

equally important Downbeat Magazine which is celebrating its 70th anniversary.

Jazz is our much-celebrated unique American treasure, and Ellington was the leader of the band. We are particularly pleased to recognize the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival which will begin next fall. It will feature a number of artistic events culminating in 2 days of concerts on the National Mall. It is especially fitting this festival will take place here in the Nation's Capital, Duke Ellington's birthplace and the city that nurtured his talent on the 30th anniversary of the extraordinary high school named for the Duke.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for and support H. Con. Res. 501.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for bringing H. Con. Res. 501 to the floor today. I urge my colleagues to support this measure. All of us have been impacted by the life and work of Duke Ellington.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, he has been called the "quintessential American composer" and considered to be one of "great musicians along with Bach and Beethoven and Shoenberg." Duke Ellington brought a level of refinement and elegance to jazz.

The Duke's first piano lessons began around the age of seven—but like many youngsters—he was more interested in going to the Washington Senators baseball games than practicing. It took seeing a few great live performances, even sneaking out of school to seek out and listen to ragtime pianists in Washington and, during the summers, in Philadelphia or Atlantic City, where he and his mother vacationed. Duke was taken under the wings of Oliver "Doc" Perry and Louis Brown, who taught Duke how to read music and helped improve his overall piano playing skills. Duke found piano playing jobs at clubs and cafes throughout the Washington area.

In late 1917, Duke formed his first group: The Duke's Serenaders, which years later was renamed as The Washingtonians. By the late 1920s, Duke's band became the most sought-after band in the United States and even throughout the world. Duke Ellington and his band went on to play everywhere from New York to New Delhi, Chicago to Cairo, and Los Angeles to London. Ellington and his band played with such greats as Miles Davis, Cab Calloway, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett and Louis Armstrong. They entertained everyone from Queen Elizabeth II to President Nixon.

Duke Ellington did not just make an impact on music to the world, but he made his hometown of Washington, DC, proud. Thirty years ago Washington, DC, honored him by renaming one high school the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. It only makes sense that in 2005, Washington, DC, will be able to honor The Duke of Jazz once again by hosting 2 days of concerts on the National Mall each year as the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival.

Mr. BURNS. 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 Georgia (Mr. BURNS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 501.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WOOLSEY. 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 UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND ON 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 792) honoring the United Negro College Fund on the occasion of the Fund's 60th anniversary and the Fund's unflagging dedication to enhancing top-quality college opportunities to millions of students.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. Res. 792

Whereas the United Negro College Fund was founded on April 26, 1944, with 27 member colleges under the leadership of Dr. Frederick D. Patterson;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund is the Nation's largest, oldest, most successful, and most comprehensive minority higher education assistance organization;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund's mission is to enhance the quality of education by providing financial assistance to deserving students, raising operating funds for member colleges and universities, and increasing access to technology for students and faculty at historically black colleges and universities;

Whereas over 60 years, the United Negro College Fund has raised more than \$2.3 billion to assist a total of more than 300,000 students attend college;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund administers more than 450 scholarships and fellowships for students and faculty, who attend more than 950 colleges and universities throughout the nation;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund has distributed more funds to help minorities attend school than any entity outside of the federal government;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund provides key support to historically black colleges and universities as a means to keep tuition down to a rate half that of tuition at comparable schools, while its member institutions provide a quality education to students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college and are from low-income families;

Whereas both the Non-Profit Times and the Chronicle of Philanthropy rank the United Negro College Fund among the top ten charitable education organizations in the country, and Barron's ranks it as the number one educational charity in terms of efficiency in distributing funds raised;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund provides operational funds, technology enhancement services, and advanced training for faculty and administrators for its member institutions;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund's member institutions enroll seven percent of African American college students nationwide;

Whereas the United Negro College Fund's colleges and universities are the top producers of successful medical school applicants; and

Whereas the United Negro College Fund has contributed immeasurably to the nation by producing countless graduates who have contributed to our communities as nurses, teachers, civil servants, business leaders, doctors, lawyers, elected officials, and community leaders: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recognizes the United Negro College Fund, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, for the Fund's outstanding commitment towards providing a quality education for minority and low-income students and towards strengthening our communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS).

