

passing of one of the most articulate conservative voices in Texas.

Harold J. "Tex" Lezar, Jr., left us earlier this month, a Texas lawyer who had worked for both the Nixon and Reagan administrations and was a fixture in Texas and national politics.

Born in Dallas, Tex Lezar grew up in Japan, the son of a ship's captain who did reconnaissance work for General MacArthur. He graduated from Yale and was an assistant to columnist William F. Buckley, Jr., before becoming a speech writer for President Nixon. Tex worked on Ronald Reagan's 1980 Presidential campaign before becoming a special counsel to the U.S. Attorney General and later the chief of staff under Attorney General William French Smith.

In June of 1984, Tex Lezar married Ms. Mary Spaeth. He leaves three children: Philip, Beau, and Maverick.

As a Texas Republican, I can say we were blessed to have had him with us as a guide to encourage and direct our political paths. As a friend of him and his family, I am glad I had the chance to know him; and I honor his life here today.

COMMENDING DR. GEORGE MEETZE FOR HIS HISTORIC SERVICE TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week history was made in the South Carolina State Senate when the Reverend George Elias Meetze presented the prayer for opening the Senate First Day of the Second Session of the 115th General Assembly on January 13. This marked the 55th year of service by the enthusiastic Dr. Meetze as chaplain of the Senate. He holds the historic record of being the longest-serving chaplain of a legislative body in the world. Every day, as he leads the Senate in prayer, he establishes a new record of devotion to the people of South Carolina.

Dr. Meetze is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, New York Theological Seminary, and Lutheran Southern Seminary. He is the retired pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Incarnation of Columbia from 1942 to 1974. Dr. Meetze and his late wife, Margaret Allen, have two sons, George Allen Meetze and William Dagnall Meetze.

In every way, Dr. Meetze is a vital participant of the Midlands community, never missing Rotary, promoting the Salvation Army, and serving the American Cancer Society.

I urge my colleagues to commend Dr. George Meetze for his historic service as he begins a new session.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will always remember September 11.

HEALTH CARE VOUCHERS FOR THE WORKING UNINSURED

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last year, Americans on average saw their health care costs increase by 9.3 percent. That is on top of the year before where health care inflation ran at 12 percent. Today, we have 44 million Americans without health insurance and 32 million Americans who work full-time without health care.

In fact, the problem with our health care system today is that many people with health care insurance pay an uninsured premium for those who work, but show up at emergency rooms without health care. Hospital costs are skyrocketing through the roof. We all pay for their health care, and they do not get it.

What ails our health care system is that there is not enough competition. We need competition in pricing of prescription drugs where we have competition, where people can buy drugs in Canada, in Europe. That competition and choice would drive prices down. What we need to do for the uninsured is also create a competitive system.

I have offered and will be offering soon a piece of legislation for a health care voucher for the working uninsured where they will get a voucher equal to the dollar amount of the tax credit the President proposed and buy into a subsidiary of the Federal employees health care plan.

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.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 492) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 492

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 2003-2004 academic year is 2,600,000 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 from minority backgrounds, and more than 14 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;

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."; and

Whereas January 25-31, 2004, has been designated as Catholic Schools Week by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, an event celebrating its 30th year: 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 Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. 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. 492.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 492, offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER). This resolution honors the contributions of America's Catholic schools, which are dedicated to not only educating their students academically but to developing their moral, intellectual, physical, and social values.

January 25 through the 31 is Catholic Schools Week, an annual tradition jointly sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and it is in its 30th year.

The purpose of this resolution and Catholic Schools Week is to celebrate the vital role that Catholic elementary and secondary schools play as they provide a values-added education with high standards of quality and excellence to many of America's children.

As President George W. Bush noted earlier this month in recognition of the National Catholic Education Association's 100th anniversary, "Catholic educators share the basic conviction that every child can learn," a principle that we are extending to public education through the No Child Left Behind Act.

The President also pointed out that high expectations that characterize Catholic education have provided students with overwhelming results. More than 99 percent of students participating in Catholic education graduate from high school and the majority of those go on to college.

As a product of Catholic education from elementary school through my education at Xavier University, I have found that my foundation in Catholic education has helped me strengthen my sense of purpose in life and prepare me to achieve my goals. My home State of Ohio has more than 500 Catholic schools, including my alma mater, Moeller High School. In Ohio, the Catholic schools serve more than 180,000 students, including more than 56,000 students attending 135 Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Cincinnati that is part of my district.

