

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF "LIGHTS ON AFTER-SCHOOL!"

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 66) supporting the goals and ideals of "Lights on After-school!", a national celebration of after-school programs.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. J. RES. 66

Whereas high-quality after-school programs provide safe, challenging, engaging, and fun learning experiences to help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic skills;

Whereas high-quality after-school programs support working families by ensuring that their children are safe and productive after the regular school day ends;

Whereas high-quality after-school programs build stronger communities by involving the Nation's students, parents, business leaders, and adult volunteers in the lives of the Nation's young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among children, youth, families, and adults;

Whereas high-quality after-school programs engage families, schools, and diverse community partners in advancing the well-being of the Nation's children;

Whereas "Lights On Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs on October 20, 2005, promotes the critical importance of high-quality after-school programs in the lives of children, their families, and their communities;

Whereas more than 28,000,000 children in the United States have parents who work outside the home, and 14,300,000 children have no place to go after school; and

Whereas many after-school programs across the Nation are struggling to keep their doors open and their lights on: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress supports the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 66.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.J. Resolution 66, offered by my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY). This resolution seeks to support the goals and ideals of "Lights on Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs.

This year's Lights on Afterschool rally, taking place October 20, 2005, is

expected to include more than 7,000 events in the United States and at military bases around the world. This event is aimed at bringing attention to the need for high-quality, after-school programs that keep kids safe, help working families, and improve academic achievement.

I support this resolution, because after-school programs are an important part of many American students' lives. High-quality after-school programs provide safe, challenging, and fun learning experiences that help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic skills.

In my hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, after-school programs have proven to be highly beneficial. For example, the LOOP after-school program has shown that students who participated 3 or more days a week did better academically and had better attendance in school than students who did not participate.

I am pleased we are able to bring attention to the critical importance of after-school programs in the lives of children, their families, and their communities. I commend the communities across the Nation that engage in innovative after-school programs and activities and ensure that the doors stay open and the lights stay on for all children after school.

This resolution is simple and straightforward. It supports the goals and ideals of "Lights on Afterschool!", a nationwide celebration of after-school programs. I commend my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), for her leadership in offering House Joint Resolution 66 and urge all my colleagues to support it.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I want to first thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for introducing this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, supporting after-school programs is one of the most important things that we in Congress and the people around the country can do to improve our children's lives and ensure that they have bright futures. High-quality after-school programs provide children with safe, enriching activities, a place to be where they are welcome and where they are comfortable. Without these programs, the hours between the end of the school day, actually between the school bell and the dinner bell, become the time that children are most likely to get into trouble.

So while these programs are important to all families, they are particularly important and invaluable to working families. Good after-school programs build stronger communities

by involving parents, community leaders, business leaders, and adult volunteers in the lives of young people. That is why I am delighted to support "Lights on Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs.

On October 20, 2005, as many as 1 million people around the country will attend events to spread the word about the critical importance of high-quality, after-school programs. But we also have to remember that resolutions are not enough. As this resolution notes, there are more than 14 million children in the United States of America who do not have a place to go after school. Yet in recent years, this President and Congress have cut funding for after-school programs.

So by all means, let us resolve today to support these programs, but when it comes time to put our money where our mouths are, let us support them financially also.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. LOWEY), the sponsor of this resolution.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of H.J. Res. 66, which I introduced with my friend and colleague from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to highlight the goals of the sixth annual "Lights on Afterschool!" celebration.

This event, organized by the After-school Alliance and sponsored by the J.C. Penney Afterschool Fund is the only national celebration of after-school programs and the important role they play in the lives of children, families, and communities.

On October 20, more than 1 million Americans, representing thousands of after-school initiatives across the country, including 166 programs in my home State of New York, are expected to open their doors to parents, neighbors, business leaders, and elected officials to showcase their accomplishments. In my own district, events will take place in New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, Ossining, and Yonkers, and more programs are registering every day.

In spite of the growing enthusiasm for this year's "Lights On!" celebration, we do need more than just one day a year to highlight the importance of after-school programs. That is why I joined with other representatives, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), and the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), and I thank also my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), who I did not mention before for supporting this program, as well as the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY). We formed the bipartisan Congressional After-School Caucus earlier this year. Our mission is simple: Build support for these programs within Congress and to

translate that support into sufficient funding to meet the growing demand for after-school initiatives.

For years, we have known that what our kids do after school can have as great an impact as what they do in school. In 1996, from my seat on the Committee on Appropriations, I helped create the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the first ever Federal after-school initiative. Since then, we have watched it grow from a \$1 million demonstration project to a \$1 billion permanent program today because there is astonishing demand and tremendous unmet need for it.

