

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 692

Honoring the 26th anniversary of Northern Ireland's first integrated school and further encouraging continued innovation to achieve a shared future in education in Northern Ireland that would deliver much higher standards of skills.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. MCHUGH, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. HIGGINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Honoring the 26th anniversary of Northern Ireland's first integrated school and further encouraging continued innovation to achieve a shared future in education in Northern Ireland that would deliver much higher standards of skills.

Whereas since its foundation in 1921, Northern Ireland has had two separate educational systems;

Whereas 2007 marks the 26th anniversary of the opening of Northern Ireland's first integrated school, Lagan College in south Belfast;

Whereas schools in Northern Ireland that have formally become integrated have demonstrated particular and distinctive commitment to a shared future;

Whereas currently, there are 58 integrated schools in Northern Ireland: 39 are primary schools and 19 are colleges for students aged 11 to 18 years;

Whereas 94 percent of Protestant students attend Protestant schools, while 92 percent of Catholic students attend Catholic schools;

Whereas currently 4.6 percent of all pupils—approximately 18,000 students—attend an integrated school in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the cost of running the current, mostly separate school system in Northern Ireland amounts to as much as 1 billion pounds a year;

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement explicitly promised that the Government of Northern Ireland would “encourage and facilitate” the development of integrated schools;

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement stated that “an essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education”;

Whereas the goal of integration is to encourage children to understand differences so they begin to understand different cultures and overcome negative stereotypes;

Whereas the Taoiseach noted in a March 30, 1999, speech at Hazelwood College in Belfast, “Integrated education has an important part to play in promoting partnership and mutual understanding.”;

Whereas in a speech in Donegal in 2006, the Secretary of State of Northern Ireland, Peter Hain, said, “The educational future of Northern Ireland must be shared and focused on what unites, or divided it will be bleak.”;

Whereas on September 19, 2006, Secretary Hain stated, “We must embrace collaboration and sharing across and between school sectors, allowing children and young people to share experiences and ensuring education spending is going to children in classrooms . . .”;

Whereas Secretary Hain further stated, “The blunt reality is that it is simply not going to be possible to offer the full range of opportunities in a system of education that does not have sharing at its heart.”;

Whereas young people must be confident of individual traditions, but at the same time, have full respect for other traditions and an ability to make friends and relationships across the community divisions;

Whereas in a recent study from Queen’s University in Belfast, research indicates that educating Catholics and Protestants together in school does have an effect on their attitudes later in life;

Whereas people who have attended integrated schools in Northern Ireland have the potential to create a new political common ground; and

Whereas integrated schools dilute sectarianism: Now, therefore, be it

- 1        *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2            (1) honors the 26th anniversary of Northern
- 3            Ireland’s first integrated school;

1           (2) commends the efforts to work toward a  
2 shared future in education in Northern Ireland;

3           (3) recognizes that a shared future in education  
4 in Northern Ireland will produce a higher quality  
5 education which plays a powerful and positive role in  
6 creating a more confident society, helping to make  
7 it sustainable and vibrant with greater sharing be-  
8 tween its communities;

9           (4) encourages a shared future in education in  
10 Northern Ireland and for Northern Ireland to have  
11 the courage to push beyond the boundaries set by  
12 the separation of the past and grasp the opportuni-  
13 ties to build a new, shared future based on mutual  
14 respect and understanding; and

15           (5) reiterates its support for the successful May  
16 8, 2007, devolution, which will present an oppor-  
17 tunity for Northern Ireland to work toward a shared  
18 future in education.

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