I appreciate the great work being done by Catholic schools, their administrators and teachers, as well as their parents and volunteers. And as the President noted earlier this month, "Catholic schools carry out a great mission, to serve God by building the knowledge and character of young people." I commend my colleague from Louisiana for introducing this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I am pleased to join the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman BOEHNER) in support of this resolution.

I also want to commend the gentleman from Louisiana for introducing this resolution as we recognize the diversity of our educational systems throughout the country. Today's resolution recognizes the contribution of Catholic schools. Mr. Speaker, children all across America have benefited from 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 America's education system is its diversity. The goal of our system should be both public and private, and it is to provide anyone and everyone in any city, any State with the opportunity they need to succeed.

□ 1015

The educational recipe for success in our country certainly includes Catholic schools, schools with other religious focuses and non-religious private schools, along with our public schools which means so much to so many. It is this variety, this diversity that truly makes American education powerful. It makes American education successful in its mission.

Today we recognize Catholic schools for their long commitment to education, to a value system, to developing the kind of lifestyles that students as well as adults need to seek.

There are many outstanding Catholic schools in my Congressional district. Among them Fenwick High School in Oak Park, Illinois, Resurrection Elementary Schools in Chicago, and, of course, St. Ignatius Prep, which is recognized as one of the top prep schools in the Nation.

So I am pleased to join with the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) in supporting this resolution, commend him for his insight.

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA), the chairman of one of our subcommittees of the Committee on Education.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 492, which recognizes Catholic Schools Week and honors Catholic schools for the important role that they play in educating America's children.

Catholic schools will provide a high quality and innovative education for over 2.5 million students this year, serving a diverse group of students from many social and economic backgrounds. Catholic schools educate racially and ethnically diverse students, children who live in inner cities, urban and rural communities, children who are not Catholic, and even students with disabilities.

These schools excel not only in bringing students with different needs and backgrounds, but they also graduate 99 percent of their student population and send 97 percent of their student body to post-secondary institutions of higher education.

This academic excellence is coupled with very low per-pupil expenditures which stems from the Catholic's Church's willingness and commitment to invest in students and in local communities. Over 84 percent of Catholic schools provide tuition assistance to their students to enable low income parents to send their children to these high-achieving schools.

Catholic schools have demonstrated a commitment to teaching every child believing that each child can and will learn. When school choice initiatives have become the law in States and communities across the country, Catholic schools have opened their

arms and their doors to parents and children seeking alternative educational options.

My home State of Michigan has the ninth largest Catholic school enrollment in the country, with 320 Catholic schools educating more than 88,000 students through preschools, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and after-school programs. In my Congressional district, I have many large and small Catholic schools in urban and rural communities, some schools that specialize in elementary educations and others that educate students during their middle school and high school years.

Catholic schools are widely recognized for their academic distinction. However, I am proud to praise their achievement in meeting the needs of the entire student. Catholic schools build character in our young people and seek to educate the spiritual, intellectual, social, and cultural components of each person while developing an attitude of servant leadership among their students.

Through their insistence on teaching children values, Catholic schools challenge students to live moral and compassionate lives. By insisting on high academic standards and innovative teaching methods, Catholic schools are models of academic excellence for all teachers and schools in this Nation.

I join my colleagues in recognizing Catholic schools week and in congratulating the schools, students, parents and teachers in West Michigan and throughout the Nation for their ongoing commitment to a high-quality education for all of our children.

I would also like to thank the Catholic educational system for the fine work that they did in shaping our chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he might consume to the Democratic Whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am going to support this resolution, of course, notwithstanding the most recent information I have received from our colleague. I congratulate the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for bringing it to the floor.

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to speak out of order.)

CARLTON R. SICKLES, A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, a former colleague of our ours died last Saturday morning. He was an extraordinarily good human being and a very close friend. I want to pay tribute to a good and decent American, an absolutely wonderful individual, Carlton R. Sickles, who passed away early Saturday.

It is unfortunate that millions of people whose lives he touched during his 82 years never had the benefit of knowing him personally. I am blessed as many in this body were blessed by knowing him well. He was a veteran of

World War II and the Korean War, a former Maryland legislator, a gubernatorial candidate and a Member of the House from 1963 to 1967.

