

spoken humility, his grace under pressure, his good sportsmanship, his example as a role model for younger kids that make him special to Iowans.

He is the Cyclone version of Nile Kinnick, and whether we are Hawkeyes or Cyclones or UNI Panthers, we are proud of him. And we all hope that he too wins the Olympics. But if Cael Sanderson never stepped on a mat again, we would still have to say, thanks for the great memories.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I acknowledge that the Speaker of this House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), is a famous wrestler and wrestling coach of great renown; and I am confident, were he not busy working on the business of the American people, he would be here on this floor to commend not only Cael but also to commend his parents, his coach and his supporters.

In a time of desperate need in America for role models for our young people, it is only appropriate that this House acknowledge a young man who has distinguished himself by achieving a record never before accomplished at a time while still maintaining an average to become an Academic All American 2 years in a row.

I join my other colleagues who have spoken in commending Cael Sanderson for his achievement and his contribution and his role model life that he leads in the State of Iowa.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 399. This resolution congratulates Cael Sanderson for finishing his career as the first ever undefeated collegiate wrestler. This resolution provides much deserved recognition to Mr. Sanderson's parents, Steven and Debbie Sanderson as well as his Iowa State University coach, Robert Douglas.

Our distinguished Speaker of the House, himself, was once a wrestling coach on the high school level, and I am sure would want to extend his congratulations to this accomplished young man, as well.

Mr. Sanderson has completed his college career with a perfect record of 159 wins and no losses and is the first undefeated four-time Division I college-wrestling champion. Mr. Sanderson has quite an outstanding record of achievement, including being a four-time NCAA champion, a four-time NCAA outstanding wrestler, a three-time Hodge award winner and a two-time Academic All American. This young man has a great deal to be proud of and I am happy to join my colleague, Representative LATHAM, in honoring him and all he has accomplished.

I want to thank my colleague from Iowa for introducing this resolution and extend my congratulations to Mr. Sanderson, his family, his coach and Iowa State University.

I ask all my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. HASTERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the remarkable accomplishments of Cael Sanderson, who this year became the first in his sport to finish undefeated over the course of four seasons and only the second NCAA Division I wrestler in history to win four NCAA Championships.

Growing up in Utah, Cael Sanderson was one of four wrestling brothers, who over the

years combined for 11 Utah prep crowns. During this prep years, Cael was coached by his father at Wasatch High, where he was a four-time State Champ. After high school, Cael decided to follow in his older brothers' footsteps by attending Iowa State University where he would leave his mark on the sport of wrestling, which I believe is safe to say will never be forgotten.

After 4 years at Iowa State University, Cael broke virtually every record and received every award he could garner. As I previously mentioned, Cael is a four-time national wrestling champion and finished his career with an overall record of 159-0. Moreover, he is also a four-time national Collegiate Athletic Championship Outstanding Wrestler, a three-time recipient of the Dan Hodge Trophy, given to the sport's most outstanding collegiate wrestler and was recently named the 2001-2002 Big 12 Conference Male Athlete of the Year.

In addition to taking care of business on the mat, Cael Sanderson also excelled in the classroom as he has twice been named an Academic All-American. Graduating in December 2001 with a Bachelor's degree in art and design, Cael showed patience, hardwork and dedication as he was able to balance the popularity that comes with being a collegiate star, as well as the long hours needed to accommodate a full academic schedule.

Finally, Cael Sanderson has been a model member of the community and has had a positive impact on all those around him. Besides offering his time to a number of community services, Cael also makes frequent visits to elementary schools and Boys and Girls Clubs in the Ames area, and spends his summers as a wrestling spokesman traveling across the nation to various wrestling camps, generating interest in the sport.

As a teacher and former wrestling coach, I commend Cael Sanderson on his many accomplishments on and off the mat. I think all of us in this body can appreciate the time and effort he has put into the sport so many of us love. Cael is a champion in the true sense of the word, as well as an inspiration and role model, not just to wrestling fans, but to everyone chasing a goal of a dream.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 399, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING PERSONAL SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 484) expressing the sense of the Congress regarding personal safety for children, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 484

Whereas 840,279 individuals were reported missing in 2001, and 85 to 90 percent of these missing persons were children;

Whereas approximately 58,200 children were abducted by nonfamily members in 1999, often in connection with another crime;

