

## HONORING CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 28) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 28

Whereas America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a superior scholastic education;

Whereas Catholic schools ensure a broad, values-added education emphasizing the life-long development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people;

Whereas the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 1999-2000 academic year was 2,653,038, the total number of Catholic schools is 8,144, and the student-teacher ratio is 17 to 1;

Whereas Catholic schools provide more than \$17,200,000,000 a year in savings to the Nation based on the average public school per pupil cost;

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students and over 24 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are minorities;

Whereas the graduation rate of Catholic school students is 95 percent, only 3 percent of Catholic high school students drop out of school, and 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual, character, and moral development; and

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, "Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives": Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Catholic Conference and established to recognize the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools; and

(2) congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 28.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of House Resolution 28, which recognizes and honors the contributions of Catholic schools in the United States. Our Nation's Catholic schools have a long tradition of academic excellence, and I am pleased to join in recognizing them today.

As this new Congress begins, it is fitting that we are focusing on the impact and the important role that Catholic schools play in providing a well-rounded education for America's young people; one that gives special attention to the academic, moral, and social development of our children.

One of the top priorities for the Committee on Education and the Workforce will be to reauthorize this year the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which provide benefits to both public and private schools. Across our country, many Catholic schools participate in many programs and activities assisted by these funds.

Last year, Catholic schools around the country enrolled more than 2.6 million children in more than 8,000 Catholic schools across the country. The student-teacher ratio in most Catholic schools is 17-to-1, and more than 24 percent of their students come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mr. Speaker, 95 percent of Catholic school students graduate; and 83 percent of their high school graduates go on to pursue a higher education. It stands to reason that if it were not for our Nation's Catholic schools, and the dedicated teachers who serve them, the achievement gap between the disadvantaged students in our society and their peers would be even wider.

Moreover, I would point out that of the total students enrolled in Catholic schools, about 13 percent are not of the Catholic faith. These students come from a wide variety of faiths and have chosen to attend a Catholic school. I think that it speaks to the mission and success of Catholic educators to reach out to all students and their parents who are seeking the best possible education for their children, especially for inner-city schools in which the majority of students enrolled are non-Catholic.

Mr. Speaker, I can attest to the outstanding contributions, dedication, and accomplishments of Catholic schools, because I and my 11 brothers and sisters are products of Catholic schools in Ohio. I attended St. Peter and Paul Elementary School in Reading, Ohio and Archbishop Moeller High School in the Cincinnati suburbs. I then went on to attend and graduate from Xavier University.

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Catholic schools have made a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of students in my State and around the country. Outstanding schools such as Archbishop Fenwick High School in Middletown, Ohio; Stephen T. Badin High School in Hamilton, Ohio; and Sidney Lehman High School in Sidney, Ohio; and countless Catholic elementary schools throughout my district, they have shaped the lives of countless students and continue to make a profound contribution on our communities.

I am proud of how these and all Catholic schools emphasize intellectual, spiritual, moral and social values and produce well-rounded citizens. Catholic schools have found a way to teach students not only academic knowledge, but also real-life lessons in service to mankind and respect for one's neighbors.

This resolution is very simple. We want to rightly honor and congratulate Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers for their ongoing contributions to education and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter and stronger future for this Nation.

I want to commend the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) for his leadership in sponsoring this legislation and urge my colleagues to vote in support of it.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand with my colleagues and recognize our Nation's Catholic schools.

First, I must point out the number of Catholic schools in our Nation. There are 8,200 elementary and secondary Catholic schools in the United States. They do, indeed, deserve to be celebrated.

What a great gift to our Nation these schools provide, producing graduates who are not only academically capable but also such a great part of the community. Our Catholic schools not only teach subjects like the alphabet and the Pythagorean Theorem and the Preamble to the Constitution, but they teach our students how to be part of our communities.

They teach that service to others is an integral part any life, religious or lay. They teach the dignity of the individual. They teach students to work for justice and to help each child develop a strong moral compass to follow.

Today, I believe I am joined by several colleagues who also are known for their support of education.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues, to recognize the contributions of America's Catholic elementary and secondary schools and congratulate these schools, the students, the teachers, and their parents

for the dedication to education in our country.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER), the sponsor of this legislation, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, as well as the majority leader, for bringing this important resolution to the floor this afternoon.

