

NATIONAL AMBER ALERT
NETWORK ACT

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, we were notified that the Senate has passed the National AMBER Alert Network Act, and it will be introduced here in the House and will be taken up shortly.

As founder and chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children, I am an original co-sponsor of that piece of legislation, and I am here to encourage my colleagues to join me in that commonsense bipartisan legislation.

The National AMBER Alert Network Act builds on the success of the AMBER Alert Plan, a voluntary, cooperative program between law enforcement agencies and local broadcasters to quickly send an emergency alert to the public when a child has been abducted. Thanks to the work of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and others, there are now 84 AMBER plans. Still, the vast majority of America's communities have not established an AMBER plan to protect their children.

This legislation provides State and local entities grants through the Departments of Justice and Transportation for highway signage, education and training programs, and equipment to facilitate AMBER Alert systems. The bill offers States the resources they need to establish a seamless network of AMBER plans.

Please join me in supporting the National AMBER Alert Network Act.

IT IS TIME TO STAND FOR PEACE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the U.N. process of inspections can work if the administration will let it; and yet we see, despite the efforts of the United Nations, the administration is preparing for war, preparing to send as many as 300,000 of our young men and women into battle. Stories of up to 800 missiles, poised for an attack on Baghdad, a city of over 3 million people. Reports of a new military strategy which plays off of this big missile attack which would attack water systems and electrical systems to totally destroy any infrastructure in Iraq, even news reports that the use of nuclear weapons is being considered.

Americans need to think about it. We have a country here which is dedicated to liberty and justice. But where is the justice if we are the first ones to use nuclear weapons? Where is the justice if we are going to attack a nation that has not attacked us? Where is the justice? It is time to stand for peace.

JOINT SESSION OF THE CONGRESS—STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 12) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 12

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 28, 2003, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

□ 1605

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON) at 4 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 26) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 26

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 2001-2002 academic year was 2,616,330, and the student-teacher ratio is 17 to 1;

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students;

Whereas more than 26 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are minorities, and more than 13 percent are Non-Catholics;

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 co-sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 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 Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 26.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask my colleagues to support H. Res. 26, which recognizes the contribution of America's Catholic elementary and secondary schools and congratulates these schools, students, teachers and parents for their dedication to education in our country.

I would like to thank the sponsor of the legislation, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for bringing this resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share some remarkable facts about Catholic

schools. They are widely acclaimed for their academic success. For example, the graduation rate of Catholic schools students is about 95 percent, while less than 5 percent of Catholic high school students drop out of school, and over 80 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college.

Catholic schools also teach a diverse group of students. Over 26 percent of students enrolled are minorities.

Catholic schools provide more than just an excellent scholastic education. They emphasize and promote the lifelong development of a student's moral, intellectual, physical, and social values. They produce students dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities.

In Delaware, I am proud of the contributions of the 32 Catholic schools that operate there. There are too many to name, so I will insert a list of those schools in the RECORD.

Archmere Academy, Christ Our King School, Christ the Teacher Catholic School, Corpus Christi School, Holy Angels School, Holy Cross Elementary School, Holy Rosary School, Holy Spirit School, Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Our Lady of Fatima School, Our Lady of Grace Kindergarten, Padua Academy, Salesianum School, St. Ann's School, St. Anthony of Padua Grade School, St. Catherine of Siena School, St. Edmond's Academy, St. Elizabeth's Elementary School, St. Elizabeth's High School, St. Hedwig Elementary School, St. Helena School, St. John The Beloved School, St. Joseph's Academy, St. Mark's High School, St. Mary Magdalen School, St. Matthew's School, St. Paul's School, St. Peter School, St. Peter's Cathedral School, St. Thomas More Academy, St. Thomas The Apostle School, and Ursuline Academy.

Each one of these schools is following a long tradition of educating students to be the future leaders in our society. I offer them my gratitude for their dedication to this tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this straightforward resolution.

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, today's resolution recognizes the contributions of Catholic schools. Mr. Speaker, I attended Catholic schools myself. I received a high-quality education from these schools and have benefited greatly. Also, children all across America have benefited from a Catholic education. Certainly, we can all agree that Catholic schools are a strong and positive force in America's educational system.