Whereas 115 of all nonfamily abductions (those perpetrated by strangers) resulted in the child being kept overnight, held for ransom, or killed;

Whereas over 50 percent of the children kidnapped in nonfamily abductions were taken away from the street in a vehicle or from a park or wooded area;

Whereas a central element of the congressionally-mandated mission of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is the prevention of child victimization;

Whereas the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, with the help of parents, local communities, and law enforcement, has assisted in the recovery of approximately 67,000 children;

Whereas the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Education recently developed a booklet, entitled "Personal Safety for Children", which offers easy-to-read tips for parents to discuss safety and protection measures with their children;

Whereas parents and educators need to teach children about safety measures they can use to protect themselves against abduction and exploitation and to encourage them to be smart, strong, and safe; and

Whereas President George W. Bush plans to convene the first-ever White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children with policymakers, experts, community leaders, teachers, and law enforcement to discuss how to prevent the victimization of children: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—*

(1) it is the sense of the Congress that—

(A) Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies and communities should work together to prevent the victimization of children; and

(B) communities, schools, and parents should learn more about the steps that may be taken to safeguard children and teach children the skills they need to be safe; and

(2) the Congress recognizes the booklet, "Personal Safety for Children", as one of the tools available to help parents and teachers talk with children about personal safety.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 484.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 484, a resolution which recognizes the importance of personal safety for children.

Last summer, child abductions dominated the news. Five-year-old Samantha Runnion was taken from the driveway in front of her home in Stanton, California. Six-year-old Cassandra

Williamson was abducted from her home in St. Louis, Missouri. And 7-year-old Erica Pratt of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was snatched from her yard but managed to escape from her kidnappers.

Last year 725,000 children were reported missing or abducted. Although many of these children ran away or were taken by a parent, 3,000 to 5,000 of these child abductions did not involve a family member, and 115 of these cases were the most serious type, where the stranger was the perpetrator and the child was kept overnight, held for ransom or killed.

Fortunately, increased public awareness and a more coordinated response to child abductions has resulted in a decline of this most serious type of abduction. Thanks to law enforcement, the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children, media saturation and a concerned public, the recovery rate of missing children is up from 62 percent just 10 years ago to 93 percent.

While we are all thankful to those who have helped return so many of our children safely home, I believe we can do more to prevent crimes against our children. Parents need to keep current photos of their child, as well as a detailed description, including eye color, weight and height, in the event of the unthinkable; and they need to talk to their children about personal safety.

Recognizing that many parents do not know how to talk about safety in a way that does not unduly alarm children and that Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and communities need to work together to protect children, President and Mrs. Bush are hosting a conference tomorrow, October 2, to raise public awareness about child victimization and help families and communities to share ideas how they can protect children.

In addition, the Departments of Justice, Health and Education, and the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children created a booklet, "Personal Safety for Children, a Guide for Parents," which will help parents discuss what children may be hearing about child abductions. Among other things, the book gives parents commonsense tips to help keep children safe, such as teaching them never to go anywhere without permission. It gives children simple-to-follow safety rules such as saying no if someone treats them in a way that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

At President Bush's request, this booklet has been distributed by the Department of Education to every school in the country. The recent rash in child abductions and murders reminds us that we must work harder to keep children and youth from becoming victims. Our children need to understand that they are our number one priority and their safety is our number one concern. To that end, I urge parents, schools and communities to learn more about the steps they can take to safeguard their children. I encourage all parents to use

the booklet "Personal Safety for Children," available at

www.missingkids.com as a tool to talk to their children about personal safety and keep them smart, safe and strong.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation and the resolution to draw attention to the victimization of missing and exploited children.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON), who has given an extraordinary amount of his time and effort and public service on this issue.

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for yielding me time to speak on this issue that I have indeed considered a passion of my service in Congress and have done a great deal of work. I also want to thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for the wonderful work he has done. He is the former Governor of Delaware. I thank the gentleman for the work that he has done not only when he served that State in the capacity as Governor; but since he has been in Congress, he has been one of the true leaders on the issue that has to do with child safety. We have worked on not just this piece of legislation today, but others; and I thank the gentleman for that. I think the people of the country will be indebted to the gentleman forever.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to ask all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 484. We all know now the names of Elizabeth Smart and Michelle VanDamme and all the other children who were tragically abducted this summer. This sense of Congress expresses that we, the representatives of children all across America, care about their well-being and safety.

