

here in the states and overseas. Many of these students are facing the reality that their father or mother—or both—are serving in a danger zone.

Fortunately, one thing that American troops do not have to worry about is whether their children are receiving a quality education. The educators in our military impacted schools make certain that the children of our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen have a first-class educational experience—each and every school day.

This is our opportunity to thank the exceptional teachers, administrators, and staff of America's military impacted schools. We recognize the extra efforts they are making in these challenging times, and we are grateful. Job well done.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 598 offered by my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. HAYES. House Resolution 598 recognizes the valuable contributions of the administrators, teachers and staff who educate children of military families.

There are approximately 650,000 school-aged children of members of the Armed Forces enrolled in public schools across the United States. Another 100,500 military children are served in Department of Defense Education Activity schools in the U.S. and overseas.

While all children deserve a quality education in a stable learning environment, children of military families often face unique and stressful situations, especially in times of conflict when their parents can be deployed for long periods of time and often with short notice.

Schools serving military installations understand the importance of providing a normal learning environment and regular routine for children whose parents serve in the military. They can provide students with a sense of safety and reassurance and, a place for them to thrive academically.

Military impacted schools can also offer increased counseling for military children due to the deployment of family members, and teachers and counselors working in such schools are trained to work with military children and their classmates when there is a service-related incident or death.

I'd like to particularly recognize the Caesar Rodney School District in my home State of Delaware, which serves the families of Dover Air Force Base. The Caesar Rodney School District serves nearly 7,000 students and has a long history of academic excellence and service to its community. I would like to thank them for their commitment to serving the needs of our military children.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 598 is simple. It recognizes and commends the valuable contributions of the teachers, administrators, and staff of military impacted schools and the Department of Defense Education Activity Schools.

This resolution is also timely as this is National Teacher Appreciation Week. We not only would like to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of our military impacted schools personnel, but all elementary and secondary teachers across the country.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 598 offered by the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. HAYES. House Resolution 598 recognizes the

valuable contributions of the teachers, administrators, and staff who work hard everyday to educate the children of military families.

It's fitting that we are considering this resolution today, as this week marks National Teacher Appreciation Week. This resolution reflects our strong belief that every child in America, regardless of their military connection, deserves the opportunity to receive a quality education, and that every child should be taught by a highly qualified teacher.

The success of education reform efforts is increasingly seen as directly dependent on the quality of classroom instruction, and ensuring the quality of America's 3.2 million teachers is an essential part of providing an excellent education to all our children. A growing number of studies provide conclusive evidence that teacher quality is the primary school-related factor affecting student achievement. Students who are taught by effective and competent teachers excel quickly, while those who are assigned to the least effective teachers lag behind and often never catch up.

House Resolution 598 focuses on schools that serve our military children. These schools understand the importance of providing a normal learning environment and regular routine for children whose parents serve in the military so that they are able to learn in stressful situations, especially in times of conflict. They can also provide students with a sense of safety and reassurance while their parents are defending our freedom.

Schools serving military installations can offer increased counseling for military children when family members are deployed, and teachers and counselors working in such schools are trained to work with military children and their classmates when there is a service-related incident or death. These schools can also offer additional counseling for staff, many of whom are spouses, parents, brothers, and sisters of deployed members of the Armed Forces.

I would particularly like to thank the schools serving the children of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in my district. The Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is the only active military base in Ohio and focuses on aviation research and development. I would like to thank them for their commitment to serving the needs of our military families.

Mr. Speaker, the teachers, administrators and staff of all our schools are the true heroes of our communities. Every child deserves an excellent education in order to gain the skills needed to continue on to higher learning, compete in the marketplace, contribute to society, and lead a fulfilling life.

This resolution rightly recognizes the contributions of the teachers, administrators, and staff of military impacted schools, and Department of Defense Education Activity schools world-wide and we praise the teachers in military impacted communities who work on the front lines at home to educate students during times of peace and times of conflict.

I would like to thank Mr. HAYES for his leadership in bringing this bipartisan resolution forward and urge my colleagues to vote in support of this resolution.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the basketball capital of the nation, Storrs CT home of the University of Connecticut Huskies. For the first time in NCAA history, one school has brought home both the Men's and Women's Division I Basketball titles in the same year.

I would like to offer special congratulations to Head Coaches Jim Calhoun and Geno Auriemma. This is Coach Calhoun's second National Championship. For Coach Auriemma, this is his third consecutive championship and fifth overall. Both men are outstanding coaches who exemplify leadership and commitment to our young people.