This resolution recognizes Catholic schools and Catholic Schools Week. This is an event sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and the United States Catholic Conference and established to recognize the vital contributions of America's Catholic schools.

Catholic schools are widely acclaimed for their academic success. Central Ohio, which I am fortunate enough to represent, is blessed with many outstanding Catholic schools. In fact, St. Francis DeSales, a Columbus Catholic high school in my neighborhood, is a past recipient of the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools Award for Excellence. This is the highest award any private or public school can achieve.

But Catholic schools provide more than a superior scholastic education. They ensure a broad education emphasizing the development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in our young people. They produce students strongly dedicated in our faith, values, families, and communities. Indeed, they are central to building a sense of community in this country that all Americans should have the opportunity to enjoy.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this resolution, and I strongly support its adoption by the House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how many speakers the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) has?

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, we believe there will be three additional speakers.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, since none of mine have shown, if the gentleman from Ohio would like to go ahead.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS).

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) for granting me the time in which to speak on this important resolution.

Today I rise in strong support of the resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic schools to our children and the educational system. As the debate on education continues and reform education continues, I think it is vitally important to recognize people and schools who have succeeded in educating our children.

America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence and among the many fine academic Catholic schools in this Nation.

In the city of Reno, for example, there is Bishop Manogue High School, which has a long and distinguished record of excellence in their academic and athletic programs.

Catholic schools, like Bishop Manogue, emphasize the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people. These values are crucial to the future of our Nation, especially as our society tends to grapple with problems like the breakdown of the family and school violence.

I want to thank our Catholic schools for their dedication to our children, and I look forward to working with them toward our goal of improving the education of every child.

As an original cosponsor of this resolution, I encourage all of my colleagues to strongly support its passage and the contributions that Catholic schools have made to our children and to our Nation.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) have any other speakers? We do not have any on this side other than myself to close.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we have two more speakers, and they are not here.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) has the right to close. If the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) will proceed.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, growing up Catholic in a pretty Catholic family, I know firsthand that the Catholic Church has always sought to feed the hungry and clothe the poor. We welcome immigrants, people who speak different languages and bring very different needs. We welcome everyone as we work to help the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless.

Catholic schools, too, welcome diverse student bodies with open arms. It is not just Catholics who attend Catholic schools; children who need special attention, dedicated teachers attend Catholic schools. Families who are looking for an added dimension to faith and morals sometimes choose Catholic schools. Parents who want safe schools that excel in academics choose Catholic schools.

Today with our communities' public schools, the Catholic schools and the Diocese of Orange educate, in every sense of the word, our children. Various schools, like Santa Margarita High School or Mater Dei in my own district, Servite in my district, Rosary, Connelly, and numerous elementary parochial schools, all are Catholic schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to recognize Catholic schools and the educators, parents and parishes who make these wonderful institutions possible.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Dela-

ware (Mr. CASTLE), who is the subcommittee chairman on the issue we are debating.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution honoring Catholic schools and their contributions to our communities throughout our Nation.

Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration of the important role that Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the country play in providing a values-added education for America's young people.

This tradition of honoring Catholic schools is 27 years old this year and is one I believe should continue.

Just last week, students from St. Hedwig Elementary School in Wilmington, Delaware, visited me in Washington, D.C. during Catholic Schools Week. I was impressed by all they have been learning and achieving, and I compliment them for their hard work and interest in our democratic process.

While the majority of our students are enrolled in public schools, Catholic schools still play a key role in our entire society. Over 2.5 million children attended 8,000 Catholic schools last year throughout the United States.

In my State of Delaware, which is the size of a congressional district, we have over 15,000 students attending 38 Catholic schools, all of whom obviously contribute greatly to their communities.

I thank the students, teachers, principals, and the administrators for making the Catholic community shine in my State.

I regard Catholic schools as a team player with public schools, other private and parochial schools and home schools in defining America's education system.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association, the graduation rate of students in Catholic schools is nearly 95 percent. The dropout rate is just about 3 percent. Eighty-five percent of all Catholic school graduates go on to college. These achievements impress me and deserve to be honored today on the House floor.