□ 1830

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 792.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of H. Res. 792, honoring the United Negro College Fund on the occasion of the fund's 60th anniversary. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for bringing this resolution to the floor of the House. All members on our committee recognize the important role that Historically Black Colleges and Universities play in the postsecondary education environment. Moreover, we recognize the dedication and commitment the United Negro College Fund has made to enhance top-quality college opportunities for millions of students.

In my home district, I have two historically black institutions, Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, and Savannah State University in Savannah, two of our State's leading institutions of higher education. The United Negro College Fund is the Nation's oldest and largest minority higher education assistance organization that has helped to raise more than \$2.3 billion to assist over 300,000 students attend college.

Not only does the United Negro College Fund have a mission to enhance the quality of education by providing financial assistance to students but the organization raises operating funds for member colleges and universities and increases access to technology for students and faculty at HBCUs. Additionally, the United Negro College Fund

ensures that first-generation college students have the resources and support they need to pursue the dream of a college education. The contributions made by the United Negro College Fund and its member institutions are undeniable. UNCF member institutions enroll 7 percent of African American college students nationwide and are responsible for producing a significant number of all bachelor's, master's and professional degrees earned by African Americans. In many instances, UNCF member institutions do not have access to the resources or endowment income that other institutions can draw upon. Despite this, with the assistance of UNCF, these institutions tend to keep their tuitions affordable in comparison with other institutions of higher education.

For over 60 years, the United Negro College Fund has made it possible for students to pursue the dream of higher education, and the organization has ensured that its member institutions have the resources and support to provide students with educational opportunities. I urge my colleagues to recognize and honor the important contributions that have been made by the United Negro College Fund, its member institutions, and their graduates and to vote "yes" on this worthy resolution.

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

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

I rise in the place of the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), our Education and Workforce ranking member, in strong support of this resolution and to honor the United Negro College Fund on the occasion of the fund's 60th anniversary. Founded in 1944 by Dr. Frederick Patterson, the United Negro College Fund is the Nation's largest, oldest, most successful and most comprehensive minority education assistance organization. The United Negro College Fund has long been a forerunner in recognizing the importance of a quality education for both individuals and for the greater good of society. Just as millions of students, particularly minority and low-income students, struggle to pay for a college education, the fund continues to enhance the quality of education by providing college aid to deserving students. In fact, the United Negro College Fund has raised over \$2 billion towards helping more than 300,000 students attend college.

Over the past 60 years, the fund has distributed more funds to help minority students attend school than any other organization outside of the Federal Government. In addition, the fund continues to provide critical support to Historically Black Colleges and Universities as a means to keep tuition down to a rate that is about half that at comparable schools and to continue to provide a quality education. If not for their important work and investments, many students in my own district would be unable to attend college.

The United Negro College Fund is also dedicated to raising operating funds for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and to boosting access to technology for students and faculty at these institutions. These funds help to ensure that students have access to quality academic student support services and to new technologies necessary to prepare them for careers in science, medicine, and public safety. The United Negro College Fund has contributed immensely to the Nation by producing graduates who have given back to their communities as nurses, teachers, elected officials, civil servants, community leaders, and doctors.

I commend the United Negro College Fund on its 60th anniversary for its outstanding commitment toward providing a quality education for minority and low-income students and towards strengthening our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California who is controlling this piece of legislation for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the United Negro College Fund on its 60th anniversary. I would like to thank my colleague from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for sponsoring this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." These words have long been associated with the strength and commitment of the UNCF. In providing financial assistance to students, raising operating funds for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and increasing access to technology at these schools, the UNCF has assured that a student with a dedicated mind will not be wasted. From its formation in 1944, UNCF has grown to become the Nation's oldest and most successful African American higher education assistance organization.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, of the 65,000 students UNCF supports at 1,000 colleges and universities, 60 percent are the first in their families to attend college and 62 percent have annual family incomes of less than \$25,000. So it is evident that without this vital assistance, these students would be left out of sharing in the American Dream.