But he is perhaps best known, Mr. Speaker, for those of us who live in the Washington metropolitan area as the father of the Metrorail transit system which today serves millions of customers every single year, not only those who live in this region but those millions of people who come to the Washington metropolitan area to visit their Capitol and their Representatives.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I will forever be indebted to Carlton for encouraging me to choose a career in public service. I wanted to run for the House of Delegates in 1966. He was running for governor. He urged me to run for the State Senate. I did not think I could win a State Senate seat. I was 2 months out of law school and thought that premature, but he continued to encourage me. And the third time he asked I ran, and I was fortunate enough to be successful. That has made a huge difference in my life.

He encouraged so many others to participate in public service. His own public service was a credit to elective office, a credit to this institution, a credit to Maryland, and his community.

To his wife Jacqueline, his children, and all his family, I offer my deepest condolences. Carlton was a role model who left a tremendous legacy. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for bringing in resolution to the floor and to my colleague from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), hopefully our next Senator from the great State of Louisiana, for proclaiming the importance of Catholic parochial education in our society and in our lives.

As a product of Sacred Heart School in Lake Worth, I remembered returning to that very classroom where the shock of my life at that time had been the assassination of President John Kennedy. We were in 4th grade. We were asked to pray and pray for our nation and for our assassinated president.

And after September 11th when I was equally shocked as the Nation was watching in horror the events unfolding in New York City, I returned that classroom for solace, for comfort, and for guidance.

Catholic education was a lot to me and to our family. My father started at Sacred Heart himself as a teacher, went on to Cardinal Newman to be a coach and earth science teacher, and then went on to the public school system where he retired from a school for troubled children.

Through his leadership and our parents' guidance and the church's blessing, it has meant a lot to all of our family as we learned life's lessons.

I recently attended St. Ann's school in West Palm Beach. Their students undertook on their own initiative an effort to send memorabilia and messages to our troops in Iraq. They gathered and worked together to do handiworks and crafts and essential items, care packages, if you will, to our troops only to find that nobody would take the packages. Not UPS, did not fly there, not FedEx. There was no way to get all of their hard work accomplished. They called our office. Thanks to the hard work of our staff, they repacked the boxes, asked the Department of Defense for permission and were able to load those packages on to a flight heading to Iraq.

I recently went to the school and thanked the children for their extraordinary efforts and thinking of our troops first over the holiday period. And they read for me a number of the letters that were sent back by our personnel in the field. It was heartwarming to see the interaction between soldier and student.

Ave Maria is a new university contemplated and soon to be constructed in Ft. Myers, Florida, the first Catholic university to be built in the country in 40 years. I commend our community for being lucky to have a Catholic University soon in our presence.

Catholic schools are important to the fiber and foundation of our Nation. They give every child a chance to pray in class, which is a unique and novel thing, one I welcome and urge other non-parochial schools to participate in. Because, after all, after September 11th the one thing that lifted the soul of the Nation and gave us courage to fight on in the days ahead was, in fact, our collective prayer, our willingness and wishes for a better world for all Americans and all inhabitants of the world.

So I salute the author of the amendment, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), our colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman, and all who will join with us today in, again, saluting the importance of Catholic education in our daily lives.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the author of the resolution that we are considering.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, thanks for the opportunity to recognize today the contributions of Catholic schools. It is particularly significant for me and my constituents since Catholic education began in America in my home State of Louisiana in 1725. My wife Wendy and I are both Catholic school graduates. We send our kids to the Catholic school right in our neighborhood. We know first-hand those contributions as so many speakers before me have noted.

Catholic schools prepare every student to meet the challenges of their future by developing their mind, yes, but also their body and their soul and spir-

it. They instill students with self-confidence and motivation and the will to succeed, and they provide a true education of value in every sense of the term.

This year is the 30th anniversary of Catholic schools week. The week was established to recognize the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

The schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities. And those students are very well rounded and they come from truly diverse backgrounds. Nationally non-Catholic enrollment in Catholic schools is 13 percent and minority enrollment is 26 percent. So the institutions are rich both in tradition and diversity.

