

thing he knew he was in a German prisoner of war camp.

Sixty years later he comes back to Czechoslovakia to return to the place in Europe where he had been shot down. When he arrived not only was he welcomed by the mayor but he was given a key to the city, and all the local townsfolk held a big parade on his behalf, in addition to all wanting his autograph and wanting his picture.

It was during this trip, 60 years later, that he learned how he survived. He learned from the villagers how they had found and taken him to a nearby facility for treatment. They discussed how they were going to hide him. At that point, the German authorities were already on their way and they were able to apprehend him.

After 60 years someone from the town handed Ray the gloves that were on his hands 60 years before when he had parachuted to safety and then later on put in the prisoner of war camp.

As we can imagine, there are many stories like this that are all too frequent for those who occupy the VFW posts and American Legions and all of those places where our veterans congregate.

One of those places that all people congregate are the post offices, and that is why for millions of Americans who are not familiar in their daily lives with the sacrifices of our Nation's veterans, when they go into the post office, they are going to have to see once again that they owe everything in their lives to our Nation's veterans, and that is why I believe that our local post office back at home in Rhode Island is a perfect memorial to celebrate our veterans in Middletown and in Newport. Newport is one of the great homes of our Nation's Navy, and I know it will be appreciated by all of those who have served our country in uniform to be able to see that their post office is named for their fellow veterans.

We have wonderful memorials here in Washington, D.C. and, thanks to this legislation, we are going to have a wonderful memorial in our own backyard.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I support the passage of H.R. 3942.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Government Reform, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 3942, legislation naming the postal facility in Middletown, Rhode Island, after Rhode Island veterans.

This measure which was introduced by the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) on March 11, 2004, and

unanimously reported by our committee on April 1, 2004, enjoys the support and co-sponsorship of the entire Rhode Island delegation.

Beginning with World War I through the Persian Gulf War, veteran Rhode Islanders from the First Congressional District in Rhode Island have bravely defended this great Nation from the great World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Persian War. There are over 45,000 veterans living in the First District. Statewide over 93,000 men and women have returned home to Rhode Island after serving in the military.

Designating the post office in Middletown, Rhode Island is an excellent way to honor Rhode Island veterans for their service to our country and to remember the enormous sacrifice the soldiers and their families have made and continue to make.

To the veterans of America, for your unselfish service and devotion to our country and your unwavering defense of our freedom, we thank you. I also want to commend the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) for introducing this legislation. I urge its swift passage.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3942.

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. CANNON. 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.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MELVIN JONES AND RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 399) honoring the life and legacy of Melvin Jones and recognizing the contributions of Lions Clubs International.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 399

Whereas Melvin Jones was born in the Cavalry Outpost at Fort Thomas, Arizona, on January 13, 1879;

Whereas Melvin Jones experienced early success in the insurance industry and that success led to his sole ownership of an insurance agency;

Whereas although many business clubs of the time exhibited a self-interested attitude, Melvin Jones had a vision of an organization of businessmen focused on volunteerism and community service;

Whereas the Association of Lions Clubs, known today as Lions Clubs International,

was begun on June 17, 1917, when 20 delegates gathered in the East Room of the Hotel LaSalle in Chicago;

Whereas, while Melvin Jones passed away on June 1, 1961, his legacy lives on;

Whereas, for over 85 years, Lions Clubs International has honored Melvin Jones' legacy by following the simple rule that he insisted be included in the organization's Constitution: "No club shall hold out as one of its objects, financial benefits to its members.";

Whereas Lions Clubs International counts over 46,000 clubs and 1.4 million members, and constitutes the largest network of service clubs in the world; and

Whereas Lions Clubs International continues to embrace its motto "We Serve" by performing a wide range of services, including cleaning local parks, supporting advances in medical technology, bringing sight to the blind, mentoring children, and organizing Liberty Day celebrations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the life and legacy of volunteerism and community service of Melvin Jones; and

(2) recognizes the contributions and service of Lions Clubs International to communities and those in need throughout the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CANNON. 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 H. Res. 399.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 399 recognizes the remarkable global contributions of Lions Clubs International, the largest service club organization in the world.

Lions Clubs work to aid communities in 190 different countries with all sorts of humanity's problems. From collecting five million pairs of used eyeglasses each year to give to those with vision loss, to collecting thousands of books for hospitals and schools in need, and to establishing disease prevention programs, the Lions Clubs consistently live up to their long-stated mission, "We serve."