In administering over 450 scholarships and fellowships supporting students at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level, the United Negro College Fund makes lasting contributions to our Nation. The funding provided to students builds successful careers in the many areas that are essential to increasing the competitiveness of the United States in the world community.

It is with the greatest honor that I list some of the alumni whom UNCF has trained to become some of our esteemed leaders:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;

The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder, the first African American Governor to be elected;

Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General and former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

The Honorable Alexis Herman, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, along with some of our distinguished Members of this House: the distinguished gentlemen from Georgia, Congressman SANFORD BISHOP and Congressman JOHN LEWIS; the distinguished gentleman from Florida, Congressman ALCEE HASTINGS; the distinguished gentleman from New York, Congressman MAJOR OWENS; and the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi, Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON.

Congratulations to the United Negro College Fund on 60 years of excellence in leading the way for providing financial assistance and training to African Americans enabling them to obtain higher education and to find their role on the world stage.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOEHNER, Ranking Member MILLER, the gentlewoman from California and others who have supported H. Res. 792. Mr. Speaker, this resolution honors the United Negro College Fund on its 60th anniversary. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this resolution.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the United Negro College Fund on its 60th anniversary of assistance in higher education. The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) was founded upon a mission to improve the quality of education through the provision of financial aid to deserving students, raising operation funds to assist member institutions, and increasing access to technology at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Throughout the past six decades, the UNCF has raised over \$2 billion, allowing the Fund to help over 300,000 students receive a higher education, thus designating the Fund as the largest contributor of funding, aside from the government, to help minorities attend school.

Today, the UNCF extends operational support through technological enhancement and financial assistance to 38 member colleges and universities, allowing these schools to maintain a tuition level 54 percent lower than that of similar schools. The UNCF also provides over 450 scholarships and fellowships that support deserving students through the doctorate level of education. Moreover, of the 65,000 students supported by the UNCF, 60 percent are the first in their families to attend college and 62 percent have annual family incomes of less than \$25,000.

The Fund has also recently established Liberty Scholarships, which allow the children of the victims of the attacks of September 11, 2001—regardless of age, race or creed—to attend any of the UNCF's member institutions. Finally, through its efforts and philanthropic activities, the United Negro College Fund has produced innumerable graduates who have

made lasting and significant contributions in fields such as politics, education, law, business, health care, and the arts.

In its 60 years of existence, the United Negro College Fund has undoubtedly changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of students, friends and families, and has thus changed the communities and the country in which we live. Therefore, I would like to honor the United Negro College Fund in recognition of these great achievements and contributions to our society.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 792, honoring the United Negro College Fund, (UNCF), on the occasion of its 60th anniversary and the Fund's unflagging dedication to enhancing top quality college opportunities to millions of students.

Mr. Speaker, we know "the mind is a terrible thing to waste." And Mr. Speaker, we know that education is an unequalled blessing. Before Emancipation, slaves risked corporal punishment as they secretly gathered to read together. As a slave in Baltimore, Frederick Douglass tricked his white playmates into teaching him the alphabet, trading morsels of food for morsels of schooling. Throughout American history, African Americans possessed an unquenchable thirst to learn, finding innovative ways to educate each other.

Dr. Frederick Patterson was a key contributor to that history. One hundred and fifty years after Douglass's death, Dr. Patterson founded the UNCF in an effort to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities and make higher education more accessible to African Americans. In the last 60 years, through grants and scholarships, the UNCF has raised over \$2 billion in aid and has helped over 300,000 students attain a college education. Sixty percent of the students UNCF supports are the first in their families to go to college. Many of these students come from families who make less than \$25,000 a year.