In 1996 just after I was elected, shortly after I took the oath of office to this wonderful body, I did not even know about the issue. I had not spoken about it. I knew a little bit about it because I have children myself; but it came to my attention in such a way that it was dramatic in that a little girl, Laura Kate Smither, was abducted and murdered in my district. The search for her went on for 2½ weeks before her body was found in a drainage ditch. The outpouring of support that came from Friendwood, Texas, the support that the friends and neighbors of the Smithers showed, and in the hurt that I saw in the eyes of Bob and Gaye Smither when they learned of the death of their daughter was phenomenal to me; and I vowed to come back here to Washington, D.C. to do my best to make some kind of a difference on these horrendous issues that affect so many of our children.

We soon found the wonderful people at the National Center for Missing and

Exploited Children and learned of the need to have a coordinated effort here in the House of Representatives, that we might be able to work on legislation that so many different Members were working on in a coordinated manner. So I was proud to be the person who spearheaded the founding of the Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children. The goal of that caucus was to serve as a unified voice for missing and exploited children and to increase awareness on this issue.

This resolution serves both of those purposes. I stand here today with my Republican and Democratic colleagues to say that missing kids are not a partisan issue. We have worked together on this legislation and many other pieces of legislation, including legislation on the Amber Plan and Code Adam and the wonderful work that the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) has done on curriculum that has been distributed. And one of the things I often tell people at home when they ask, What is it we can do? What can we do? It is easy for folks to pick up the telephone and call a local school and ask them what their curriculum is to teach children and at what levels. They need to be taught all the way through school about what they can do.

It is no longer a simple matter of telling people. Do not talk to strangers. The issue is much more significant than that. We say to the public, Congress is concerned about our American children and their safety. We believe that Federal, State and local law enforcement and communities should work together to prevent the victimization of children, and we are indeed trying to do just that.

The program that we have been hearing about with the Amber Alert that I have just mentioned is one where the public becomes a partner with law enforcement and extends law enforcement's ability to do significantly greater things within our communities.

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We say to communities, schools and parents should learn more and teach their children the skills they need to be safe.

I want to thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for introducing this legislation and letting me join him in the work on it and all of our other colleagues. Together, Republican and Democrat alike, we can make a difference in the lives of children everywhere. We are doing so with this and other pieces of legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 484.

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds just to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) for all the work he has done. They say nice things about the rest of us in terms of what we have done, but he has spearheaded the movement to help in this area of safety of children and deserves a tremendous amount of credit for that. I just wanted to make sure that was understood.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for yielding me the time.

I rise in support of the resolution that he has brought to the floor and commend him for the timeliness of it, the timeliness of it in several different respects. It is very timely with respect to the national discourse that is taking place on the exploitation of children, the victimization of children in every kitchen across the Nation, abduction of children, murder of children, kidnapping, exploitation of every type. So it is timely in the national discourse.

But in the work of the Congress it is also timely, because tomorrow the Committee on the Judiciary will be putting finishing touches on an omnibus bill that includes many of the elements outlined in the resolution that we are now considering.

I myself remember that about a month ago or so, I introduced a bill which passed the House that had to do with offering more monitoring capability on the part of judges to watch a sexual predator of children after he is convicted and after his release to make sure that perhaps even for a lifetime of that offender there is monitoring taking place. That bill, which passed the House, is going to be part of this omnibus bill tomorrow, as will several other items of new ideas in the question of victimization of children.

Then, as the gentleman himself observed, tomorrow many of us will be joining the President and the First Lady in the conference on victimization on children, missing children, exploited children, and that will highlight even more the awareness to which the gentleman from Delaware has contributed by this resolution.

It seems to me that we are all on our way as Members of Congress in reflecting the high level of concern that our families across the Nation are feeling about the new wave of dastardly things that are happening to our children, and so we are now in a position well poised with the President and some of the initiatives to actually adopt concrete measures dealing with the problem.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just would say in closing that again I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for their work on this legislation, and the fact that this legislation is on the floor, I think, is a tribute. I am sure many of us have heard our parents or grandparents say, out of a dark cloud comes a silver lining, and that is that some of these parents who have suffered some of the most horrible things that we could imagine happening to us, our families, our children, ourselves, have found the energy to carry on in the name of their children, efforts at

the local community level and now at the national level with the national center. There are so many local organizations.