Fortunately, the great, truly great, aspect of the American education system is its diversity. The goal of the American education system, both public and private, is to provide anyone in any city, in any State, with the opportunity to succeed.

The educational recipe for success in our country certainly includes Catholic schools, schools with other religious focuses and nonreligious private schools, along with our public schools. It is this

variety, this diversity, that truly makes American education powerful and makes American education successful in its mission.

Mr. Speaker, today we are recognizing the educational and societal contributions that Catholic schools make to our Nation. I believe we must recognize the importance and value that all pieces of our educational system have in the lives of our children.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) for introducing this resolution.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Catholic schools for their continuing contributions to educating young Americans. Catholic schools impact not only the intellectual life of our Nation's youth but also their moral, physical and social lives and truly are a major component in instilling the proper values in the next generation.

This year, more than 2.5 million students in the U.S. will be enriched by their Catholic school education. America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence and can boast a student-to-teacher ratio of 17 to one, but the impact of Catholic schools is far broader and more far reaching than even that.

More than 26 percent of 2.5 million school children enrolled in Catholic schools are minorities. More than 13 percent are non-Catholics, and again, it is tremendously important to the moral, the value-based life of our country.

My wife, Wendy, and I are both graduates of Catholic schools, and we realize perhaps because of that the special value Catholic schools provide to an education. That is why we chose to enroll our three daughters in Catholic schools and intend to do the same for our young son, Jack, when he is of age.

Because I believe so strongly in the value and contribution of Catholic schools, I joined with so many others here and introduce House Resolution 26, which supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week.

Again, I congratulate Catholic schools, parents and teachers for their tremendously important role in ensuring a brighter, stronger future for our Nation. I thank them for the hard work and dedication that is put into educating the youth of our country. I thank them, in particular, for instilling important, deep-seated values in the next generation of Americans.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in concurrence with House Resolution 26.

I think most of us realize the excellence of private schools, particularly the Catholic schools around the country that are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence and provide students more than a superior scholastic education because they are very interested in value-added education, emphasizing a lifelong dedication to moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people. Certainly in our society today, a strong sense of values and character is critical.

As has been mentioned previously, the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2001-2002 academic year is over 2.6 million; and of course the student-teacher ratio is critical in any educational setting, and a ratio of 17 to 1 is truly admirable and does provide for a much better academic environment.

Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students. Roughly one-fourth of the students who enrolled in Catholic schools are minorities, and more than 13 percent are non-Catholics.

We feel that the Catholic schools of the United States provide a tremendous service to all people who are interested in education and would like to commend them, and I urge support of House Resolution 26.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to spend just a few extra minutes thanking all of the many colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the House, Democrats and Republicans, for joining together in supporting this resolution and for honoring Catholic Schools Week. I think in so many ways Catholic schools are really vital to the education of our youth and vital to the intellectual and moral and values-based life of our country. I wanted to highlight just a couple of ways, though, I think Catholic schools are so healthy and so important.

Really, when we get right down to it, they are the main reasons Wendy and I have decided to send our kids to Catholic schools; and they go right to the heart of the contribution Catholic schools make to the life of our country.

One is something I touched on, and that is, Catholic schools offer a great value-based education. In my archdiocese in southeast Louisiana, the motto, the PR slogan, if you will, for the archdiocese school system is "Catholic schools, an education of value."

□ 1615

It is so true, and it is a play on words, of course, because it means at least two things: One is that it is a wonderful education; a wonderful non-public education. And of course non-public private school educations can often be extraordinarily prohibitively expensive. But in our archdiocese, and in virtually all across the country,

Catholic schools offer a really solid education at a reasonable price. So it certainly is an education of value in that sense.

Of course, even more importantly, and an even more compelling reason so many parents send their kids to Catholic schools, is that it is an education rooted in a sense of values. And it is not simply 1 period of religion a day, and it is not simply going to mass 1 day a week or 1 day every other week. It is the whole atmosphere which really embodies loving, Christian principles, and it is a wonderful, loving, nurturing environment for any child, Catholic or non-Catholic, to be brought up in and educated in.