Mr. Speaker, this is an extraordinary group of young men and women. We could spend hours telling you about each one of these marvelous student athletes. Since we don't have that much time, I want to take a moment to tell you a little about All Americans Emeka Okafor and Diana Taurasi.

Emeka Okafor the Co-National Player of the Year, is not only a stellar shot blocker, he is graduating from UCONN as a Junior with his degree in Finance and carries a 3.8 GPA. Earlier this year he was named Kodak Academic Player of the Year. Emeka is a genuine role model for our children.

Diana Taurasi was recently named the national women's Player of the Year and the Final Four Most Outstanding Player. As a senior at UCONN, she led the Huskies to three consecutive national titles—and finished her college career with a team-high 17 points in the championship game.

Coach Auriemma told his team before the game that in the early 90's the team played in its first championship game before a crowd of roughly 1,500 people. On April 6th the Huskies defeated the University of Tennessee Volunteers in front of a crowd of over 15,000. Mr. Speaker I think its safe to say that Title IX is alive and doing well in Storrs Connecticut.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of our colleagues to join me in honoring these two tremendous teams.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 598.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING CHARTER SCHOOLS FOR THEIR ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 600) congratulating charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contribution to education, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 600

Whereas charter schools deliver high-quality education and challenge our students to reach their potential;

Whereas charter schools provide thousands of our families with diverse and innovative educational options for their children;

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public entity and are responding to the needs of our communities, families, and students and promote

the principles of quality, choice, and innovation;

Whereas in exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other operations;

Whereas 41 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have passed laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas nearly 3,000 charter schools are now operating in 37 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and serving 750,000 students;

Whereas over the last 10 years, Congress has provided more than \$1,000,000,000 in support to the charter school movement through facilities financing assistance and grants for planning, startup, implementation, and dissemination;

Whereas charter schools improve their students' achievement and stimulate improvement in traditional public schools;

Whereas charter schools must meet the student achievement accountability requirements included by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and contained in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, in the same manner as traditional public schools, and often set higher and additional individual goals, to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas charter schools give parents new freedom to choose their public school, charter schools routinely measure parental satisfaction levels, and charter schools must prove their ongoing success to parents, policymakers, and their communities;

Whereas nearly 40 percent of charter schools report having a waiting list, and the total number of students on all such waiting lists is enough to fill over 1,000 average-sized charter schools;

Whereas charter schools nationwide serve a higher percentage of low-income and minority students than the traditional public system;

Whereas charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, the Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the United States; and

Whereas the fifth annual National Charter Schools Week, to be held May 3 to 7, 2004, is an event sponsored by charter schools and grassroots charter school organizations across the United States to recognize the significant impacts, achievements, and innovations of charter schools: Now, therefore, be it—

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives acknowledges and commends charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education and improving and strengthening our public school system;

(2) the House of Representatives supports the fifth annual National Charter Schools Week; and

(3) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to demonstrate support for charter schools during this week long celebration in communities throughout the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

□ 1445

Mr. PORTER. 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. 600.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 600, a resolution congratulating charter schools across the United States and their students, parents, teachers and administrators of such schools for their ongoing contributions to education.

Charter schools represent a grand experiment which relies upon innovation and creativity found within American society. Since charter schools are often small and independent, they are able to focus on new approaches for teaching and preparing students for their place in our rapidly changing world. Charter schools often deliver high-quality education and challenge students to reach their potential. Charter schools can be vehicles for improving student achievement and for stimulating change in all educational settings including public schools.

Almost 2,700 charter schools serve students across the Nation, and these schools are found in 41 States, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. In Michigan, there are over 210 operational charter schools and even more approved to open during the 2004-2005 school year.

I would especially like to commend one innovative and entrepreneurial charter school pioneer in my district, Mr. J.C. Huizenga. He founded National Heritage Academies in 1995 with a vision to create a network of K-8 schools that offer a common-sense approach to education. The cornerstones of this approach include rigorous academics, a strong virtue-based character development program, active parental involvement, and a high degree of accountability.

Mr. Huizenga and his National Heritage Academies operate 39 schools in 5 States and serve nearly 21,000 students.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting and congratulating charter schools.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take a few moments to respond to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) regarding the extraneous comments he inserted in the debate on the previous measure. He commented that the legislature in Ohio and others there agree that No Child Left Behind is underfunded.