I would just add, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the integration of all the education of our young children, as they get into more choice, more opportunities for our kids, more comparisons, the Catholic schools, along with all the other schools, add to this mix. Our goal should be to educate every child in America as well as we possibly can. Certainly Catholic schools aid in that; and for that, we are very blessed. I honor them and appreciate them and encourage support for this resolution.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to close by saying that sometimes I think people think those of us who are so supportive of public schools may not be as supportive of our

private schools, but the reality is that we care about all of our schools and those institutions who choose to help educate our children. Today I have been proud to talk about our Catholic schools and the way that they excel and the way that they complement the rest of the education system that we have here in the United States.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased that Congress has recognized the important role that Catholic Schools play in our community. As a Latino, I know the important place in our history of Catholic Education. In my district, the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School is regarded as both an academic and athletic giant. The San Bernardino Diocese School System under Bishop Gerald Barnes has made major investments into their school system to bring their students education into the 21st Century.

Even though I am a strong supporter of public schools, I understand the importance Catholic Schools have played in our nation's education. The quality of education provided at Catholic schools is truly remarkable. Not only do they focus on academic achievement but they also instill values and moral lessons in young people. Their curriculums are often full of programs in character development and community service. Catholic school students graduate with a wide variety of skills that will not only help them in their careers but also in their family and community life. I am pleased to support this resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic Schools.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the invaluable contributions of our nation's Catholic schools.

Last week was Catholic Schools Week, and January 31st was National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools. In honor of these events, my colleague, Mr. SCHAFFER from Colorado, has introduced a resolution to honor our nation's Catholic schools.

The United States Department of Education has provided us with statistics that show Catholic schools take in children from many different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and yield well educated, college-bound, young adults.

Our nation's Catholic schools boast a 95 percent graduation rate and 83 percent of their students go on to college.

Not only do these children come away from their schools with strong academic credentials, but they gain an appreciation for the importance of faith, family, and community that is critical to our society's well being.

At a time when our nation is asking the question: "How can we give our children the best education possible?" The Catholic schools are providing some answers by demonstrating what works.

For these achievements, I congratulate Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for our nation's students.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to join with my colleagues in passing House Resolution 28, honoring the contributions of Catholic schools to academic excellence. Catholic schools have enhanced the quality of life for the community, as well as hundreds of thousands of young people who have benefited from its commitment to developing their minds and their spirits.

I would like to recognize the good work of schools such as Notre Dame High School, Resurrection High School, Northside Catholic Academy Schools, and St. Scholastica Academy in Illinois. These Catholic schools, like their counterparts, provide critical leadership and support to the intellectual development of the lives of so many in Illinois. With a 95 percent graduation rate, and 83 percent rate of continuing on to higher education, catholic schools deserve our recognition for the work they do.

I applaud the success and commitment of Catholic schools in the 9th Congressional District and in this nation.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of our nation's Catholic schools. Catholic schools not only provide students with an excellent education but also provide spiritual enrichment.

The contributions made by Catholic schools often exceed the classroom walls. The curriculum is designed to challenge students and to encourage religious awareness and development of morals and values. Students are encouraged to volunteer in a range of activities including working in soup kitchens, aiding other students with homework or working to improve a neighborhood park.

During the past 30 years, Catholic schools around the nation have made significant improvements in enrolling minorities and have continued to expand the educational mission in urban areas. There are approximately 1,020 Catholic schools in urban areas today.

A common complaint of parents and teachers is overcrowding in classrooms. Catholic schools often provide students and teachers with the opportunity for learning on a personal level. For instance, class size on average provide a ratio of 17 students to every one teacher, allowing teachers to focus on the needs of individual students. The effectiveness of this system is repeated in the statistic that 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college and the drop-out rate is only 3.4 percent.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting these institutions and the wonderful contributions they make in their communities and in our nation's future.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of house resolution 28 which celebrates the contributions of Catholic schools throughout the nation. From the easternmost point of the U.S. Virgin Islands to the westernmost tip of Orote Point in Guam, Catholic schools continue to provide a valuable education to more than 2.5 million students in the United States.

As Guam is home to more than 1,00,000 Roman Catholics, representing an overwhelming majority of the resident population, I am particularly pleased to speak in support and in recognition of the contributions of Catholic schools today.