I know in my own area in Contra Costa County and Solasta County, we have had a number of children who have gone missing; not only gone missing and later found, but clearly children who have gone missing and were killed and violently assaulted, that local organizations have come into existence because of the energy of these parents and of the community to help other parents and families when this happens to them and in a number of instances have, because of their quick response, because of their understanding of the nature of this crime and what needs to be done in the first few hours of the discovery, have facilitated the rescue of some children. And the national center has continued that effort and has provided recognition of those local programs, of those local individuals who really have taken a tragedy and turned it to positive energy, and have taken the tragic loss and victimization of a child and used that to save other children and to prevent other children and families having to go through this.

I would say as part of this resolution to recognize those individuals, I think almost tragically so, but almost every Member of Congress has experienced this in their own congressional district where these individuals have gone on, where we think one would be so devastated that they would cease to function, they have gone on to provide an incredible amount of leadership, and fortunately the national center has recognized these individuals and their efforts.

We had a young girl, Ms. Sanchez, who I had the opportunity to give an award to because of her courage, who was abducted, kidnapped, taken, but somehow found it within herself at a given moment when her abductor happened to look the other way, since he stopped to ask directions from somebody, she ran from his vehicle and was saved by a passing truck driver. Her own personal courage has been an example, and she shared that with other children.

Amber Schwarz, who many years ago disappeared from our community in Pinole. Her mother has gone on to develop the Amber Foundation, which has provided assistance to law enforcement, assistance to families and to communities to cope with these incidents and to bring resources to try and save and recover these children, and the Amber Alert in California that was so successful just recently and now many States are looking at replicating.

We owe a great deal of thanks to those families who have been able to summon the courage and the where-withal to share their tragedy with others to try and avoid that tragedy from happening to other children and to the families. And again, I thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) so

much for shepherding this resolution to the floor of the House.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, which will not be much.

Let me start by thanking the gentleman from California, whose interest in children is well-defined and well-known throughout this body, particularly in that of education; again, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) for his abiding and continuing concern for the children of America; for the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) for the same, for his abiding and continuing concern for the children of America, indeed for all the Members of the House and of, I am sure, the Senate. It is a concern of all of us, and I am delighted this conference is going to take place.

I think we all realize that the Presidential conference will call attention to an issue as much as anything that can happen. So I look forward to that happening tomorrow, and today we look forward to passing this resolution.

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution, which expresses the sense of Congress about the safety of America's children and points out the need for parents and educators to teach our children about safety measures they can use to protect themselves against abduction and exploitation.

During the past spring and summer, the American public has watched in horror as daily news reports have highlighted numerous stories of kidnapped children. According to the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, there were 203,900 children abducted by family members and 58,200 children abducted by non-family members in 1999, the most recent year of collected and analyzed data. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released part of this study in August 2002, and the remainder of study will be released in November this year. Non-family abductions are the smallest category of missing children, but the one in which the child is at greatest risk of injury or death.

These statistics highlight the need for communities, schools, and parents to learn more about the specific steps that can be taken to facilitate children's safety and teach children the skills and know-how they need to enable them to stay safe. I commend the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Education for their recently developed booklet, "Personal Safety for Children," which offers tips to parents for discussing safety and protection measures with their children. For example, the booklet instructs parents to make a list with their children of their neighborhood boundaries, choosing significant landmarks and telling their children whose homes they are allowed to visit.

I would also like to commend the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for their fight to prevent child victimization and their assistance in the recovery of countless missing children. Furthermore, the President will convene a White House Conference on

Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children tomorrow, October 2. The Conference will promote public awareness of the cause of missing, exploited and runaway children, and it will bring policymakers, experts, key officials, community leaders, teachers and law enforcement officials together to share progress made and generate new ideas to help prevent the victimization of children. In August the President stated that the "Personal Safety for Children" handbook holds practical advice to help families and communities make their homes, their schools, and their neighborhoods safer and added that he was calling on "all Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and our communities and our citizens to work together to do everything in our power to better protect our children."

I would also remind my colleagues that the House more than six months ago overwhelmingly passed bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3839, the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act, to help ensure that assistance is provided in the most effective manner for children caught in abusive situations. That bipartisan bill is the product of efforts by members on both sides of the aisle to ensure that all children grow up in a safe and loving environment.