Mr. Speaker, the resolution also honors Melvin Jones, the founder of the Lions Clubs. Jones grew up in Chicago and worked in the insurance industry as a young adult at the turn of the 20th century. He became affiliated with the business group known as The Business Circle, but was dismayed that the group focused only on improving the financial status of its members. Jones sought a business club that asked for more from its members.

On June 17, 1917, Jones pulled together leaders of business clubs from

all over the U.S. to discuss a new business-oriented organization that also would be committed to community service. The nascent group was called the Association of Lions Clubs, and it has grown into the largest service club organization on Earth with 1.4 million members worldwide today.

This year is the 125th anniversary of Melvin Jones' birth and, therefore, a fitting time to pay tribute to his commitment to volunteerism and service.

Mr. Speaker, the Lions Clubs International are truly worthy of commendation by this House, and I would encourage anyone interested in volunteer opportunities to think about contacting a nearby Lions Club chapter.

I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) for his work to honor Melvin Jones and the Lions Clubs. I know the gentleman from Minnesota has been a Lions Club member for many years. I congratulate the gentleman for advancing this resolution to the floor.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we honor the life of an American hero, Mr. Melvin Jones, and the institution he helped created, the Lions Clubs International. A driven and thoughtful man, Melvin Jones made his home in Chicago, Illinois and formed his own insurance agency in 1913.

Mr. Jones, like many other businessmen, worked extremely hard for his success. Unlike some, however, Melvin Jones did not find satisfaction in his personal success alone. He wanted to improve his community. He believed that he and other successful businessmen should work together for the betterment of the community.

Mr. Jones is quoted as asking at a businessmen's luncheon, "What if these men who are successful because of their drive, intelligence and ambition were to put their talents to work improving their communities?"

Thus, on June 7, 1917, the Lions Clubs International was born. The first meeting was held in Chicago and two principles were set forth. One, meetings were not to be of a social nature, and members could not promote their own business interests.

The group was to focus on volunteerism and community service. Melvin Jones became so engulfed in the Lions Club that he left the insurance agency he had created to work for the club full time. He was a living example of the Lions Club motto, "We serve."

Although Mr. Jones passed away in 1961 at the age of 82, his legacy in the Lions Club lives on. Today with more than 46,000 clubs in 193 countries, Lions Club has expanded its focus to help meet the ever-increasing needs of our global community. One of the Lions Club's biggest programs is to improve the quality of eye care for the less fortunate. The Lions Club provides thou-

sands of people around the world with free eye care. In addition, the Lions Club collects more than 5 million pairs of eyeglasses each year to be distributed in developing countries.

Melvin Jones, the man, whose personal code was, and I quote, "You cannot get very far until you start doing something for somebody else," became a source of inspiration for people working all over the world for the good of mankind. I am delighted to know this history and origin of the Lions Club and proud to say that at one time I, too, was a member of a Lions Club and one of its creators in my own community and my own neighborhood, and I can remember distributing eyeglasses to people who needed them.

So we thank Mr. Jones for his vision, for his creativity, and his sense of giving back to his community. I am privileged to support this legislation. I view Mr. Jones as one of our real visionaries.

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

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the mellifluous gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his contribution to the Lions Club in his area.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY), the distinguished sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 399, a resolution I introduced to honor the life and legacy of Lions Club International founder, Melvin Jones, and to recognize the contributions of this fine organization.

Over 200 years ago at the end of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, a curious woman asked Benjamin Franklin, "Sir, what have you given us?" He replied, "a republic, if you can keep it." Part of our responsibility of maintaining our republic is encouraging the active involvement of our citizens and our government in serving our community. No one understood this better than Melvin Jones.

The club he founded, Lions Club International, embodies that spirit through a program called Liberty Days.

The history of Lions Club International of which I am a proud member from the Watertown, Minnesota chapter goes back nearly 100 years. After a humble beginning that began on January 13, 1879 in a dusty cavalry outpost at Fort Thomas in what was then known as the Arizona Territory, Melvin Jones moved east with his family to St. Louis.