Mr. Speaker, I served in the Michigan legislature for 11 years. During all that time, I never met any legislator who ever felt that the Federal Government was properly funding or overfunding anything.

It is the character of State legislators and State legislatures to believe that the Federal Government should be sending them more money. That simple statement about the Ohio legislature is no indication whatsoever of the truth of the situation.

The truth is that Federal funding for education has more than doubled over the past 8 years. The truth is that if we look at the charts of the funding under No Child Left Behind of this Congress and compare it with the funding under the previous program, we are doing extremely well. It is almost an exponential increase compared to the relatively flat funding prior to that.

Similarly for IDEA funding; if we look at the history of that, IDEA funding was struggling along at a few billion dollars per year for a number of years. Since the Republicans took over, we have quadrupled the amount of funding for IDEA to \$10 billion in fiscal year 2004.

The facts are, the Republicans have been very generous with the funding of No Child Left Behind and IDEA, and attempts to say otherwise are simply falsifying the facts and I think are for political purposes and should not have been inserted in the discussion of the military schools debate.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Michigan makes a valid point. We are spending more on education, but there are more mandates that have been placed on these local schools, and the money that we have given has not equaled the amount that is needed to fulfill the obligations that the Federal Government wants to impose on the local school districts and the States.

I was in the State legislature, too. I know State legislators want more Federal money; there is no doubt about that, and I apologize to the gentleman from Nevada. We are getting a little off the point here, but my point was that here we have a Republican-controlled legislature, we have a Republican State for the most part controlled by Republican-elected officials, soon to become a Democratic State in the fall, but a Republican State controlled, and my point is that the Department of Education in Ohio is not going to throw it back in the Republican Congress' face and criticize them unnecessarily so. So if anything, it was a proper analysis of the funding that was needed.

Back to H. Res. 600. I do rise, Mr. Speaker, in support of H. Res. 600, a resolution congratulating public charter schools for their ongoing contribution to our educational system.

The first charter school opened its doors in 1992 in Minnesota; and since that time, the number of charter schools has grown. While they only educate a small portion of all children that attend public schools, these schools have added to the importance and purpose of our public school systems. The truly great aspect of our

country's educational system is its public schools. Whether it is charter schools or traditional public schools, all of our public schools exist to educate our Nation's children.

America cannot succeed without a robust and successful public school system. Charter schools are one important part of this system.

I do want to say that this is not a resolution of us agreeing to abandon the traditional public schools, abandon funding for the traditional public schools at both a local, State level, and at Federal level. This is not that resolution.

We do want to commend all the hard-working teachers and principals and leaders in the schools and the kids who go to these schools as students who attend. They are great kids. I have had an opportunity to meet with them and speak with them. They are great kids who deserve all the respect and admiration that this body can give them.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 600. This resolution honors and congratulates our Nation's charter schools and the students, parents, teacher administrators, and other individuals involved for their hard work and dedication to providing a quality public education. This week, May 3 through May 7, has been designated National Charter School Week. It is during this week that charter school organizations and others around the United States honor these schools for their continued contributions to education.

The Nation's charter schools deliver high-quality education and challenge students to reach their potential. Forty-one States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have passed laws authorizing charter schools. Since the first charter school law was passed in 1991, almost 3,000 charter schools now serve nearly 750,000 students in 37 States and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Specifically, I am honored to mention the 14 charter schools in Nevada that serve nearly 3,000 students. Nevada first passed charter school legislation in 1997, with our first charter school opening in the 1998-1999 school year. The State charter school legislation was revised again in 1999, lending teachers more room for creativity in allowing charter schools the ability to offer an extended school day, as well as an extended school year.

I commend the charter schools in the State of Nevada and across the Nation for recognizing the immense need for improved education and for their commitment to improving student achievement for students who attend these schools. At charter schools nationwide, almost half the students are considered at-risk or are former dropouts. Charter schools serve significant numbers of

minority students, students with disabilities, and students that are from lower-income families. These schools give opportunity and freedom to students and parents who otherwise might not have had the chance to receive a quality education.

Nearly 40 percent of charter schools report having a waiting list, and the total number of students on all such waiting lists is enough to fill another 1,000 average-size charter schools across the country. By allowing parents and students to choose their public school, charter schools can stimulate change and improvement in all public schools and benefit all public school students.