Guam has a long and rich history of Catholicism since the island was discovered by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, who docked at Guam with his chaplains during his sail around the world. The year 1662 ushered the first of many arrivals of Spanish missionaries. Over time various types of Catholic education have been provided in Guam beginning with the tradition of "Eskuelan Pale", or Catholicism classes, which taught basic literacy in Guam for 275 years today's modern school facilities which usher in 21st Century lessons into the

classroom. Several religious orders and countless cadres of lay teachers have provided educational guidance and have broadened opportunities for Guam's school children since the end of World War II, when a formal Catholic school system was established. The School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Mercy, Dominican Sisters, the religious orders of Capuchin, Franciscans, Jesuits and Marists have all served to educate Guam's school children.

There are three Catholic high schools in Guam, including: Notre Dame High School in Talofofo; Academy of Our Lady of Guam in Hagatna; and Father Duenas Memorial School in Mangilao serving an enrollment of approximately 1,100 students. There are also seven elementary and middle schools, including: Bishop Baumgartner Memorial School in Sinajana; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in Agat; Saint Anthony School in Tamuning; Saint Francis School in Yona; San Vicente School in Barrigada; Santa Barbara School in Dededo and Dominican School in Yigo, serving an estimated enrollment of 2,300 students. Four Catholic nursery schools in Guam Bridge the continuum of education from infancy to elementary. These include the Dominican Child Care Center in Ordot; the Infant of Prague in Mangilao; Maria Artero in Agana Heights; and Mercy Heights in Tamuning.

Although I have not attended Catholic schools, as a former educator raised in the Catholic faith, I certainly appreciate the education provided by Catholic schools. Three of my five children have attended Catholic schools in Guam and in Virginia and 10 of my 17 staffers in both my District and D.C. offices are products of the Catholic school system in Guam and the Philippines. Additionally, my aunt, Mary Underwood, was instrumental in the establishment of the Catholic school system after World War II. She was also the first native of Guam to become a nun.

Catholic schools have often provided a broad, value-added education and shape to the life-long development of moral, intellectual, physical and social values of students. Catholic Schools Week is the culmination of an annual national celebration of the important role that Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the country play in the education of our nation's students.

At this time, I would like to commend the contributions of all Catholic schools, students, parents, teachers and administrators in Guam and across the nation. I would also like to recognize the contributions of the Archdiocese of Hagatna, which oversees the administration of Guam's Catholic schools, and particularly Archbishop Anthony Apuron, for continuing the tradition of providing excellence in the education and moral well-being of the children of Guam.

I urge your support of House Resolution 28.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to adopt H. Res. 28 commanding the contributions of Catholic schools. As a Roman Catholic having attended and graduated from Catholic Schools and a Catholic university, I am proud to be the original sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, today the House voices its strong support for the goals of Catholic Schools Week and recognizes the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. The House also congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across our

great nation for their ongoing contributions to education and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for America. As the first clause of the resolution states, "America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a superior scholastic education." Mr. Speaker, this is the essence of the resolution.

Catholic schools ensure a broad values-added education, emphasizing the life-long development of moral, intellectual, fiscal and social values in America's young people. Americans have responded positively to Catholic schools. The total Catholic school student enrollment for 1999 and 2000 was 2,653,038, which is an increase over the 1998 and 1999 school year. The total number of Catholic schools is 8,144. The student/teacher ratio in those institutions is less than 17 to 1.

Catholic schools provide more than \$17 billion a year in savings to the nation based on the average school per pupil cost, enabling more money to be spent on students in government-owned schools. Catholic schools teach and contribute to a diverse group of students. Twenty-four percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are minority students. The graduation rate of Catholic school students is 95 percent, and only 3 percent of Catholic high school students drop out of school. Eighty-three percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college. Mr. Speaker, these are impressive statistics, and they quantify why America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for academic excellence.

Catholic schools not only develop sound academic abilities in their students, but they produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, their values, their families, and communities. Catholic schools do this by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual development and moral character.

In 1972, a pastoral message was adopted by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that stated the following, "Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also for the destinies of the many communities in which he lives."

It is on that basis, Mr. Speaker, that this resolution recognizes Catholic schools and Catholic Schools Week. This is an event sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association, which is, by the way, the largest private organization of professional teachers in the world. It is also sponsored by the United States Catholic Conference and established to recognize the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

So today the House congratulates Catholic schools, their students, their parents, and teachers across the country, for their ongoing contributions to education and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter and stronger future for this nation.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Catholic School Week and I want to spend a few moments commending the

Catholic schools in my home district of El Paso, Texas and in other parts of our country for a job well done.

