You can imagine trying to raise millions of dollars at \$1000 per person. You can't start a business that way, you can't start a college that way and you

can't have a presidential campaign that way. So it was 3 out of Iowa and 2 out of New Hampshire.

I think this time they are going to carry 4 out of New Hampshire. And one reason is because the rules have changed about fundraising. So hopefully more Americans will have a chance to participate in the system and will get a chance to run through the southern primaries and on into the convention. So it ought to be an interesting year.

I'd like to talk just a minute about higher education and some of the things that I hope we could do. Then I'll be glad to take up to 3 questions you'd like to ask me. I'll be glad and try to respond to them if there's something you want to say to me. First—thank you for the work you do to help students have a chance to participate in what still is the best system of colleges and universities in the world. We have millions of families every year who still fill out their student aid application forms. It's a large number.

Here is what our committee, which is the Senate's education committee, will be doing. As Ron said, for the last year our major priority was elementary and secondary education. We tackled fixing No Child Left Behind which was 7 years overdue, and filled with partisan problems. It's like higher education but even more so. In fact—with elementary and secondary education it's like going to a University of Tennessee football game—you've got 100,000 people in the stands and every single one of them played football and is an expert and knows what plays to call and usually wants to call it. Well it's the same thing with elementary and secondary education—you have 50 million students, and 3.5 million teachers and parents. And everybody has got an idea—whether it's transgender bathrooms—they all want to put it in the bill. But all these things could sink the bill in a minute. And I will compliment Senator Patty Murray of Washington because she and I worked together and we got a result and the president to sign the bill. Fundamentally, it was a major change because it basically says “sure we want to know how the students are doing so the federal government will require you to take 17 tests between the 3rd grade and senior year.”

Then you report that to see how the students are doing. And you disaggregate it so you can see if the African American kids or the white kids or the Latino kids are being left behind. But after that, the decisions about what to do about the results of the tests—if you're a 4th grade teacher in Franklin—that's your business. That's the state of Tennessee's business. So if you want the common core academic standard you can have it. If you don't want it then you don't have to have it. That's not anything the United States Secretary of Education is going to tell you. It's not going to tell you what the test should be, how to evaluate the test, what the accountability system should be and how to evaluate the teachers.

People assume that because I have been a big fan of evaluating teachers as Governor that I'll come up here and try to make everybody do it. It's just the reverse with me. I think people are fed up with Washington telling them so much about what to do—whether it's elementary and secondary education or in higher education. My goal with higher education is to try to deregulate it. Try to take the federal rules and regulations which just piled up through 8 different reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act, and simplify them and make them more fair. Several years ago I got an appropriations bill; a study for how to do that with research, and the head of the University of Texas at Austin, chancellor, former chancellor now, had them update me a report. I asked the chancellor of Maryland and the

chancellor at Vanderbilt to lead a group of higher education folks to recommend how we could make higher education more simple and effective: 59 recommendations. A few of them the Secretary himself can do. As many as we can, maybe 3 dozen of the rest of those, we hope to put in a piece of legislation that Sen. Mikulski and Bennet from the Democratic side, and Sen. Burr and from the Republican side will introduce. They all will help to save the time and money from this jungle of redtape the study would have.

Another simplification we would like to do is with the FAFSA. You know better than almost anybody that it's not necessary to have 108 questions. In fact we had testimony before our committee from people that come from many different directions that said basically you only need 2 questions. One was “the size of your family?” and one was “your amount of income.” Well, maybe we don't need only 2 questions, but we need a lot fewer questions. I mean you have 20 million families filling that out every year. That's an enormous savings of time and money. And if we simplify and demystify the forms to some degree more students will take advantage of the student aid enrollment. The president of Southwest Community College in Memphis told me he thinks he loses 1,500 students every year just from the complexity of the FAFSA. And so we are experimenting in a whole variety of ways. Parents and grandparents asking, “why do I have to give this info to the government again, they've already got it on my FAFSA?” Well, good question. Maybe all you need to do is give permission to the IRS to send it over and you fill out only a few questions. So, simplifying for FAFSA is another thing we have a bipartisan agreement on.