In exchange for flexibility and autonomy, public charter schools are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their administration. Charter schools respond to the needs of America's communities, families, and students while promoting the principles of quality, choice, and innovation. Charter schools must meet the same No Child Left Behind student achievement accountability requirements as other public schools and often set higher and additional individual goals to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public.

Charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the administration, the Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators and parents across the Nation. The fifth annual National Charter Schools Week held this week, May 3 through May 7, recognizes the significant impacts, achievements, and innovations of our Nation's charter schools. Through this resolution, Congress today acknowledges and commends the charter school movement and charter schools, students, teachers and parents and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education and improving and strengthening our Nation's public school system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time and for his work in bringing this bill forward and the gentleman on the other side as well.

I strongly support this resolution. The first Federal bill for charter schools was a bill for the District of Columbia only. I worked with Newt Gingrich on this bill when he was Speaker and when he knew that the District of Columbia opposed vouchers. Instead, he worked with me on a charter school bill, and charter schools took off in the District of Columbia as they have in no other jurisdiction today.

The District of Columbia has the largest number of charter schools. I

could not be more proud of these schools. They are an alternative public school system. They are accountable to us in the same way that the District of Columbia public schools are.

This morning in the other body in the Senate, a hearing was held on charter schools in our city as a part of the D.C. appropriation. The interesting thing about the voucher fight that took place just a few months ago is that my own constituents who came in to see me, who wanted vouchers, many of them said to me that the reason that they were supporting a voucher bill is that there was such a long line of backlog in the charter schools that they did not believe their children could get into the charter schools.

I then begged the Congress to give any extra money it had to our charter schools since our council had passed a bill in favor of charter schools, our council was giving money to charter schools; and, instead, the Congress decided to make the District of Columbia the only jurisdiction in the United States to have vouchers imposed on it while the Congress itself has refused to impose private school vouchers on the country.

I invite the Congress to visit the charter schools of the District of Columbia and come see what a public school system can do in addressing the need for alternatives to public schools, as I believe there are. There are people who oppose charter schools. I think that is an unacceptable position. If, in fact, the public school the child attends is not satisfactory to that parent, there should be a public school alternative for that parent. That is exactly what the District of Columbia has. A series of public school alternatives, side by side, are our public schools.

I am proud of Arts and Technology, SEED, Friendship Edison, Cesar Chavez, Carlos Rosario, Tree of Life, Capital City, Howard Road, and KIPP to name just a few of the charter schools in the District of Columbia. We have almost 1,400 youngsters attending D.C. charter schools. The next time my colleagues want a voucher, if they come and see the charter schools in the District, they will get cured of that disease.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nevada for the wonderful work that he has done on this resolution and for his support of charter schools. I am pleased to join him in cosponsoring this legislation and serving as an honorary cochairman of the National Charter School Week. The growth of charter schools across our country in recent years has allowed us to see firsthand the difference that these schools can make in children's lives.

In 2002, while I was a member of the Tennessee State Senate, we passed legislation allowing for the creation of

public charter schools. That was signed into law in Tennessee that year. The legislation allowed for the creation of the first four public charter schools, which opened their doors in our State in 2003. These schools have had a great start, and I am looking forward to seeing the establishment of more charter schools in Tennessee.

Unfortunately, some traditional schools fail to serve some students, and charter schools have proven to be a great alternative for many of these students. Fifteen different studies show that students frequently enter charter schools significantly below grade level and then progress at or above the gains being made in surrounding districts and demographically comparable schools or with their State averages.

National Charter School Week is a great opportunity for us to talk about the success of charter schools and the success that they are having in meeting the needs of our children and their families and the success that they are having in encouraging children to become lifelong learners.

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

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice in supporting the tremendous work the charter schools are doing all across this land, and I want to commend the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) for the work he is doing to help foster the charter school movement.

In Wisconsin, I am proud to say that movement is growing by leaps and bounds. My State was among the very first to enact the charter school law in the early 1990s; and in line with our proud tradition of local leadership and public education, our charter schools are flourishing.

In fact, we have gone from one charter school in 1994 to 134 this year. Over 20,000 Wisconsin students are now enrolled in these charter schools. The Appleton School District, in my own congressional district, alone has nine such charter schools. That is how much we care about creating educational opportunities for all families.

One of the most exciting charter schools in Wisconsin is called Wisconsin Connections Academy. It is quite literally a public school without walls. The State's virtual K-8 elementary school is enrolling students from all across Wisconsin.

