

SJR

39

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT
First Committee of Referral

DATE: 2/16/98

FURTHER:

Date of 5-Day Notice: 2/26/98
 (in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
 IN TO OFFICE: 3/4/98

HESS Committee considered

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39

Relating to improving reading instruction in elementary and secondary schools.

and recommends:

- be replaced with _____ CS SJR 39 (HES)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to the _____ Committee

- Senate Bill:**
- same title
 - new title
- House Bill:**
- same title
 - technical title
 - new: SCR# _____

SIGNING/DO PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	NR	DNP	AM
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓				
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓				
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓				
CHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	✓	CHAIR:			

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal
SJR 39 CS SJR 39 Sen. HESS Cmte	2/23/98	✓	

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):*

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal

APPROPRIATION -- no fiscal note

*include fiscal notes accompanying Governor's bill

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HASTINGS, MN

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR TAYLOR

Introduced: 2/16/98

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to improving reading instruction in elementary and secondary schools.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** illiteracy is growing at an alarming rate throughout the United States; and

4 **WHEREAS** 24,000,000 adult Americans cannot read and another 50,000,000 are
5 limited to a fourth or fifth grade reading level; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Reading Excellence Act has been introduced in the United States
7 Congress as S.B. 1596 and would provide \$210,000,000 for research supporting the use of
8 phonics, for teacher training, and for individual grants for primary and secondary reading
9 instruction; and

10 **WHEREAS** the use of intensive phonics instruction in the elementary education
11 curriculum would be an effective tool for improving reading skills in the public school system;

12 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the enactment of S.B.
13 1596, the Reading Excellence Act, and urges the United States Congress to approve the
14 measure as soon as possible.

15 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the
16 Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
17 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39(HES)**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA****TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION****BY THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Offered:

Referred:

Sponsor(s): **SENATOR TAYLOR****A RESOLUTION****1 Relating to improving reading instruction in elementary and secondary schools.****2 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:****3 WHEREAS** illiteracy is growing at an alarming rate throughout the United States; and**4 WHEREAS** 24,000,000 adult Americans cannot read and another 50,000,000 are
5 limited to a fourth or fifth grade reading level; and**6 WHEREAS** the Reading Excellence Act has been introduced in the United States
7 Congress as S. 1596 and would provide \$210,000,000 for research, for teacher training, and
8 for individual grants for primary and secondary reading instruction;**9 BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the enactment of
10 S. 1596, the Reading Excellence Act, and urges the United States Congress to approve the
11 measure as soon as possible.**12 Copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Paul Coverdell, U.S. Senator**
13 and prime sponsor of S. 1596, to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank
14 Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of
15 the Alaska delegation in Congress, and to all other members of Congress.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SJR 39

Revision Date _____ Dept. Affected _____
 Title Support Reading Excellence Act BRU _____
 Component _____
 Sponsor Senator Taylor
 Requester Senate HESS Committee Component Serial No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES []						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1091 Designated Program Receipts						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY97) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This resolution will have no impact to the General Fund.

Prepared by Gary Wilken, State Senator
 Division Chairman, Health, Education & Social Services Committee
 Approved by *Gary Wilken*
 Agency _____

Phone 465-3709
 Date 2/28/98
 Date 2/28/98

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Senator Robin L. Taylor
Senate Majority Leader

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 39

SJR 39 sends a message to the United States Congress that Alaska supports The Reading Excellence Act, S. 1596, sponsored by Senator Paul Coverdell of Georgia, which will provide funding to improve reading skills and enhance reading instruction methods nationwide. The Reading Excellence Act will provide \$212 million for research, teaching, and individual grants for primary and secondary reading instruction.

S. 1596 requires that 95 percent of the funds go to actual reading instruction for children, not administrative overhead. The measure also authorizes grants to parents for tutorial assistance for their children. Funds for the teacher training would have to be spent on programs proven effective by scientific research.

Grants to parents for tutorial assistance for their children are also authorized in the legislation. Our children's reading skills must be dramatically improved if we, as a state and as a nation, are to compete in the global marketplace of the 21st century.

District A:

Hyder • Ketchikan • Kupreanof • Meyers Chuck • Petersburg • Saxman • Sitka • Wrangell

Support
B.O.O.K.S.
 for America!

U.S. SENATOR PAUL COVERDELL (R-GA)
*The Better Opportunities for
 Our Kids and Schools Act*

GOP EDUCATION MEDIA HOTLINE: Phone 202-224-8049 FAX 202-228-3196

Update for Monday, February 2, 1998...

COVERDELL INTRODUCES BILL TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS

SB1596

--"Reading Excellence" initiative a key component of BOOKS--

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Senator Paul Coverdell (R-GA) today introduced legislation to fight illiteracy by improving reading instruction for students in America's primary and secondary schools. Titled *The Reading Excellence Act*, the proposal represents a key component of the Senate Republican Leadership's BOOKS (*The Better Opportunities for Our Kids and Schools Act*) education reform plan for grades K-12.

"High illiteracy rates are a threat to the foundations of a healthy democracy. *The Reading Excellence Act* would address this serious problem by improving the reading skills of children in schools across America," remarked Coverdell, who is the sponsor of both this specific bill and the comprehensive BOOKS package.

The Reading Excellence Act would provide \$210 million for research, teaching training, and individual grants for primary and secondary reading instruction. The bill requires that 95 percent of the funds go to actual reading instruction for children, not administrative overhead. Furthermore, the measure authorizes grants to parents for tutorial assistance for their children, and funds for the teaching training would have to be spent on programs proven effective by scientific research. The House of Representatives passed similar legislation late last year.

