

STATEMENT OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, 2nd DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND,
ON INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
TO THE STATES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL
FACILITIES. JANUARY 10, 1955.

I am today introducing legislation which will provide for a program of federal assistance in the construction of badly needed classrooms. I know this subject of aid to education comes in for a great deal of discussion but, like Mark Twain's comment on the weather, no one does anything about it.

One difficulty which must be resolved before there is a satisfactory solution to this perennial problem is the exact limit of federal responsibility in the task of providing an adequate elementary and secondary education for the future citizens of the country. I am not prepared to say that I know exactly where the line must be drawn between federal responsibility and the responsibility of the states and local communities. However, I do feel that this measure I am introducing approaches closely to what I deem is the limit of federal responsibility, at least for the present.

Through committee hearings, investigations and the writings of those genuinely interested in education, we have been convinced that there is a tragic shortage of classrooms. This shortage exists in every state in the union. It is my conviction that the federal government must assume some of the responsibility for alleviating this terrible situation. My bill seeks to do that.

I contemplate that the federal establishment can discharge its responsibility by a program of grants to states for construction of school buildings. The plan I envisage would run over a five-year period

and cost \$500 million. At the end of that time, the federal expenditures plus those funds expended by the States out of their own resources should have come close to bridging the gap between needed classrooms and those actually available. It is my present thinking that after this job has been done the States can carry the major portion of the cost of general maintenance and operation of the school plants.

I have used the figure \$500 million because I believe it is a realistic one. Any talk of a smaller figure is either hypocrisy or self-deception. The job can't possibly be done for less. I fear asking for larger sums because the demand for billions might prevent any action during this Congress.

The formula for the distribution of the money gets away from the old concept of "richer" States and "poorer" States. I think it will provide a more equitable distribution of the federal funds than the formulae which have been incorporated in federal aid bills in the past.