The UNCF also extends its aid to students beyond the confines of college campus, providing internships at hundreds of Fortune 500 companies and supporting students in their doctoral and post-graduate study. Additionally, UNCF provides millions of dollars in technical and structural support to Historically Black Colleges and Universities by providing computers and training faculty.

I am grateful to the UNCF for its contributions to the education of many of my esteemed colleagues in Congress, including, to mention a few, Congressmen HASTINGS, LEWIS, OWENS, THOMPSON and BISHOP of GA. I know these men personally. I know how their education has contributed to their quest for justice and their tireless work for a better America. I have seen the fruits of their education as they harness their inquisitiveness and leadership to the most difficult challenges of governance.

Mr. Speaker, there are countless others I do not know personally who have

received the immeasurable gift of education because of the UNCF. Let me share a few stories with you from the UNCF's 2003 Annual Report. When she was in high school, Gabrielle Brown maintained a part time job mowing lawns in public parks to help her family. The UNCF made Ms. Brown's dream of college a reality. At Johnson C. Smith University, Ms. Smith was on the honor roll and served as a Big Sister. She said, "the people and companies who give to the UNCF may not realize that their contribution is more than just money, it's hope for the future."

Another UNCF recipient, Theodore Wesby, spent much of his childhood homeless, sleeping in shelters and bus stations. When he could not afford to live in the dorms at Edward Waters College, the UNCF awarded him a scholarship to cover his expenses. The formerly homeless young man plans to pursue a career in real estate, helping others locate their homes, just like the UNCF helped him locate his. It is in the name, honor, and gratitude of these inspiring students that I express my appreciation to the UNCF for its contributions.

W.E.B. DuBois, a graduate of the historically black Fisk University and Harvard University, wrote in *The Souls of Black Folk*:

"I sit with Shakespeare, and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm and arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out of the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed Earth and the tracery of stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the veil."

Mr. Speaker, because of the United Negro College Fund, so many more of us have been able to sit above the veil of ignorance with Shakespeare and Balzac, with Einstein and Pythagoras, with Martin and Mandela. I thank the UNCF for the tremendously important work it does, and I urge my colleagues to accept this resolution.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the United Negro College Fund for providing assistance to allow minority students the opportunity of achieving their dream of a college education for 60 years. The Fund is the nation's largest, oldest, most successful and most comprehensive minority higher education assistance organization. Over those 60 years, the United Negro College Fund has raised more than \$2 billion to help a total of more than 300,000 students attend college and has distributed more funds to help minorities attend school than any entity outside of the government. UNCF administers over 450 scholarships and fellowships that support students at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level. Of those students UNCF helps, 60 percent are the first in their families to attend college and 62 percent have annual family incomes of less than \$25,000—reinforcing the fact that without UNCF, those individuals may not have been able to finance their education.

It was the dream of Dr. Frederick D. Patterson in 1943 to raise money collectively with other black college presidents through an "appeal to the national conscience." His call was heard and answered by the Nation. UNCF does amazing work—but more students would get the opportunity of attending and graduating from college if the maximum amount for Pell grants were increased and students were relying less on student loans.

Mr. Speaker—the United Negro College Fund has proven its slogan to be fact—"a mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker and fellow members. I rise to support this resolution and commemorate the 60th anniversary of the United Negro College Fund.

As the oldest comprehensive minority higher education assistance organization, the United Negro College Fund has enhanced educational opportunities for hundreds of thousands of young men and women.

In today's times tuition increases are the rule, not the exception, many minority students rely on organizations like this to navigate financial aid applications and to get the financial help they need to pay for school.

The students who attend college through this organization often go on to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, and elected officials.

United Negro College Fund students don't just become graduates, they become productive citizens and I congratulate all the students back home in Houston and across America who have been helped by this program.

\$2.3 billion has been invested in our future by this organization and I wish the United Negro College Fund continued success.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 60th Anniversary of the United Negro College Fund. The United Negro College Fund is the nation's oldest, most successful and most comprehensive minority higher education assistance organization.