I rise, Mr. Speaker, to honor the faculty who dedicate their lives to shaping the future of their students, and certainly that includes the religious who are at the core of Catholic education. I salute the parents who sacrifice their personal funds to send their children to Catholic schools. I applaud the students of those schools for the role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

And I join with so many of my colleagues in saluting this vital part of American education.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just indicate again that I strongly support this resolution for a number of reasons. We all know that Catholic schools are noted for a strong emphasis on discipline, which is so important for young people. As a matter of fact, important for all of us. They are noted for a strong emphasis on values education, values that we all need to internalize and make a part of our every day lives.

They are also noted for parental involvement. Catholic schools' parents must be involved in the education of their children. All schools should follow this concept because without parental involvement, then children do not really get the information that they need to have to know that education is not just inside the school, but it is an actual part of life.

And so, again, I commend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) for introducing this resolution. I am pleased to join with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and others in support of it.

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all my colleagues who have come to the floor today to help us celebrate Catholic Schools Week. As I said, not only am I a graduate of Catholic education, but so are my 11 brothers and sisters. If it were not for the commitment of my parents to send us to Catholic schools,

I do not think that we would be what we are today.

□ 1030

I cannot really go on much further in talking about Catholic education without admiring the work of Cardinal McCarrick here in Washington, D.C.

While there are many Catholic schools here in Washington, there are 13 very special Catholic schools here in Washington called the Consortium Schools that are in low-income neighborhoods. They are 95 percent minority, 80 percent non-Catholic. Cardinal McCarrick and the volunteers at the consortium have worked to keep those 13 schools open for the benefit of those children in those neighborhoods.

Last year, Senator KENNEDY and I worked to help raise money to keep these 13 schools open. I made a commitment to go see all 13. I made it to four. I have got nine more to go. But there is amazing work that is going on at these 13 schools here in Washington where we all know the condition of the public schools. I just want to take a moment to thank Cardinal McCarrick and those at the City Consortium Schools for the work they are doing to help minority and poor children here in Washington, D.C.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased that Congress has recognized the important role that Catholic Schools play in our community.

As a Latino, I know the important place that Catholic education has had in my district. The Saint Thomas Aquinas High School in San Bernardino, CA, is highly regarded for its academic and athletic excellence.

The San Bernardino Diocese School System under Bishop Gerald Barnes has made major investments into their school system to bring students into the 21st century.

Even though I am a strong supporter of public schools, I understand the importance of Catholic schools in our Nation's education and the values they instill in our students.

The quality of education provided at Catholic schools is truly remarkable, and deserving of high honors.

Not only do they focus on academic achievement but they also build strong moral foundations for young people. Their curriculums are often full of programs in character development and community service.

Catholic school students graduate with a wide variety of skills that will not only help them in their careers but also in their family and community life.

I am please to support this resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of House Resolution 492, offered by the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. VITTER. This resolution honors the contributions of America's Catholic schools, and their dedication to educating their students and improving their communities.

Catholic Schools Week 2004 will be celebrated from January 25–31 with the theme, "Catholic Schools: A Faith-Filled Future." Every year since 1974 Catholic Schools Week has been celebrated and jointly sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a quality academic education. Catholic schools provide a values-infused education that emphasizes moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people. In turn these schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities.

There are currently over 2.6 million students enrolled in 8,000 Catholic schools across this Nation. In my home State of Delaware, over 30 Catholic schools provide an excellent education to over 15,000 students. These schools serve children from all incomes and backgrounds. In addition, Catholic school students come from many different races, religions, and ethnicities. In this school year, about 26 percent of Catholic school students are from minority backgrounds and about 14 percent are not Catholic.

I appreciate the great work being done by the Catholic schools, their administrators and teachers as well as their parents and volunteers. I commend my colleague from Louisiana for introducing this resolution and urge my colleagues to support it.