In addition to *The Reading Excellence Act* introduced this afternoon, BOOKS contains Coverdell's A+ Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), block grants for states and local school districts, school safety voucher programs, teacher testing and merit pay, expansion of charter schools, and funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

"Our legislation would help kids acquire the reading skills they must have to keep pace in a highly competitive economy. This proposal will make a real difference for children in our Nation's primary and secondary schools, and I hope all of my colleagues will support our effort to combat illiteracy by improving students' reading skills," Coverdell concluded.

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FORBES -February 23, 1998

Why do we have a worker shortage in a society with considerable residual unemployment?

The skills gap

By Kelly Barron

A SURGE IN AIRCRAFT ORDERS last year should have been great news for aerospace giant Boeing Co. Instead, it cost the company plenty. Production delays will cost it \$2.6 billion in actual and expected pretax charges.

To fill the new orders, the Seattle, Wash.-based firm, one of the U.S.' leading exporters, added 12,100 assembly workers last year. It found that 8,000 of them needed schooling in everything from reading blueprints to riveting. "A lack of experienced help in the work force made it more difficult to build as many aircraft as we had hoped," says James Dagnon, a Boeing senior vice president.

The workers needing retraining were by no means the bottom of the barrel. Boeing had already rejected a third of the candidates interviewed because they lacked even rudimentary reading and math skills or had poor employment histories.

A familiar story in high-tech businesses. But assembly lines? The list of industries hitting the wall of skilled-labor shortages keeps growing. It already includes financial services, transportation and manufacturing. Although there remain unemployed people in the U.S., the supply of employables is fast drying up.

This skills shortage shines a harsh light on the U.S. educational system, long a subject of concern to FORBES (see "Voucher kids," June 2, 1997 and "The end of arrogance," Feb. 13, 1995). Says Richard Judy, a senior research fellow at the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis, Ind. and coauthor

of Workforce 2020: "Our K-through-12 system in this country is just not getting the job done."

As far back as 1983 a presidential commission's report, "A Nation at Risk," concluded that inferior education threatened to blunt America's competitiveness. There have been halting reforms since, but teachers' unions still mother mediocrity at the local level. Worse, they block parental choice and vouchers. The unions' standard response to complaints about the quality of the product they deliver is: Give us more money.

With employable workers scarce, companies raid one another. Companies in the high-tech sector report turning over between 20% and 30% of their staffs every year. Part of that stems from bidding wars in Silicon Valley, in which talent scarcity is a major factor. But turnover is expensive. "How do you get a job done with those kinds of turnover rates?" asks Gale Fitzgerald, chairwoman and chief executive of Buffalo, N.Y.-based Computer Task Group.

In the days when industry required huge amounts of sheer muscle power, lack of education wasn't a big problem. But today nearly all jobs require literacy. Machinists need computer skills to operate chip-controlled equipment. Parcel delivery involves data entry. Telemarketers must know how to spell and edit their entries.

The trucking industry says it will need an estimated 80,000 new truck drivers every year through 2008. Drivers still need a certain amount of brawn, but they also require logistics skills, which means being able to conduct inventory, routing, even flow analysis, from the computers in their cabs. Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based trucking company CRST International has 15 recruiters constantly prowling for new blood. Says Vice President Larold Witt, "Five or ten years ago you could hire a lot of farm boys who had been driving a combine since they were 9. Now we're taking guys who have driven a car only once or twice in their lives."

Nearly 20% of the companies recently surveyed by Training magazine said they taught reading, writing, arithmetic or English to their new hires. Of

those semiliterates, 67% had high school diplomas-a further black eye for the public educational system. One company investing in the basics is \$2 billion (revenues) Qualcomm Inc., a San Diego, Calif. maker of wireless technologies. Last year the company remedially schooled 500 employees hired to manufacture telephones.

The skills shortage is especially hard on small manufacturers, who have fewer resources to train workers. At Delco Machine & Gear in Long Beach, Calif., Chief Executive Philip Jakobi teaches employees reading and math as well as machining. Though the company is growing at 15% a year, Jakobi says it could grow 20% a year with enough bodies.

Unions and politicians like Dick Gephardt would have you believe that companies move to places like India, Ireland and the Philippines only for cheap labor. In fact many of them move to those places in search of educated, trainable workers. Some businesspeople would like to import needed talent from overseas, but Congress and the Administration turn deaf ears to their pleas for more liberal immigration policies for skilled workers.

The Hudson Institute's Judy estimated that the unaddressed shortages throughout the U.S. economy will result in a 5% drop in the growth rate of GDP over the next five years. That translates into about \$200 billion in lost output-nearly \$1,000 for every American.

What to do about it? The White House talks about big new training initiatives. It talks about cutting class size and hiring more teachers. But there's a lot of waste in these government programs already. The U.S. General Accounting Office recently concluded that in 1995 nearly 95% of \$273 million in vocational training grants went to train people for oversupplied occupations such as cosmetology.

Some companies run effective vocational programs of their own. Cisco Systems has spent \$20 million on Networking Academy, a program that instructs youths to build and manage the computer-server networks the company sells. Students practice on their schools' computer systems and

intern at local companies that are more than happy to have workers who know what they're doing-teenagers or not.

"I got really good at it," exults 17-year-old Felicia Voss, a star pupil in Cisco's program at Thurgood Marshall Academic High School in lower-middle-income South San Francisco. "I terminate cables and do punch-down," she says, stopping herself. "Oh, you don't know what that means." Smart kid. Voss explains, "We put wires into a jack so other computers can get access."

That's splendid, but should businesses-heavily taxed already to support public schools-have to teach prospective employees how to read and write and do arithmetic? Unless the U.S. does something about its inefficient educational monopoly, it will have real trouble maintaining its present level of economic growth.