In fact, according to a study conducted by the Afterschool Alliance, 40 percent of middle school children, the age when kids are most vulnerable to engaging in dangerous activities, are unsupervised for a good portion of the day. Parents need safe, structured environments where their kids can learn and play, make friends, and develop new interests, yet Congress is not doing what we should to ensure that our kids are safe and engaged while their parents are at work.

The Congressional After-School Caucus and the "Lights On!" celebration will focus on changing that. We will share the lessons we have learned to make sure after-school does not become an after-thought in our Federal education priorities. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, join the Caucus, and fight tooth and nail for every dollar available so that kids and their parents have access to these desperately needed programs.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN), an original cosponsor of the resolution.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of "Lights on Afterschool!", and House Joint Resolution 66, which recognizes the goals and ideals of "Lights on Afterschool!"

"Lights on Afterschool!" started in 2000, celebrating the importance of after-school programs, and it continues to grow 6 years later. This year's celebration is scheduled for October 20, and roughly 1 million Americans are expected to participate.

After-school programs play an important role in keeping many kids safe and engaged in positive activities. The hours between 3 and 6 p.m. on school days represent the peak times for juvenile crime. During those few hours after school, kids are most likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

Today, there are currently over 6 million students, kindergarten through grade 12 participating in after-school programs, and these children are growing and learning in a safe and healthy

environment. Congress must protect this opportunity for kids. Congress must do more to give families and children who are not currently participating the chance to do so.

"Lights on Afterschool!" reminds us all of our obligation to give children the resources they need to succeed in school and to succeed in the future. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution fits directly into my legislation, the Balancing Act, legislation that is intended to help working families bridge their responsibilities of work and their responsibilities to their families.

As this resolution notes, there are more than 14 million children in the United States who do not have a place to go after school. Yet in recent years, this President and this Congress have cut funding for after-school programs. So by all means, let us resolve today to support these programs, but when it comes time to put our money where our mouths are, let us support them financially as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a small farming village in Minnesota. There was no need for after-school programs because after school, everyone went back home to the farms to milk the cows, feed the animals, and so forth. We live in a different world today, and it is absolutely essential that children have appropriate, meaningful, and useful activities after school in today's world.

This resolution commemorates a very good program, the "Lights on Afterschool" program, which has been invaluable in many communities, and I am pleased to join in this resolution to honor that effort and to recognize it.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res 66, which recognizes the fifth annual celebration of Lights on Afterschool! on October 20 and honors the contributions of after-school programs to our communities.

As a former educator, I understand the importance of after-school programs. These programs enrich children's lives with artistic, athletic, and educational activities. They support working parents who want to know that their children are in safe, nurturing environments. After-school programs reduce crime by giving young people positive outlets for the energy. Schools, community members, volunteers and families come together every school day to make these programs successful.

Over six million students across the country benefit from after-school programs, and in New Jersey, there are 28,000 students attending these programs. Many after-school programs are federally funded including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

My district is fortunate to have several of these centers. The Trenton Public Schools

have partnered with several organizations, including the Boy Scouts, Imani Community Center and Passage Theatre Company, to integrate after-school, summer and adult education programs to better serve students. The Middlesex County Educational Services Commission provides educational and social activities for students with multiple disabilities, including autism. And the Princeton Regional Schools' after-school program benefits from its designation as a 21st Century Community Learning Center.

These programs, and others in my district, strengthen our communities and improve our children's lives. But we can do better. If the No Child Left Behind Act were fully funded, another 64,000 students in New Jersey alone would have a safe place to go after school.

I applaud the staff and volunteers of after-school programs, and I am glad to join the one million Americans expected to celebrate Lights on Afterschool! on October 20th.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 66, a bill supporting the goals and ideal of "Lights On Afterschool!," a national celebration of after-school programs.

While my district of El Paso, Texas is fortunate to be served by several excellent after-school programs, I am here to say we need more.

As more families have two parents who work every day—and single parents struggle to balance the duties of providing for their kids and caring for them—more children are left without supervision after school. The Afterschool Alliance estimates there are 14.3 million of these children across America.

Without available after-school programs, many of these children will be left to wander the streets between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., the time of day when juvenile crime is most likely to occur and children are most likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. Or they might just sit in front of the television or video game console all afternoon.

By creating more after-school programs—at schools, community centers, and faith-based organizations—we provide children a fun and productive place to go after school. Also, parents have peace of mind knowing their kids are safe and are thus better able to focus on their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the American people support after-school programs, and so should we. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting "Lights on Afterschool" and the movement for more afterschool programs in America.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Resolution 66, supporting the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool!," a national celebration of after-school programs. Passage of this bill will not only recognize this celebration, but also reaffirm the United States Congress' continuing commitment to providing our children after-school programs.