So that sense of values really is so important and such a mainstay of the important contribution Catholic schools make to the life of our country. I think it is something we can all learn from, whether we are helping improve education in the public sector or in any other sector. I think it is something over the last 10 years in particular we have begun to appreciate much more deeply, and that is that educating our children is not merely an intellectual exercise. It has to be a value-laden exercise. And we should not apologize for that in whatever setting.

Of course, if we are in the public school setting, there are limits to how we pass on those values, and we cannot do them in a way which endorses one religion over another or religion over nonreligion. But surely there is still plenty of room within that constitutional framework to offer kids in every setting an education rooted in positive, important values.

The second aspect of Catholic schools that I think is so important and so beneficial, which really goes to the heart of Wendy and my decision to send our kids, is that it is a very diverse environment that our kids find themselves in, particularly compared to other private school settings. So often in nonpublic school settings, particularly schools which are prohibitively expensive, you end up having a very narrow part of the community represented in that school. Those schools are super schools, and they do an excellent job academically, and certainly kids there are great and bright and talented. But it is so healthy in so many ways for kids to be exposed to a more diverse cross-section of the whole community socioeconomically, and certainly Catholic schools offer that. The enrollment of minority and other students in Catholic schools is very, very significant, and Catholic schools play such a positive and instrumental role in reaching out to those minority and other families.

So those are two of the key reasons, I think, Catholic schools make such a contribution to the life of our country. And as I said, those are the same reasons why we made the personal decision to send our kids there.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Delaware for yielding me this time and congratulate he and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for bringing this resolution to the floor today on behalf of the committee.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 26, which recognizes and honors the contribution of Catholic schools in the United States. I commend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) for his leadership in sponsoring this legislation.

Catholic schools throughout our Nation have a well-earned and an internationally acclaimed tradition of academic excellence, and I am pleased to join all my colleagues today in recognizing them. We are honoring and congratulating Catholic schools, their students, parents and teachers for their ongoing contributions to education and the vital role that they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

This week is National Catholic Schools Week, and it is fitting that we focus on 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.

The theme of this year's week is "Catholic Schools: Making a World of Difference." This theme is clear in what one Catholic student wrote in an essay to celebrate this week when he said, "Most importantly, a Catholic school is a community of individuals; teachers, parents, students, who actively participate in enriching young people's educational lives."

I am impressed with how all Catholic schools emphasize intellectual, spiritual, moral and social values and produce well-rounded citizens. Catholic schools teach both students academic knowledge and real-life lessons in service to mankind and respect for one's neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I can personally attest to the outstanding contributions and dedication of Catholic schools, as I am a proud product of Catholic schools in Ohio, having attended Sts. Peter & Paul Elementary School in Reading, Ohio, and Archbishop Moeller High School in Cincinnati. From this strong foundation I then went on to graduate from Xavier University, which is also located in Cincinnati.

In the great State of Ohio, Catholic schools have made a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of students. For example, Fenwick High School in Middletown, Ohio, Chaminade-Julienne High School in Dayton, Ohio, and Badin High School in Hamilton, Ohio, are excellent examples of schools that have profoundly influenced the lives of their students and continue to make significant contributions to their communities.

The top priority in the last Congress for the Committee on Education and the Workforce was the No Child Left Behind Act, a landmark reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which provides services and benefits to both public and private schools. Across our country, many Catholic schools participate in these programs and activities under the act. The primary goal of No Child Left Behind is to improve academic achievement for all students and thereby close the achievement gap that exists between disadvantaged students and their peers. Unfortunately, these gaps have remained stubbornly wide over the last three decades.

However, our Nation's Catholic schools and the dedicated teachers who serve in them have kept the achievement gaps from growing even wider. Indeed, some data indicates that one in four Catholic school students are from underprivileged backgrounds. Coupled with the fact that approximately 95 percent of Catholic school students graduate, and 83 percent of these students go on to pursue a higher education, it is clear that Catholic schools are very successful in educating all students who enter their doors.

As Sol Stern wrote in a column entitled "The Invisible Miracle of Catholic Schools," in the City Journal, "Catholic schools are already transforming the lives of thousands of poor black and Hispanic children, many of whom are not Catholic. Catholic educators have remained committed to the ideal that minority children can share in, and master, our civilization's intellectual and spiritual heritage."