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Later, in Quincy, Illinois, Melvin Jones attended Union Business College and Chaddock College. After college, he moved to Chicago where he launched a successful career in insurance, first with the Johnson and Higgins agencies

and later with his own business, the Melvin Jones Insurance Agency.

In 1909, he married women's professional golfer Rose Amanda Freeman, whose unqualified support was instrumental as Melvin worked tirelessly to get the Lions Club rolling. In 1913, an acquaintance invited Melvin to meet some local men who belonged to a club called the Business Circle. Like many groups at the time, the Business Circle was largely about old school "scratch my back and I will scratch yours" club.

After his election as secretary in 1915, Melvin began to wonder how much could be accomplished if only the members of the Business Circle would pool their energies and talent for the greater good of their communities. Despite broaching this novel idea with other business organizations, their feedback was mixed at best. So Melvin put this unique vision into action and launched his own organization.

On June 17, 1917, he assembled 20 delegates representing 27 clubs nationwide in the East Room of the Hotel LaSalle, and a consensus was reached that a national organization should be formed dedicated to community service. After a spirited debate, the club voted by secret ballot to name the new organization the Association of Lions Clubs. Jones advocated for the name of Lions because it was a symbol of courage, strength, fidelity and vital action, which helped set the standard for the club.

Furthermore, during the organization's constitution, he insisted that it include a plank that no club should hold out as one of its objects financial benefits to its members, a principle Melvin followed throughout his entire life.

The Lions Club caught on so fast that it was just 3 years later after its birth that the club became international when it chartered a new club in Windsor, Ontario.

One of the profound moments of the club's history occurred in 1925 at their international convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, when Helen Keller addressed, challenging the attendees, the Lions, to become knights of the blind in their crusade against darkness, and from then on, as my fellow colleagues have noted, the Lions have been serving and bringing sight to the visually impaired and made this one of their central priorities.

In 1927, the Lions Club had the support of 11,063 local clubs and comprised 60,000 members worldwide. In 1950, when Lions membership surpassed the 400,000 mark, the international board of directors conferred upon Melvin Jones the title of Secretary General of Lions Club International which was changed to Founder and Secretary General in 1958.

Throughout his life, Jones' refusal to accept the limitation of old age was an inspirational reminder to all Lions of his dedication to serving others.

In 1960, at the age of 81, even after several strokes the year before, he

commuted to the club each day alone from his suburban Chicago home, never missing a moment of the Lions International Convention where thunderous applause for the Founder shook the rafters.

On June 1, 1961, Melvin's perfect attendance record ended with his passing into the next life. Soon after, the international board of directors proclaimed January 13, Melvin Jones' day as a memory each year for his contributions to the world of Lionism. In 1965, the Melvin Jones Lions International Memorial was dedicated near his birthplace at Fort Thomas, Arizona.

In June 1999, the Lions international board dedicated a prestigious 50-foot spire in his honor as a lasting tribute to his memory.

During his remarkable life, Melvin Jones accumulated dozens of award, honors and accolades, including participation in a White House business leaders conference to discuss the economy in 1932 and representing the Lions Club at the preliminary planning for the United Nations in 1945.

Today, the Lions Club International is the largest network of service clubs in the world, comprising more than 46,000 clubs and 1.4 million members in 193 countries.

In addition to bringing sight to the blind, the Lions help build a brighter future for their communities by performing a wide range of services from cleaning up local parks and developing youth programs to assisting the hearing impaired and promoting diabetes awareness.

One of the Lions' newest and most exciting programs is the Liberty Day Program. Unfortunately, as most of us are well aware, over the years civics education has become only voluntary in many schools across the country. Even where it is taught, many American government and history books have left out the two most important documents in our history, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. These omissions will have a detrimental effect on our republic, with young people learning less about our founding and how precious our democracy is.

As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to give back to our communities and combat the cynicism and apathy that some of our constituents have towards government.

In the summer of 1966, two members of the Youth Service Committee of the Lions Club in Denver, Colorado, started a small program in Denver schools to distribute books containing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The program immediately got traction and volunteers sought out private donations for the printing of these little booklets.

Other Lions Club members and volunteers pitched in and recruited elected State officials in Colorado ranging from the Speaker of the State House, Russell George, to former Senator Gary Hart and Attorney General Gale

Norton to speak to classes and distribute the books. The response was unbelievable.