Archmere Academy, Claymont
Christ Our King School, Wilmington
Corpus Christi School, Wilmington
Holy Angels Elementary School, Newark
Holy Cross School, Dover
Holy Rosary Elementary School, Claymont
Holy Spirit Elementary School, New Castle
Immaculate Heart Of Mary School, Wilmington
Mother of Divine Grace
Mother Seton School
Our Lady Of Fatima School, New Castle
Our Lady of Grace Kindergarten, Newark
Padua Academy, Wilmington
Sacred Heart Academy
Saint Ann Elementary School, Wilmington
Saint Anthony Of Padua School, Wilmington
Saint Catherine Of Siena School, Wilmington
Saint Edmond's Academy School, Wilmington
Saint Elizabeth Elementary School, Wilmington
Saint Elizabeth High School, Wilmington
Saint Hedwig Elementary School, Wilmington
Saint Helena Elementary School, Wilmington
Saint John Bosco's Academy
Saint John The Beloved School, Wilmington
Saint Joseph's Academy
Saint Marks High School, Wilmington
Saint Mary Magdalen School, Wilmington
Saint Matthew Elementary School, Wilmington
Saint Paul Elementary School, Wilmington
Saint Peter School, New Castle
Saint Peters Cathedral School, Wilmington
Saints Peter and Paul School of Easton
Saint Thomas More Academy, Magnolia
Saint Thomas The Apostle School, Wilmington
Saint Vincent's Academy
Salesianum School, Wilmington
Ursuline Academy of Wilmington
Windermere Place

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 492 and in recognition of the numerous contributions that Catholic schools bring to our country. The standard of academic excellence promoted in the thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools around the nation provide a vital contribution to the fabric of our educational system.

Year-round, these institutions provide a solid, structured education to our young peo-

ple that is steeped in the traditions of the Catholic church. Today, we congratulate Catholic schools, parents, and teachers for their ongoing contributions and their key role in ensuring a brighter, more promising future for the more than 2.5 million students who attend these schools. We also recognize the particular contribution of Catholic schools to our country's minority population. Nationwide, Catholic schools have a minority enrollment of 26 percent.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to every individual in our country who dedicates themselves to educating our children. I am proud to recognize today the unique contribution of America's Catholic Schools, and specifically, the great work of South Florida Catholic schools in educating the children of South Florida.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, because I am attending the important World Economic Conference in Davos, Switzerland, at which I intend to argue strongly for changes in international economic policy better to reflect the rights of working people and the importance of environmental protection, I am missing some votes in suspension. By their nature of course, bills scheduled this early in the session on the suspension calendar are entirely non-controversial so my inability to vote on some of them, while regrettable, was obviously irrelevant to the outcome. What my absence does mean is the lack of a chance to express my support for various of the principles affirmed in those resolutions, so I want to take this opportunity to express my agreement with their thrust. In particular, given the importance of Catholic schools in the district I am privileged to represent, I want to express my appreciation for the dedicated and effective work done by the educators in that school system whose commitment to young people is one of the great assets our society has. I am happy to be able to join my colleagues in expressing my gratitude to those dedicated men and women who devote themselves to the job of educating young people in an appropriate way.

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as we strive for excellence in America's schools, I am pleased to honor next week as Catholic Schools Week.

Catholic schools provide an intellectually stimulating environment, one where children are challenged by their peers and teachers to make the most of their education. Children from many nationalities and religious backgrounds attend Catholic Schools across America, and all learn the basic principles and values necessary to achieve the American Dream.

Catholic Schools emphasize the importance and development of faith and character. Teachers and staff nurture students in a professional and caring manner encouraging spiritual and emotional growth through education and community involvement.

Receiving a quality education has always been of great importance for our country as we reach to make the future bright for generations to come, and Catholic schools have and will continue to make a huge impact on our nation's youth.

I am pleased to offer my support for H. Res. 492, the Designation of Catholic Schools week, and thank my colleague Representative DAVID VITTER of Louisiana for bringing this important issue to the floor and to the attention of the House.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMMONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 492.

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. BOEHNER. 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 MENTORS AND SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO RECRUIT MENTORS

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 491) honoring individuals who are mentors and supporting efforts to recruit more mentors.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 491

Whereas mentoring is a strategy for motivating and helping young people succeed in life by bringing them together in structured and trusting relationships with caring adults who provide guidance, support, and encouragement;

Whereas mentoring offers a supportive environment in which young people can grow, expand their vision, learn necessary skills, and achieve a future that they may never have thought possible;

Whereas a growing body of research shows that mentoring benefits young people in numerous ways, including improvements in school performance and attendance, self-confidence, attitudes toward and relationships with adults, and motivation to reach their potential;

Whereas mentoring is an adaptable, flexible approach that can be tailored to help children with academics, social support, career preparation, or leadership development;