In addition, the number of students enrolled in Catholic schools who are not of the Catholic faith is over 13 percent. These students come from a wide variety of faiths and have chosen to attend a Catholic school. This is especially true for inner-city schools, where in some cases the majority of students enrolled are non-Catholic. Catholic schools and their educators have had tremendous success in reaching out to all students and their parents who are seeking the best possible education for their children.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this resolution and congratulate Catholic schools for the job they are doing in helping to educate all our Nation's children.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for H. Res. 26, a resolution recognizing the valuable contributions of Catholic Schools.

This week marks the 29th Anniversary of National Catholic Schools Week, a week dedicated to honor the achievements and successes of Catholic Schools throughout the U.S. More than 2.6 million children are enrolled in the 8,114 Catholic Schools in our country.

As Pope John Paul II said, ". . . the purpose of Catholic Education is to communicate Christ to you, so that your attitude toward others will be that of Christ." A Catholic education

challenges students through a combination of high standards, strong motivation, effective discipline, and an emphasis on personal responsibility. It is an education that goes beyond preparation for a secular life; it is an education that prepares students for a Christian life.

Placing a premium on both academic standards and moral responsibility has proven to be a successful formula for Catholic schools. Consider the following facts. Catholic school student test performance in the three grade levels of the National Assessment of Educational Progress exceeds public school test results by an average of 4.5 percent in math, 4.8 percent in science, and 12.5 percent in reading. Only 3 percent of Catholic school students drop out of school, compared to a 14 percent dropout rate in public schools. In addition, 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college, as compared to 52 percent of public high school graduates.

Children do not form their core moral values on the sole basis of what schools teach them. Learning a respect for life and respect for the rights of others does not just start at school. It starts at home. Accordingly, the Catholic school curriculum recognizes parents and family as primary educators and seeks to foster a shared vision among the two. As the father of four children who have attended Catholic schools, I know that Catholic schools strive to create a special bond between families and educators. Schools and families work hand-in-hand reinforcing family values, ethical behavior, social responsibility, and academic achievement.

There are more than 167,000 men and women who constitute our Catholic school faculty nationwide. Lay men and women represent 91 percent of the full-time equivalent teaching staff in Catholic elementary schools and 92 percent in middle schools. Parents know that the job of a good school teacher is not an easy one. The teachers and staff in our Catholic Schools are allies and supporters in helping parents instill solid moral lessons in our children. They deliver a curriculum that accentuates academic aptitude and moral responsibility. The Catholic school family—the teachers, administrators, librarians, and support staff—are all working every day to help parents rear and prepare America's next generation of leaders.

Mr. Speaker, learning in a religious setting is not for everyone and America's public school system is critical to providing educational opportunities for all. We must continue to vigorously support our public schools at both the Federal and local levels. At the same time, however, we should support those who seek the benefits of Catholic school and choose a religious setting as the best educational environment for their children. In effect, parents of Catholic school children pay twice—they pay their fair share of taxes necessary to support the public school system and they pay tuition at the school their children attend. I urge my colleagues to join me in addressing this inherent unfairness and work for the passage of a tuition tax credit program—some time this year—as the best way to help offset the double payment endured by those who send their children to Catholic schools.

In the interim, Mr. Speaker, as we work for passage of a tuition tax credit, all members can and should vote today for the passage of

H. Res. 26 which appropriately recognizes the valuable contributions of Catholic schools across the Nation.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the many accomplishments of Catholic schools. On January 26 the annual weeklong national recognition of Catholic schools began across the Nation. I am proud to have several of the nation's high achieving Catholic schools in my district in metropolitan Kansas City, Missouri. As a former educator I understand the importance of recognizing the achievements of education throughout our Nation, and I welcome this opportunity to applaud the Catholic school community nationwide.