Soon, every State had its own booklet on Liberty Day, and many have Statewide Liberty Day coordinators, who are continuously seeking to promote and collect private donations to print these books. In fact, in 2000, both the House and the Senate passed resolutions honoring and recognizing the contributions of Liberty Day.

I am proud to be State Chairman of Minnesota's Liberty Day program. In my State, I have had the honor of participating in more than a dozen of these celebrations, talking to thousands of students and adults, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

Liberty Day has evolved into more than just a celebration for students. It is a celebration in which the whole community can participate. Many communities celebrate by holding public lectures, displaying sections of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution in public places and staging mock debates on issues our Founding Fathers grappled with more than 200 years ago. These celebrations are terrific opportunities to connect with our constituents and provide an example and opportunity to give something back to our communities who have entrusted us with the responsibility of doing the people's business. It is also a chance to leave a lasting impression in the minds of young and old alike and erase some of the cynicism they have towards government and public officials.

In closing, none of the outstanding programs and services provided by Lions Club International that have touched the lives of many millions around the world would have been possible without the selfless dedication of Melvin Jones and the millions of volunteers who have followed in his pursuit of serving others.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution and give Melvin Jones and the Lions Club International the congressional recognition they deserve.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lions Club International founder, Melvin Jones, for his legacy of volunteerism and community service. Melvin Jones was born on January 13, 1879 at Fort Thomas, Arizona, and passed away on June 1, 1961 at the age of 82. He founded the Association of Lions Clubs in 1917, the same year they held their national convention in Dallas, TX.

Melvin Jones abandoned his job at an insurance agency to devote himself full time to the Lions. He was a dedicated individual who gave back to his community and worked hard to improve the lives of others. Melvin Jones had a vision for the Lions to expand their focus to help meet the ever-increasing needs of our global community.

Today, Lions International has over 1.4 million members in over 170 countries worldwide. As a proud member of the Oak Cliff Lions Club in Dallas, TX, I am pleased to celebrate their 75th anniversary and salute each member who graciously gives their time, skills and

resources for our communities and internationally. As global members, Lions provide immediate and sustained relief in time of disaster and offer long-term assistance to those in need. Lions International has raised millions of dollars for various charitable causes, including sight conservation, diabetes awareness and cancer research. For over 85 years, Lions International has benefited countless persons by fulfilling the mission set out by Melvin Jones in the association's motto: "We Serve."

Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to honor the service and commitment Melvin Jones made to build a brighter future for our country, and I know my colleagues will join me today in recognizing his valuable contributions.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 399, honoring the achievements of Melvin Jones and recognizing the contributions of Lions Club International.

One of our Nation's great success stories began when Jones, then an insurance agent, looked around his business luncheon group and asked a question:

"What if these men, who are successful because of their drive, intelligence, and ambition, were to put their talents to work improving their communities?"

On June 7th, 1917, Lions Clubs International was born. Jones eventually left the insurance business to devote himself to the organization full-time. With his guidance, Lions Club International became one of the world's leading service associations. Jones's leadership was held in such high regard that he was recruited as a consultant during the organization of the United Nations.

Today, almost 1.4 million Lions Club members in 193 countries tackle problems like blindness, drug abuse prevention, diabetes awareness, and disaster relief. Lions build parks, support hospitals and establish water treatment programs. The largest Lions Club in the United States meets in Lubbock, Texas, where they've served since 1929.

The Lions have been with us for 85 years. Melvin Jones's philosophy that "You can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else" has become the motto of service-minded folks the world over. Where there's need, they're there. Where there's work to do, they serve.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 399.

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. CANNON. 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 THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 578) supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 578

Whereas the financial services industry in the United States benefits millions of people in the United States, providing products and services that allow individuals and families to build homes, buy cars, finance educations, start businesses, and meet everyday needs;

Whereas personal financial education is essential to ensure that individuals are prepared to manage money, credit, and debt, and become responsible workers, heads of households, investors, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and citizens, yet a study completed in 2002 by the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy found that high school seniors knew less about principles of basic personal finance than did high school seniors 5 years earlier;

Whereas financial education has been linked to lower delinquency rates for mortgage borrowers, higher participation and contribution rates in retirement plans, improved spending and saving habits, higher net worth, and positive knowledge, attitude, and behavior changes, yet a survey completed in 2002 by the National Council on Economic Education found that a decreasing number of States include personal finance in education standards for students in kindergarten through high school;