There are many Catholic Schools in my district including Cathedral High School and Loretto Academy; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Blessed Sacrament, Father Yermo, Holy Trinity, Our Lady of the Assumption, Our Lady of the Valley, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, Saint Pius the X, St. Raphael's, and St. Michael's. I know each and every one of these schools contributes greatly to the fabric of the educational system in El Paso, and I am proud of the efforts of all of the priests, nuns, teachers and other support staff in these schools. They work tirelessly to improve the lives of our children.

Our Catholic schools continue to show exemplarily results in education. They share, with other Catholic schools across the nation, a long-standing tradition of excellence. The catholic schools in El Paso continue to show steadfast commitment to teaching and spiritually guiding young men and women as they prepare for higher education and for life's many challenges. Catholic schools continue to exhibit strong leadership, a clear vision and sense of mission that is shared by the schools, students, parents, and alumni. In El Paso, our Catholic schools have exhibited high quality teaching and have provided a safe environment for learning. Spirituality, as a guiding principal, should be emulated across our country. The values that are instilled at our Catholic schools are fundamental values that are central and important to the functioning of society as a whole.

Daily school prayer, religion classes, and school Mass emphasize God's central role in our lives. As a Catholic myself, God and reverence are personally and centrally important to me and I appreciate the commitment that our Catholic schools make in insuring that our students will have faith and prayer in their lives. I cannot overstate how important faith in God is to overall success and happiness in life.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge Archbishop Armando X. Ochoa of the Archdiocese of El Paso for his strong leadership and dedication. He continues to support the mission of our Catholic schools in educating our youth. I urge all my colleagues to join with me and commend all of the people across the country who make the catholic schools so successful.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic schools in America. I congratulate the more than 8,000 Catholic schools that serve this nation's students. I am a product of Catholic schools as a graduate of Holy Family High School in Birmingham, Alabama so I know first hand about the value of a Catholic school education.

According to the National Catholic Education Association, Catholic schools serve over two and a half million students a year. With an impressive average student-teacher ratio of 17 to 1, Catholic schools provide the necessary one-on-one teaching that students need to learn. My graduating class of Holy Family had 23 students who graduated with me! I was able to bond with my classmates and had a true sense of family and support. My experiences with Sister Mary Catherine, Sister Mary Ambrose, Sister Mary Mathilda, Sister Jean Bernadette, Father Nathaniel, Fa-

ther Carl, and Father Alvin instilled in me and the other girls at Holy Family an appreciation for Math and Science that was unprecedented at that time. The same quality education that I enjoyed as a youth is making a difference in communities across the United States, including my 37th District of California.

I am proud of the four Catholic schools in my district that have created rigorous educational environments with quality teaching: St. Miguel Catholic School in Los Angeles, California, Verbum Dei High School in Watts, California, St. Albert the Great Catholic School in Compton, California, Our Lady of Victory Grade School in Compton, California and St. Philomena Grade School in Carson, California. These schools make a tremendous contribution to the community and I am proud to represent them in Congress.

Many years ago, my Catholic education spawned a love of learning that I have treasured throughout my life. Institutions that generate this type of intellectual curiosity in our nation's youth are critical to developing productive, hardworking citizens and leaders of tomorrow. That is why I join my colleagues in recognizing America's Catholic schools. I commend the community of teachers, students, parents and administrators that have established this high standard for learning that challenges and engages students. They are playing an integral role in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the children of today and the leaders of tomorrow.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to recognize the splendid reputation, the years of dedicated service, and the outstanding achievement of Catholic Schools. During Catholic Schools Week, it gives me great pleasure to extend warm remarks that highlight the achievements of a leading institution that provides immeasurable educational support to neighborhoods and communities throughout our Nation.

In fact, Catholic Schools in America have had a tremendous impact in the lives of many Americans. For example, Chicago has the Largest Catholic School System in the United States. It is comprised of 277 elementary schools serving close to 105,000 students. In addition to educating younger students, the Chicago Catholic School System provides direction and oversight to 48 secondary schools; its programs and services reaches the lives of 33,648 teenagers.