The "Lights On Afterschool!" celebration was started in October of 2000 and was hosted in over 1,000 communities across the nation. The goal of the program at its inception was to call attention to the importance of after-school programs for America's communities. Last year, 7,500 communities celebrated Lights On Afterschool! events. This October, the Afterschool Alliance, the founding

organization, expects 1 million Americans to participate in "Lights On Afterschool!"

In this time of political pressure for budget cuts, "Lights On Afterschool!" seeks to celebrate the importance of after-school programs to American Society, and assert the need for even more programs. The worth of after-school programming is not lost on the American public. Nine in ten Americans think children need organized activities or a program to go to after school where they have learning opportunities. Nine in ten also support funding for after-school programs in low-income neighborhoods.

The "Lights On Afterschool!" program calls for expanding after-school opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one. This is not only a good idea on paper, but a good idea in practice. Teens who participate in after-school programs are three times less likely to try drugs, and less likely to smoke or drink. Teens who do not attend after-school programs are three times more likely to skip class. Students who participate in after-school programs have better grades, are more likely to attend college, and reach higher levels of achievement. The benefit of these programs also extends to the tens of millions of parents of school aged children, who, with the help of these programs, were better able to balance family and work life.

It seems like a simple decision to support the "Lights On" program, but budget-tightening is forcing many programs to cut back or even close. There is a tremendous unmet demand for after-school programs. Today, millions of children have no adult supervision after school. Mayors surveyed in 86 cities reported that only one-third of the children needing after school care were receiving it. Over two-thirds of principals whose children lack after-school programs claim a lack of funding as the reason for not having sufficient programming.

The "Lights On Afterschool!" program is scheduled next month on the 20th of October. Supporting this program—and after-school programs in general—should be a high priority for this country and this congress.

I support H.J. Res. 66 for the foregoing reasons, and I urge my colleagues to follow suit.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 66, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool." Lights On Afterschool is a national celebration of after school programs and the dedicated people who keep them going.

After school programs play an important role in the lives of millions of school children throughout the United States. These programs provide fun and educational activities that help develop the social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic skills of children, while giving them a safe and enriching alternative to the streets.

Students in my home town of Chicago benefit from hundreds of exciting after school options. Many of these are coordinated through After School Matters, a non-profit organization which partners with the City of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library, and the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services to create a network of after school opportunities for teens in underserved communities.

Through After School Matters, Chicago teens take part in engaging activities that provide skills that translate to the workplace. After School Matters helps kids build positive relationships with adults and peers, providing them with access to educational and career opportunities in their neighborhoods and the city.

Programs such as After School Matters are making a difference in communities throughout the United States. These programs deserve our support, and I urge my colleagues to make after school programs a priority as we move through the budget process.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take this opportunity to recognize the work of these dedicated people who help provide quality after school opportunities for children. On October 20th, I urge my colleagues to participate in "Lights On Afterschool" and honor the after school programs which serve their communities.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 66.

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. EHLERS. 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.

□ 1445

STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL SCHAFFER POST OFFICE BUILDING

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3703) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8501 Philatelic Drive in Spring Hill, Florida, as the "Staff Sergeant Michael Schaffer Post Office Building".

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3703

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL SCHAFFER POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8501 Philatelic Drive in Spring Hill, Florida, shall be known and designated as the "Staff Sergeant Michael Schaffer Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Staff Sergeant Michael Schaffer Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Pursuant

to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3703. I introduced this bill to honor the life of fallen U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Michael Schaffer. On July 25 this year, while fighting extremist forces in Afghanistan, Sergeant Schaffer made the ultimate sacrifice for our great Nation that he loved so dearly.

I sincerely appreciate leadership's willingness to schedule this legislation for consideration today. I can only hope that with the enactment of H.R. 3703, Michael's widow, parents, and family will be comforted by this small token on behalf of a Nation that is eternally grateful for Michael's service.

Michael Schaffer, a native of the beautiful town of Spring Hill in my district, answered the call to service by enlisting in the Army in 1998. At the age of 25, Michael had already served tours of duty in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He became the team leader of the Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade. In addition to being an excellent soldier, he was a model citizen, a dutiful son, and a very caring husband.

Tragically, enemy combatants ambushed Sergeant Schaffer and his squad in Oruzgan, Afghanistan, on July 25, 2005. They fired shots at the American forces. One shot struck Sergeant Schaffer. Although wounded, he still managed to alert the rest of his team to the imminent danger and ordered them to evacuate the area. However, another shot then killed him.

The Army posthumously awarded Sergeant Schaffer the Silver Star and Purple Heart. The Army recognized that his last act saved the lives of at least two of his own soldiers. I am deeply humbled by the brave and selfless actions of this young hero.

I urge my distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring the sacrifice made by Michael Schaffer to defend the freedom of our great Nation, and I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) for making possible House passage of this legislation.