For 165 years, the Catholic schools of the Kansas City Diocese have prepared thousands of competent young adults fully for lives as productive citizens. There are over 40 Catholic education centers in metropolitan Kansas City, and they are all known for their high academic standards and rigorous educational instruction. These centers currently serve 14,000 students in my district. Every day over 1,000 dedicated faculty offer the guidance and instruction that make these students some of the best the Nation has to offer. Not only do the metropolitan Kansas City Catholic schools promote excellence in the classroom, they also encourage community service. In the first semester of this school year, our 14,000 students offered 87,978 hours of service to their communities by working to combat hunger and to provide care for the elderly.

One of the brightest educational beacons in the Kansas City Diocese is St. Elizabeth School in Kansas City. They are recipients of the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award from the United States Department of Education. The award recognizes St. Elizabeth's for exceeding local, State, and national education goals. I participated in the announcement of this award and was overjoyed to see the level of excellence embodied throughout the school. They expressed their gratitude by giving me a remembrance of our day together: a Kelly green sweatshirt that I cherish, especially in St. Patrick's Day parades.

St. Teresa's Academy, another blue ribbon school of excellence in my community, is the oldest school and women's institution in Kansas City. The school was founded and is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who, since their founding in the 17th century in France, have been in the forefront of preparing young women for the future.

I had the pleasure of accompanying the Secretary of Education, Roderick Paige, to St. Francis Xavier School in Kansas City, St. Francis is one of the seven Central City Catholic Schools established by the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-Saint Joseph to provide educational support to children of the urban core of Kansas City. It serves a diverse population of students, some of whom are Catholic, but all come to receive their outstanding educational instruction offered as a part of the St. Francis Xavier curriculum. There is also a commitment to serving the whole child. More than half of the students at St. Francis qualify for free or reduced lunch. The school also participates in partnership with community organizations, including the Rockhurst University School of Education for teacher and parent training; Rockhurst High School in establishing a "Middle School Acad-

emy" to align curriculum, share resources, and setting up a mentoring program; and Young Audiences, to enrich the curriculum through the arts by having visual and performing artists work with teachers. St. Francis is part of the President's Service alliance and all students are required to perform community service. St. Francis students get real life experiences as part of their curriculum through partnerships the teachers establish with the community. The students also have a connection to students in the global society fostering the development of cultural awareness.

I have also visited St. Thomas More School for a presentation by 6th Graders on the Federal minimum wage. This was part of a class project titled "That is Not Fair," a program which emphasizes social justice issues. I was accompanied by Brigid Flanigan, principal; Leanna Kilgore, Cindy Rapp, Barbara Mingori, and Paula Pawlewicz, 6 grade teachers; Ann Harbin, facilitator of the "That's Not Fair program; and Michael Poulin, social justice program coordinator. After listening to the presentation and hearing the students' hopes and aspirations of the future I challenged the students to reach high and achieve their goals. With the first rate education provided by St. Thomas More and throughout the Kansas City Diocese, there is no question that they will be prepared to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the Catholic schools in metropolitan Kansas City which play an important role in gifting students with the abilities to excel academically, socially, and civically. And I ask all of my colleagues to join me in celebrating the legacy and the bright future of the Catholic schools in the 5th District of Missouri and of the Nation.

Mr. FERGUSON. 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. 26, "Honoring our Catholic Schools," is receiving from my colleagues in the House today.

America's student dropout 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 averaging 15 students, 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. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the annual celebration of "Catholic Schools Week." Each year, the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Catholic Conference sponsors a week-long celebration recognizing the outstanding educational contributions of America's Catholic schools. Catholic schools locally and nationally will mark this festive occasion by hosting many community, parish and school events.

In Pennsylvania alone, Catholic elementary and secondary schools educate approximately 240,000 students yearly. These schools operate with complete devotion to each and every student, providing them with solid values and academic skills needed in becoming responsible citizens of Pennsylvania and the Nation. Catholic institutions tout a 95 percent graduation rate, and 83 percent of Catholic school graduates pursue higher degrees—a very impressive statistic.

Not only do Catholic schools boast these high standards and excellent achievements, but fervently instill in their students the idea and necessity for commitment to family and the community. Most, if not all, Catholic students willingly provide countless hours of volunteer service to the local parish as well as the entire community. This only proves that Catholic school students are strongly dedicated to their faith, values, family and community.