I am pleased that my colleague and friend from Delaware has brought this issue to the Floor of the U.S. Congress, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 484.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECOGNIZING IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING U.S. HISTORY IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Mr. OSBORNE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 451) recognizing the importance of teaching United States history in elementary and secondary schools, and other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 451

Whereas gaining a sense of history is a gradual and cumulative process, and history education should therefore begin at the early stages of a student's classroom experience and continue to develop throughout a student's entire educational career and beyond;

Whereas when students study United States history they become familiar with the development and expansion of the country, which enables them to better understand the present relationship between the United States and other countries and to anticipate future international interaction;

Whereas when students have a foundation of basic United States history they can better understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens of the United States and as a part of the global community;

Whereas the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) United States History Assessment of 2001 found that 89 percent of high school seniors, 84 percent of 8th graders, and 82 percent of 4th graders scored below "proficient" levels;

Whereas the results of the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Assessment showed that 77 percent of all 4th graders sampled scored below "proficient" levels and showed similar results for 8th and 12th graders, with approximately three-fourths of students at both grade levels scoring below "proficient" levels;

Whereas the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Assessment showed that one-third of 4th graders could not explain the meaning of "I pledge allegiance to the flag" on a multiple-choice test and a majority of 4th graders could not answer why "citizens elect people to make laws for them" in a democracy;

Whereas in 1999, the United States placed 6th in the International Civic Education (CivEd) Study, a study of 27 countries sponsored by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) designed to tap the civic knowledge and skills of 14-year-olds and their attitudes toward democracy and citizenship;

Whereas according to the CivEd study, 12 percent of students in the United States reported never or hardly ever studying history in school, and the majority of 9th graders typically spent less than one hour per week doing history homework;

Whereas according to the Center for Survey Research and Analysis, fewer than half of the seniors surveyed at top universities across the United States can identify crucial events in United States history;

Whereas distinguished historians and intellectuals fear that without a common civic memory and common understanding of the remarkable individuals, events, and ideals that have shaped the Nation, people in the United States risk losing much of what it means to be an American, as well as the ability to fulfill the fundamental responsibilities of citizens in a democracy; and

Whereas citizens who lack knowledge of United States history will also lack an understanding and appreciation of the democratic principles that define and sustain the Nation as a free people, such as liberty, justice, government by consent of the governed, and equality under the law: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—*

(1) recognizes the importance of teaching United States history and civics in elementary and secondary schools;

(2) expresses concern regarding the lack of basic understanding of United States history among students of all levels in the United States; and

(3) strongly supports efforts to promote the value of education in United States history and to ensure that students in the United States graduate from high school with a significant understanding of United States history and civics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSBORNE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 451.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 451, recognizing the importance of teaching U.S. history and civics. I would particularly like to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) for introducing this piece of legislation and for his leadership in this area.

As I thought about speaking on this subject today, I was reminded of the fact that a couple of months ago, I had a civics teacher from Nebraska who came into my office. This particular individual had paid his own way back to Washington, and I asked him what was on his mind, and he said, well, he had been teaching U.S. government for over 20 years, and he was really distressed by the fact that he had seen his students become increasingly less and less engaged with the political process, or even being interested in government, certain issues. So his sole purpose of paying his way back here was just to try to talk to people and apprise us of the situation.

Of course, this has certainly not been a very encouraging trend. In 2001, the NAEP test indicated that in testing 4th, 8th and 12th graders, that between 80 to 90 percent of those students were below acceptable levels of achievement in history and government. Actually, the 12th graders had 89 percent of the students below satisfactory level. Again, this is a rather alarming trend because a democracy depends upon an informed, engaged electorate, and it is alarming to see that we apparently have been losing ground in this regard.

One might ask, well, why this decline; why have things gone south on us in this regard? I would say, I would suggest maybe two reasons. One, I think there has been an increasing lack of emphasis in the schools on teaching of history, particularly U.S. history and U.S. government, and this is reflected in the test scores and in some of the apathy.

I think second, and we are all probably somewhat involved here, there has been an increasing cynicism on the part of the general public in regard to the political process. We may say, well, why are people more cynical today? I think one reason is that they feel more powerless. I think they see the emphasis upon money, the factor that many special interest groups play in the legislative process.

Then the other night I was reminded as I sat on the floor and listened to the debate, which became increasingly raucous and increasingly partisan, and I thought if I were a young person who was just kind of getting acquainted with the political process, how would I feel about what is going on on the floor? These are the Representatives, these are the people who are supposed