In Chicago and abroad, Catholic Schools have provided education and service to those that have been traditionally left behind in our society. for years, through their educational programs, they planted seeds of hope in the minds and hearts of many poor and neglected children, which have germinated to produce leaders and champions.

So, I graciously thank our teachers, counselors, Nuns, and Priests in our Catholic Schools for their years of dedicated service. And I urge them to "keep on, keeping on" as they continue to prepare our young to excel in the New Millennium.

Ms. KAPUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in recognizing the contributions of our Nation's Catholic schools. As Father Andrew Greeley of Chicago has observed: "Our Nation's Catholic schools are a seventh sacrament.". Today, we salute Catholic teachers and students around the world. As a product of Catholic schools, back home in Toledo I can attest to the quality of instruction,

the professional and nurturing approach of the many fine sisters, priests and lay teachers whom I remember so fondly, and in fact still count among my friends and advisors to this day.

Despite the coarsening of our popular culture, what I call the 'poverty of affluence', it is heartening to know that total Catholic school enrollment for the 1999–2000 school year was over 2.6 million students at more than 8,100 schools. In my home state of Ohio, there are over 193,000 students attending 528 Catholic schools. In these quality institutions, joined by many fine public schools, character and commonly cherished values are instilled into generation after generation. Honesty, integrity, love of family and country, self-respect and self-discipline are just a few of the hallmark results of Catholic-based education.

Catholic schools are one of the cornerstones of our educational system providing faith based educational opportunities to those families who desire their children to have a Catholic faith based education. Catholic schools accept young people from every walk of life, from all economic and ethnic backgrounds. These schools have played an historic role in welcoming and teaching the sons and daughters of immigrants, whether they be Irish, Polish, Hungarian or Russian, whether they are African-American, or Chinese or Latino, just to name a few. In the heart of our Nation's biggest cities and most humble rural towns, Catholic schools continue this missionary endeavor.

It is my pleasure to honor the contributions of Catholic schools, both the men and women who lead and teach and care so deeply for our young people. Those students have made, and continue to make, a difference in the life of their families, communities and world.

Our system of education is most appropriately conducted on the local level. Therefore, it is both our right and responsibility to support our schools, our teachers, parents, support staff, administrators, our sisters and priests, and our children, whom we know will one day inherit and take responsibility for all of our work and world.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our nation's Catholic schools and the record of excellence they hold in our children's education.

I believe our most profound responsibility is to ensure that every child has a first-class education, that no child is left behind and that all students share in the pride and promise of educational opportunity—Catholic education provides that opportunity.

As a former student at the University of Notre Dame and a former teacher at Mount Saint Michael's Academy in the Bronx, NY, I know the benefits Catholic schools and universities provide to students in America.

Our children deserve the best schools in the world; they deserve schools that will help them meet the challenges of tomorrow. That is why I'm pleased with the bipartisan support H. Res. 28, "Honoring our Catholic Schools," is receiving from my colleagues in the House today.

America's student drop-out rate is increasing at an alarming pace. But our nation's Catholic schools have given a diverse group of students the inspiration, environment and counsel they need to stay in school. A tribute to the strength and quality of a Catholic school education is the 95 percent graduation rate among Catholic high school seniors.

America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for providing small classrooms where each student can have the attention they need to achieve their future goals. America's Catholic schools also graduate a record 83 percent of students who go on to college.

I believe that while we call for higher standards in our nation's schools, we must also recognize those schools that are providing the education America's students need to succeed. I am pleased to join with my colleagues in honoring the contributions of Catholic schools. After all our children are our country's most precious resource.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Catholic schools across America and back home in Illinois. All Catholic schools, their teachers, administrators, parents and students should be congratulated for their vital role in promoting and ensuring a bright future for this country.

It is amazing that Catholic Schools graduate 95 percent of their students and that 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college. I know that the education and, more importantly, the values, that were imbedded in me at St. Patrick's high school in Chicago proved themselves invaluable in college and in my professional career.

In my hometown of Chicago, the Catholic Archdiocese has an unparalleled record of educating students of all racial and economic backgrounds. Chicago has one of the largest Catholic school systems in the nation, and the best and the brightest in Chicago are often alumni of their Catholic schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for scheduling this vote honoring the contributions of Catholic Schools. It is my hope that they will continue to flourish and prosper for the benefit of millions of school children around the country.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools. As a Catholic school graduate, I know the value of a Catholic education. I know first hand that Catholic schools teach students discipline, pride and respect for learning. I am so grateful to the priests, nuns and lay persons who taught me at St. Peter's Elementary, Holy Name Elementary, Parmadale, St. Aloysius Elementary, St. Colman Elementary and St. John Cantius High School for their love and guidance through my formative years.