Not long ago, President Bush signed into law a comprehensive education reform package emphasizing accountability, local control and flexibility, expanded options for parents, and funding for effective programs. Given Catholic schools' record of success and standard of excellence, it is only fitting that these private institutions continue to serve as a model for public education reform in America.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate and express great appreciation to the Nation's Catholic schools on the occasion of "Catholic Schools Week." I especially salute the many Catholic school teachers, principals, and school administrators in the 18th Congressional District of Pennsylvania for their hard work and dedication which has benefited so many young people. My best to all the students in their continuing academic careers and future endeavors.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to honor the contribution of Catholic schools.

Catholic schools play an important role in my district on Long Island and across the country in educating not only Catholics, but also many non-Catholic and minority students. Schools such as St. Anthony's Huntington, the Academy of St. Joseph in Brentwood, St. Dominic in Oyster Bay, St. John the Baptist in West Islip, and others throughout Long Island are models of educational excellence.

With limited budgets, but with unlimited devotion, the teachers and administrators provide a real public service—focusing on developing the heart, mind and spirit of their students. With a 95 percent graduation rate and 83 percent of students continuing on to higher education, their valuable service is more than evident.

I rise to support their role today and urge my colleagues to support this resolution commending the contribution of Catholic schools.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 26 honoring the contributions of Catholic schools. My 18th Congressional District in Houston has a number of outstanding Catholic schools that have contributed to the well being and education of thousands of students.

Catholic schools ensure a broad-based education for students in elementary grades. This education includes the emphasis on character, values, and moral development. More than 26 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools nationwide are minorities. In minority communities, Catholic schools serve a special purpose—they integrate students into a moral and spiritual doctrine that carries lifelong benefits.

This weekend, I attended a celebration in my district at the St. Philip Neri Catholic Church. The church has an exemplary school for students pre-kindergarten through the 5th grade. The school was founded more than 30 years ago.

I support the goals of Catholic Schools Week and congratulate the schools, students, parents, and teachers for their ongoing contributions to education. Catholic schools have played a key role in educating our students. Catholic schools have long been dedicated to teaching a diverse group of students, and I applaud their work. As we continue to seek methods to reform our nation's schools, Catholic schools serve as a model for discipline, for a broad-based education, and for values. Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence. I strongly support H. Res. 26 and the accomplishments of Catholic schools everywhere.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 26, as amended.

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. CASTLE. 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.

SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GREATER AWARENESS OF NEED FOR YOUTH MENTORS AND INCREASED INVOLVEMENT WITH YOUTH THROUGH MENTORING

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 25) supporting efforts to promote greater awareness of

the need for youth mentors and increased involvement with youth through mentoring.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 25

Whereas mentors serve as role models, advocates, friends, and advisors to young people in need;

Whereas numerous studies document that mentors help young people augment social skills, enhance emotional well-being, improve cognitive skills, and plan for the future;

Whereas, for some children, having a caring adult mentor to turn to for guidance and encouragement can make the crucial difference between success and failure in life;

Whereas, 17.6 million young people, nearly half the youth population, want or need mentors to help them reach their full potential;

Whereas there exists a large "mentoring gap" of unmet needs, with only 2.5 million youth in formal mentoring relationships, leaving 15 million young people still in need of mentors;

Whereas the celebration of National Mentoring Month will institutionalize the Nation's commitment to mentoring and raise awareness of mentoring in its various forms;

Whereas a month-long focus on mentoring will tap into the vast pool of potential mentors and motivate adults to take action to help a young person;

Whereas National Mentoring Month will encourage organizations of all kinds, including businesses, faith communities, government agencies, schools, and more, to engage their constituents in mentoring;

Whereas the celebration of National Mentoring Month would above all encourage more people to volunteer as mentors, to the benefit of the Nation's children; and

Whereas on January 2, 2003, President George W. Bush signed a proclamation naming January 2003 as National Mentoring Month and called upon the people of the United States to recognize the importance of being role models for youth, to look for mentoring opportunities in their communities, and to celebrate this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends those who give their time and talents to support mentoring programs; and

(2) supports efforts to promote greater awareness of the need for youth mentors and increased involvement with youth through mentoring.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 25.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, not long ago I read the results of a study that was done on the Fullerton County Public Schools in