□ 1500

The Academy's mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and to meet the highest performance standards. This Academy is on the cutting edge of education reform, offering a uniquely individualized learning program that combines the best in virtual education with very

real connections among students, families, teachers and the community. They have taken public education into their own hands, and good things are happening. They have grown from 200 students to 400, and they have received 800 applications for this year.

Mr. Speaker, here in Washington, we must stand ready to help. We must work to remove unnecessary barriers that hold back our charter school innovators, and we should work to unleash the great progressive potential that charter schools represent. Congratulations not only to the Wisconsin Connections Academy, but to all charter schools across the country that are making a very real difference in our children's future.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) has the right to close.

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We support this resolution. We appreciate the gentleman's efforts on this. I want to make perfectly clear that we want to show our support and congratulate the public charter schools for their contributions to the system, and say what great students and kids they have, and how we want to support them and their families. This is not a resolution to abandon our traditional public schools, but to show our support for charter schools.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, as well as co-chair of National Charter School Week, I strongly support the H. Res. 600, legislation honoring the fifth annual National Charter Schools Week.

Public schools are America's commitment to providing a high quality education for every child. I am dedicated to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to receive a quality education regardless of what public school they attend. This includes charter schools, which are models of successful education reform and one of the fastest growing education innovations working to improve our public education.

As a National Co-Chair of Charter Schools Week, I would like to take a minute to celebrate the first decade of Charter Schools in the United States. Traditionally, charter schools are independent public schools, designed and operated by educators, parents, community members and others. Since the first charter school began operation in 1992 in St. Paul, Minnesota, the number of charter schools has grown to nearly 3,000 serving 750,000 students around the country in 37 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Charter schools have consistently been at the forefront of my priority list, and I am pleased that Wisconsin has 137 exceptional charter schools. In my congressional district alone, we have over 24 charter schools presently and that number grows each year. I have consistently advocated for increased funding for charter schools and supported the Charter

School Facilities Financing Demonstration Program during consideration of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that charter schools give parents options when determining the best public school in which to enroll their children. Thus, we must ensure that all our students reach their highest academic potential, which may require attending a charter school that provides a model better suited towards an individual student's needs.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to speak about the benefits of charter schools and their ability to deliver high-quality education and challenge our students to reach their potential. Charter schools provide thousands of our families with diverse and innovative educational options for their children.

I recently had the pleasure to visit a charter school in my district, KIPP 3D Academy. KIPP stands for Knowledge is Power Program, and this is an innovative approach to education which has been making a significant impact all over the country. Charter Schools are a unique opportunity for students to access other methods of education, and after visiting with the 3D Academy students, I can see how excited they are for learning.

Charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public entity and are responding to the needs of our communities, families, and students and promote the principles of quality, choice, and innovation.

In exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other operations. During my visit to KIPP 3D Academy, I was able to see their substantial progress with their students, and how their strict curriculum embodied their slogan that Knowledge is Power.

Nearly 3,000 charter schools are now operating in 37 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and serving 750,000 students.

Charter schools improve their students' achievement and stimulate improvement in traditional public schools. They also give parents new freedom to choose their public school, charter schools routinely measure parental satisfaction levels, and charter schools must prove their ongoing success to parents, policymakers, and their communities.

Charter schools nationwide serve a higher percentage of low-income and minority students than the traditional public system. These schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, the Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the United States.

The fifth annual National Charter Schools Week is May 3 to 7, 2004. This event is sponsored by charter schools and grassroots charter school organizations across the United States to recognize the significant impacts, achievements, and innovations of charter schools. I am pleased to join my colleagues in the House of Representatives to acknowledge and commend charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education and improving and strengthening our public school system.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Res. 600, congratulating charter schools and their students, parents, teachers,

and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education. This week is the fifth annual National Charter School Week and provides a great opportunity for Congress to recognize and honor charter schools and those involved for the role they play in reforming and improving our nation's public education system.

Charter schools are public schools that agree to improved academic achievement and accountability in financial and other operations, in exchange for increased flexibility and independence. The greater autonomy allows charter schools to focus on increasing academic achievement in each student, rather than bureaucratic paperwork. Charter schools must meet all the same No Child Left Behind achievement goals as other public schools.

Charter schools are adept at meeting the specific needs of the local community in which they are located, especially in low-income communities. Nationwide, almost half of charter schools serve students considered at-risk or who have previously dropped out of school. Charter school students share similar demographic characteristics with students in all public schools, and serve significant numbers of students from low income families, minority students, and students with disabilities.