I especially wish to recognize the delegation of students, teachers and parents that make the National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools a special day. Their commitment to ensuring an exceptional education and maintaining quality Catholic schools ensures that Catholic students in the future will continue to benefit from outstanding educational opportunities. An overwhelming percentage of Catholic high school graduates attend college, which is a sign of the excellent work of our Catholic School system.

I would also like to recognize the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) for their efforts to promote educational and catechetical goals. By sponsoring programs like the Seton Awards, which recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Catholic education, the NCEA works diligently to insure better education across America.

Providing quality educational opportunities for all children is one of the most important goals of our society. I am encouraged by the

ongoing involvement of the students, teacher and parents who are observing the National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in celebrating Catholic Schools.

As a student at St. Mary's elementary school in St. Croix from kindergarten through eighth grade, a graduate of St. Joseph's Mountain School in St. Joseph's, New York, and St. Mary's College, Notre Dame Indiana, I personally owe a debt of gratitude to catholic schools for what I have been able to achieve.

Catholic schools across the country have contributed greatly to the communities in which they exist and the nation at large. Numerous studies show that parents place their children in Catholic schools for the superior academic achievement of Catholic school students. They 1996 tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) sponsored by the U.S. government demonstrated that students in Catholic schools score higher than those in public schools. As a result, Catholic school education is becoming a popular choice among parents. Catholic preschool enrollment has increased by nearly 223% since 1987-88.

As I pay tribute to the 8144 Catholic schools in this country, I want to pay tribute to those schools that have nurtured and educated me, those that I have already mentioned, and St. Pius V in Jamaica, New York.

I also would also like to make special mention of the Catholic Schools in my district—St. Mary's, St. Joseph and St. Patrick's in St. Croix, and Saints. Peter and Paul in St. Thomas. The people of the Virgin Islands and I appreciate them for all they do and have done for the children of our islands.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the sponsors of the H. Res. 28 in honoring the success of Catholic Schools in providing a quality education to millions of children around the country. However, I am concerned that this resolution also contains language that violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the establishment clause of the first amendment, thus insulting the millions of religious Americans who are struggling to educate their children free from federal control and endangering religious liberty.

The success of Catholic schools has been remarkable. Catholic schools operating in the inner-city have been able to provide an excellent education to students written off by the educational establishment as "unteachable." Contrary to the claims of its critics, Catholic schools do not turn away large numbers of children in order to limit their enrollment to the "best and the brightest." In fact, a few years ago the Archdiocese of New York offered to enroll all students who had been expelled from New York's public schools! Mr. Speaker, I have introduced legislation, the Family Education Freedom Act (H.R. 368) which would help more parents afford to send their children to Catholic, or other religious schools, by providing them with a \$3,000 tax credit for K-12 education expenses.

While I join with the sponsors of this legislation in praising Catholic schools, I am disturbed by the language explicitly endorsing the goals of the United States Catholic Conference. The Catholic Conference is an organization devoted to spreading and advancing Catholicism. While the Conference may advance other social goods through its work,

those purposes are secondary to its primary function of advancing the Catholic faith. This is especially true in the case of Catholic schools which were founded and are operated with the explicit purpose of integrating Catholic doctrine into K-12 education.

Therefore, even though Congress intends to honor the ways Catholic schools help fulfill a secular goal, the fact is Congress cannot honor Catholic schools without endorsing efforts to promulgate the Catholic faith. By singling out one sect over another, Congress is playing favors among religions. While this does not compare to the type of religious persecution experienced by many of the founders of this country, it is still an example of the type of federal favoritism among religions that the first amendment forbids.