Whereas there is in this Nation a mentoring gap, consisting of over 15,000,000 young people who need mentors but do not have them;

Whereas, in an effort to begin closing the mentoring gap, the House of Representatives on December 8, 2003, approved a measure to significantly increase Federal grant funding for local mentoring organizations to \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2004;

Whereas the recipients of those grants and other mentoring programs all across the country rely principally on volunteer mentors and will need an influx of volunteers to meet the growing demand for mentoring;

Whereas nonprofit groups and leading media companies have joined together to designate January 2004 as National Mentoring Month in an effort to recruit more mentors for young people;

Whereas the monthlong celebration of mentoring will encourage more adults to volunteer their time as mentors for young people and will enlist the involvement of nonprofit organizations, schools, businesses, faith communities, and government agencies in the mentoring movement; and

Whereas on January 9, 2004, President George W. Bush signed a proclamation designating January 2004 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) praises those individuals who have already given their time to mentor a child; and

(2) supports efforts to recruit more mentors in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. 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 within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 491.

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, I rise to introduce the National Mentoring Month Resolution honoring those who give their time to mentor children.

Last night in this Chamber the President emphasized the threat of terrorism to our Nation's security, and I think all of us are aware of that threat. I would like to make a point that the major threat to our Nation's survival, as I see it, is not terrorism, as much of a threat as this is; but, rather, it is the trauma and dysfunction that is faced by so many of our children, because they are the future of this country.

Currently, roughly 50 percent of our young people are growing up without both biological parents. We have 20 million fatherless children in our Nation. I used to work with some of those young people. And when your father does not care enough about you to stay around to even see what you look like, it leaves a hole in your psyche that you are often times trying to fill for the rest of your life and usually filling it with all of the wrong things.

Currently, the United States leads the world in violence for young people: homicide, suicide, so on. We also are certainly very much addicted to drugs, alcohol abuse with teenagers, pornography. These are every day threats that our young people face. So having said all that, mentoring is the best-known remedy that many of us have for the social pathology that is harming our children today which threatens the foundation of our culture and our society.

Let me take a minute or two and mention what a mentor is. Some people hear the term and do not think about it very much. A mentor is someone

who cares. Quite often children have some attention from fathers, mothers, grandparents, teachers and preachers and people who are paid to pay attention to them in some way or another. But a mentor is one who simply cares enough to show up and spend time with a young person and say unconditionally, I, someone who has no ax to grind at all, cares enough about you to show up every week or twice a week or whatever and spend some time and invest my life in your life.

A mentor is also someone who affirms. And I saw in my previous profession of coaching how important affirmation was. So often if you gave the player the message that he was not very good, that he did not measure up, that he was not going to make it, often times his performance would begin to play down to that level of expectation. But on the other hand, if you told him, I really believe in you, I see some promise in you, we think you have a great future, we think down the line you will be a great player, that player often times would perform at a level that he himself was not aware that he could perform at.

So that is essentially what a mentor does. A mentor affirms. He says, I believe in you. I see some potential here. I see some talent.

So many of our young people today have no affirmation in their lives, no one who is affirming who they are, what they are or what they can do.

Lastly, I would say a mentor is one who provides some directions and vision. So many young people are growing up in households today where they really do not have a role model who has shown what it is to get up and go to work every day, someone who takes responsibility, someone who finishes their education or someone who just finishes anything. A mentor is one who can say, I see a future for you beyond dropping out at the end of the tenth grade. I see a future for you beyond minimum-wage jobs, and you have this talent and you can do this.

So mentoring is very important, and I think it is important to realize also that mentoring works. We have currently a great deal of evidence that indicates that mentoring will reduce drug and alcohol abuse by roughly 50 percent, significantly reduces teenage pregnancy, teenage drop-out rates, teenage violence; and it improves self-esteem, grades, and relationships. And so it is the best thing that we have going, considering what our children are facing today.

The other thing to remember is that mentoring is cost effective. It costs roughly \$300 to \$500 to provide a good mentoring experience for a child, and it costs \$25,000 to \$30,000 to lock them up for a year. The average meth addict will commit 64 crimes a year, which is a huge cost to any community. So we feel that mentoring at the front end reduces a great many of the costs at the back end of the social process.

Two years ago, the first Mentoring for Success grants were awarded by the