This being the case, charter schools allow many parents and students freedom of choice that otherwise would not be available, enabling them to improve their lives with a quality education. In addition, increased flexibility allows charter schools to use varied educational methods and techniques while still remaining accountable for results.

Charter schools have benefited from a strong degree of bipartisan support from the local, state, and national levels. This is evidenced by the efforts of both Republicans and Democrats in Congress when they expanded access to charter schools through the No Child Left Behind legislation. In the two years since the enactment of that legislation, Congress and the President have provided at least \$200 million dollars annually to assist in the financing of new charter schools and to provide additional aid to existing schools.

It is important for Congress to recognize, through this resolution honoring National Charter Schools Week, the benefits charter schools and those involved have brought to our education system and to our nation at large. I thank my colleague from Nevada, Mr. PORTER, for introducing this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Res. 600. This resolution recognizes National Charter Schools Week and honors charter schools and those involved for providing a quality education to children from thousands of families across the United States. The fifth annual National Charter Schools Week is May 3 through May 7, and it is during this week that we make it a point to acknowledge and celebrate charter schools.

With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, Congress built on the existing opportunities for families and students that charter schools allowed and increased both access and funding for these institutions. Charter schools are public schools that give families additional freedom. These public schools have flexibility and independence from certain regulations, but submit to the same or higher accountability requirements regarding student achievement.

Beginning in 1991 with one school, charter schools have grown in prevalence in nearly every State in our nation. Currently, there are almost 2,700 schools serving nearly 3,000 students. In my home State of Delaware, we first passed a charter school law in 1995. We now have 13 charter schools, serving over 5,000 students. Delaware charter schools serve students at both the elementary and secondary levels, and stimulate change and improvement in public schools at all levels.

In communities of all types throughout Delaware and our nation, charter schools teach students using a variety of methods and techniques, often succeeding in situations that might appear to some to be less than ideal. For example, the East Side Charter School, located in the East Lake village of Wilmington, Delaware enrolls a student population in which 88 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunch, yet produces academic results that exceed those of the other public schools in Delaware.

Charter schools have enjoyed a considerable amount of bipartisan support from every level, including the Administration, Congress, State governors and legislatures, local communities, parents, and teachers. During National Charter School Week, it is important to demonstrate this support by honoring and commending charter schools, and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators through this resolution and other programs, ceremonies, and activities.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Charter Schools Institute's 2004 Colloquium taking place in Brighton, Michigan on May 7, 2004. The NCSI 2004 Colloquium is a celebration of the families, teachers, local leaders and others who chose charter public schools because of their proven ability to help our nation's school children attain academic and personal success.

The National Charter Schools Institute has joined together with sponsors and supporters including the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies, the Black Alliance for Educational Options and the Programs for Educational Opportunities to bring this Colloquium to Brighton to benefit charter school representatives throughout the state of Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, America's charter schools are our partners in our quest to provide a quality education to all of our children. I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the benefits of the National Charter Schools Institute 2004 colloquium to the school children of Michigan, and to ask them to join me in celebrating National Charter Schools Week.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 600, 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. PORTER. 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.

RECOGNIZING BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED MUSIC EDUCATION

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 380) recognizing the benefits and importance of school-based music education, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

Whereas school music programs enhance intellectual development and enrich the academic environment for students of all ages;

Whereas students who participate in school music programs are less likely to be involved with drugs, gangs, or alcohol and have better attendance in school;

Whereas the skills gained through sequential music instruction, including discipline and the ability to analyze, solve problems, communicate, and work cooperatively, are vital for success in the 21st century workplace;

Whereas the majority of students attending public schools in inner city neighborhoods have virtually no access to music education, which places them at a disadvantage compared to their peers in other communities;

Whereas local budget cuts are predicted to lead to significant curtailment of school music programs, thereby depriving millions of students of an education that includes music;

Whereas the arts are a core academic subject, and music is an essential element of the arts; and

Whereas every student in the United States should have an opportunity to reap the benefits of music education: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) it is the sense of the Congress that music education grounded in rigorous instruction is an important component of a well-rounded academic curriculum and should be available to every student in every school; and

(2) the Congress recognizes NAMM, the International Music Products Association for its efforts to designate a Music in Our Schools Month in order to highlight the important role that school music programs play in the academic and social development of children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Mr. 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. 380.

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

There was no objection.

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