What is the superintendent of a Baptist private school or a Pentecostal home schooler going to think when reading this resolution? That Congress does not think they provide children with an excellent education or that Congress does not deem their religious goals worthy of federal endorsement? In a free republic, the legislature should not be in the business of favoring one religion over another. I would also like to point out the irony of considering government favoritism of religion in the context of praising the Catholic schools, when early in this century Catholic schools where singled out for government-sanctioned discrimination because they were upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Allowing Congress to single out certain religions for honors not only insults those citizens whose faith is not recognized by Congress, it also threatens the religious liberty of those honored by Congress. This is because when the federal government begins evaluating religious institutions, some religious institutions may be tempted to modify certain of their teachings in order to curry favor with political leaders. I will concede that religious institutions may not water down their faith in order to secure passage of "Sense of Congress resolutions," however, the belief that it is proper to judge religious institutions by how effectively they fulfill secular objectives is at the root of the proposals to entangle the federal government with state-approved religions by providing taxpayer dollars to religious organizations in order to perform various social services. Providing taxpayer money to churches creates the very real risk that a church may, for example, feel the need to downplay its teaching against abortion or euthanasia in order to maintain favor with a future pro-abortion administration and thus not lose its federal funding.

Of course, the idea that politicians should bestow favors on religions based on how well they fulfill the aims of the politicians is one that should be insulting to all believers no matter their faith. After all, despite what a few of my colleagues seem to think, Mr. Speaker, we in Congress are neither omnipotent nor divine.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I join the sponsors of H. Res. 28 in their admiration for the work of Catholic schools. However, I also have reservations about the language singling out the religious goals of one faith for praise.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker I rise in support of this measure to recognize the role Catholic Schools have played in the education of America's Children.

Last week over 8,200 Catholic elementary and secondary schools nationwide celebrated

their 27th annual Catholics Schools Week. This event was established to increase support for private Catholic schools and to recognize their accomplishments and contributions to the country.

"Catholic Schools Week" celebrates education that goes beyond preparation for a secular life; it is an education that prepares students for a Christian life. Parents who chose to send their children to Catholic Schools do so because they not only want their children to have an excellent education in reading, writing and arithmetic, they also want to them to have a Christian education.

Although public schools can prepare children for a secular life through a good education, they are constitutionally bound not to extent their role as educators into the area of religious education. I strongly urge parents who would like the benefits of public education and the rewards of faith based education to make a commitment to work with those religious communities that share their beliefs in the development of after school and weekend parochial programs.

This bill states that Congress supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and the U.S. Catholic Conference, and congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers for their contributions to education.

Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students, 24 percent of whom are minorities. Moreover, only three percent of Catholic high school drop out of school and 83 percent go on to attend college.

Finally, the resolution states that, by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in moral guidance, Catholic schools produce students and, ultimately, citizens who are strongly dedicated to their faith and communities.

I offer my heart felt thanks to the Catholic Schools across the nation for their dedication to excellence in the classroom as they prepare young people to achieve excellence in life. In closing I would like to extend a special thanks to the Catholic Schools in Houston like Saint Philips High School, and Saint Pius High School.

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this resolution on Catholic education, and to share with my colleagues some of the rich history and achievements of Catholic schools in New Mexico.

The Catholic Church has had a presence in the American Southwest for over 400 years. Before public education was established in New Mexico, Catholic friars began teaching at local Indian pueblos. In the early 1800s, the Spanish government, cooperating with the Catholic Church, established schools in the territory of New Mexico.

Today New Mexico has 29 Catholic elementary schools and 4 secondary schools. Over 8,000 New Mexico children are enrolled in Catholic schools and the ethnic composition of the student body reflects the rich diversity of New Mexico (Hispanic 43%, Anglo 31%, American Indian 11%). I am very proud of New Mexico's Catholic schools and their students. Last year 324 students graduated from Catholic high schools in New Mexico. This is a 99% graduation rate and, of those, 99% went on to post-secondary education.

It's the dawn of a new century: It is a century in which knowledge is a commodity chil-

dren must have to succeed. Catholic schools across America are giving our children this opportunity.

Catholic schools have given New Mexico's children the wings they need to achieve their dreams. As Catholic schools nationwide celebrate Catholic school week, we thank them.

Mr. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 28.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6 p.m.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6 p.m.

□ 1800

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 6 p.m.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will now put the question on motions to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today.

Votes will be taken in the following order: House Joint Resolution 7, by the yeas and nays, and House Resolution 28, by the yeas and nays.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first such vote in this series.

#### RECOGNIZING 90TH BIRTHDAY OF RONALD REAGAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 7.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by