Whereas expanding access to the mainstream financial system provides individuals with lower cost, safer options for managing finances and building wealth and is likely to lead to increased economic activity and growth, yet between 25,000,000 and 56,000,000 people over the age of 18 do not use mainstream, insured financial institutions and are considered "unbanked";

Whereas personal financial management skills and lifelong habits develop during childhood, and 55 percent of college students acquire their first credit card during their first year in college, yet only 26 percent of people between the ages of 13 and 21 reported that their parents actively taught them how to manage money;

Whereas although more than 42,000,000 people in the United States participate in qualified cash or deferred arrangements described in section 401(k) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (commonly referred to as "401(k) plans"), a Retirement Confidence Survey conducted in 2002 found that only 32 percent of workers surveyed have calculated how much money they will need to save for retirement, and 25 percent of workers have done no specific planning for retirement;

Whereas financial literacy empowers individuals to make wise financial decisions in an increasingly complex economy, and only 30 percent of those surveyed in an Employee Benefit Trend Study conducted in 2003 are confident in their ability to make the right financial decisions for themselves and their families;

Whereas personal savings as a percentage of personal income decreased from 7.5 percent in the early 1980s to 2.3 percent in the first 3 quarters of 2003;

Whereas Congress sought to implement a national strategy for coordination of Federal financial literacy efforts through the establishment of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission in 2003, the designation of the Office of Financial Education of the Department of the Treasury to provide sup-

port for the Commission, and requirements that the Commission's materials, website, toll-free hotline, and national multimedia campaign be multilingual; and

Whereas the National Council on Economic Education, its State Councils and Centers for Economic Education, the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, its State affiliates, and its partner organizations have designated April as "Financial Literacy Month" to educate the public about the need for increased financial literacy for youth in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CANNON. 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 materials on H. Res. 578, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 578 supports the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month. The National Council on Economic Education, its State Councils and Centers for Economic Education and the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy have deemed April to be Financial Literacy Month. Along with my colleagues, especially the sponsor of this resolution, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), I am pleased to be highlighting this designation and the important cause of financial literacy.

This resolution aims to increase awareness of the significance of thoughtful and well-planned personal financial management. It can be overwhelming for people of any age to manage money, credit and debt, but learning simple financial principles can help protect you against severe family illness, short-term losses of employment, economic downturns, and other aspects of life that most of us will experience at one time or another.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution cites the fact that over the last 20 years personal savings have decreased from 7.5 percent of personal income to just over 2 percent today. This reality means more Americans have just a small cushion on which to fall back on when

financial times become difficult. We all need to take steps to learn economic fundamentals and teach our children these principles as well. All of us can enjoy big returns on our investments in financial literacy.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), my friend and distinguished Member from Illinois, for her work on H. Res. 578. I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, providing America's youth with a good education has been a national priority but also a national failure. Not only are many children of our great Nation being deprived of a good academic education, but many young people today lack the life skills necessary to function without the financial assistance of their parents.

According to the JumpStart Coalition for Financial Literacy, high school seniors today know less about the principles of basic personal finance than seniors did 5 years ago. Even more startling is the fact that the average student who graduates from high school lacks the basic skills for managing their own personal finances. Many are unable to do simple tasks like balancing a checkbook.

Over the last 50 years, a dangerous trend has developed. Saving money has declined at the same time that borrowing has increased. In 1950, savings averaged 12.3 percent of national output. By the 1960s, it was down to 8.5 percent. By the 1980s, it was down to 4.7 percent, and in the early 1990s, it was only 2.4 percent.

Americans need to work to achieve financial independence, and proper financial planning is crucial to that process.

While not a final solution, educating our youth about the principles of personal finance would do a great deal to help them achieve financial independence and prosperity. Educating new generations to understand personal finance would help future Americans build wealth and obtain financial independence.

In order for our youth to lead successful lives these life lessons must be taught. Creating a Financial Literacy Month is a great first step towards protecting our youth from poverty.

I rise today to ask that we support the goals and ideas of Financial Literacy Month and that this President issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, as well as State and local governments, to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities that promote financial accountability.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and my good friend the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) for the lead roles that they have played in introducing and bringing this legislation to the floor.