We'd like to reduce the number of student loans. I'd like to see a single undergraduate loan. I think students would be less likely to over borrow and less likely to make mistakes. And we could use the savings from that to provide another thing that I think would be helpful and that's the year-round Pell Grant. We have ridiculously complex student aid and student aid repayment terms. I saw the other day, Bernie Sanders had some person up there holding up a sign that said she had \$90K in student loans and she was paying half of her income to pay it off every year. Well, as an undergraduate loan she doesn't have to do that.

If she knew what the existing income-based repayment programs are, she wouldn't have to pay half of her income toward loans, she would only have to pay 10 or 15 % of her income towards it. If she had been working for public service she might have it forgiven. After 20 to 25 years it would be forgiven. So there's a lot of misinformation about student loans and about repayment and our goal is to cut it down to two. To have a 10 year repayment plan and have an income based repayment plan. So you would have two choices.

Fundamentally, if students knew what their options were and that they were that simple to understand, we'd probably have a lot more students take advantage of those repayment plans and on the front end a lot more students going to college. There are other steps we'd like to take.

The ones I have just described have a lot of bipartisan agreement. We'd like to allow students to use their income from two years ago, called the prior-prior year, to use to fill out their financial aid forms. The administration agrees with us on that. Other areas where we may be able to have a bipartisan agreement on in the Senate are campus safety and sexual assault, accreditation reform, giving institutions more authority to counsel students on how much to borrow as a way to reduce over borrowing. Having institu-

tions have some skin in the game (or risk sharing) as a way to reduce over borrowing. So those are some of the areas where we should be able to have bipartisan support.

Now what can we actually get done this year?—My goal is as I've said to the group earlier, the tax payers will pay our salaries this year, and I think we ought to just continue to work. Our number one priority is oversight on the elementary and secondary education bill we passed last year. The bill's not worth the paper it's printed on unless it's implemented properly and I don't want the Department of Education granting back to itself all the decision making authority we pushed out of Washington and to the states and classroom teachers. So we're going to be watching that very closely and having a number of hearings.

Number two—we have a very important biomedical innovation research bill. There's never been a more important time for scientific research. The House has passed, the president's interested in precision medicine and cancer research. We have a genius, Francis Collins, heading the National Institutes of Health. We want to do our part. So that's going to take some time.

The third of three top priorities is reauthorization of Higher Education Act.

Maybe we can do it all this year. This year is challenging because it's not only an election year, it's a presidential election year. So we have some really interesting proposals on higher education from some of the candidates. You've heard those. And those could box things up in the Senate as we try to deal with them.

But we're going to go ahead and take some of these proposals that I've just described, and bring them through our committee, pass them in the House of Representatives, and look for opportunities to bring them to the Senate floor.

I'm really proud of what we did in elementary and secondary education. Because I think it's really good policy. It's carefully written, it was vetted by everybody who is involved in the education system, and I think it will govern elementary and secondary education for the next 15-20 years because it will be difficult to change.

I'd like to do the same thing for higher education. Over the last eight reauthorizations, the stack of regulations has gone like that. I'd like to start the stack of regulations going downward like that. I'd like your advice as we begin to do it.●

RECOGNIZING RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEWARK DEBATE TEAM

● Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Rutgers University-Newark debate team for celebrating its victory at the National Debate Tournament at the University of Missouri Kansas City, UMKC.

The Rutgers University-Newark debate team, founded in 2008, is sponsored by the School of Public Affairs and Administration and the Office of the Chancellor, Newark. They have competed in tournaments hosted by Harvard, the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, and James Madison University and outranked schools such as Boston College, Dartmouth, and New York University. Director of debate, Christopher Kozak, has led the team to 3 consecutive years as the 1st-ranked team in the Northeast; and in the 2014-2015 year, the team was the 14th-ranked team nationally.