Over the past 60 years, UNCF has raised more than \$2 billion to help a total of more than 300,000 students attend college. Today, of the approximately 65,000 students UNCF supports, 60 percent are the first in their families to attend college and 62 percent have annual family incomes of less than \$25,000. UNCF doesn't just give students an opportunity to get a college education, but more of an opportunity to make a lasting contribution to our communities and nation by building successful careers.

We all know how important a college education is today. It is virtually impossible to compete in today's global economy without a college degree. Studies have shown that workers with a college degree earn 75 percent more than those with only a high school diploma. While there are many obstacles that deter students from going to college, finances by no means should be the deciding factor.

No one should be denied the opportunity to get an education and increase their earning potential based solely on their inability to pay for a college education. UNCF's founder, Dr. Frederick D. Patterson, president of what is now Tuskegee University, recognized that for many African-American students, lack of finances was the only thing standing in the way of their goal of getting a college education. In 1944, he issued a call to other black college presidents to raise money to help educate these qualified students. Now for the past 60 years UNCF has made sure that minority students at over 1,000 colleges and universities have the financial support they need.

Not only does UNCF support students, but also higher education institutions throughout the country. UNCF provides operating support to 38 member historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), which help the member schools keep tuition down at a rate 54 percent lower than tuition at other comparable schools. UNCF also administers millions of dollars to help provide computers, technology integration training for faculty members and technological infrastructure support for HBCUs.

The fact that UNCF plays such a significant role in supporting our nation's HBCUs is important. HBCUs graduate far more than their share of African American professionals. While HBCUs represent just 3 percent of the nation's institutions of higher learning, they graduate nearly one-quarter of African Americans who earn undergraduate degrees. Nine of the top ten colleges that graduate the most African Americans who go on to earn Ph.Ds are HBCUs.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have two of UNCF's member institutions in my state—Virginia Union University and Saint Paul's College. And two other HBCUs in my district that benefit from UNCF funding and programs—Hampton University and Norfolk State University.

Graduates of UNCF institutions have indeed made lasting contributions in the fields of business, health care, the arts and even politics. In fact, several of my distinguished colleagues are UNCF alumni.

In 1972, UNCF introduced its now famous slogan: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste". And through the diligent efforts of all who work with UNCF, by donating financial resources, time and in the case of many celebrities—their good name, they have made sure that the meaning of that slogan resonates across America. Most importantly, they have made sure that every student who has the desire can attend college. I commend those involved with the United Negro College Fund for their hard work and congratulate them on 60 years of service.

Mr. BURNS. 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 Georgia (Mr. BURNS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 792.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WOOLSEY. 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.

#### NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4731) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4731

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM.

Section 320(i) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1330(i)) is amended by striking "2005" and inserting "2010".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in strong support of H.R. 4731, to reauthorize the National Estuary Program. Estuaries are unique and highly productive waters that are important to the ecological and economic bases of our Nation. Fisheries, wildlife, recreation, and tourism are heavily dependent on healthy estuarine systems. Yet despite their value, most estuaries in the United States are experiencing stress from physical alteration and pollution, often resulting from development and rapid population growth in coastal areas.

In the 1980s, Congress recognized the importance of and the need to protect the natural functions of our Nation's estuaries. As a result, in 1987 Congress first authorized the National Estuary Program. Today this program, the National Estuary Program, is an ongoing nonregulatory program designed to support the collaborative, voluntary efforts of Federal, State, and local stakeholders to restore degraded estuaries. Currently all 29 estuaries in the National Estuary Program have developed and are implementing restoration plans. Under this program, \$35 million a year is authorized to allow the EPA to help these State and local restoration efforts. The program's current authorization expires in 2005. Thus, the need for this legislation.

H.R. 4731 reauthorizes the National Estuary Program at the same level of funding for an additional 5 years. The bill contains no Federal mandates and imposes no costs on State or local governments. I certainly want to congratulate the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GERLACH) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) on sponsoring this bill and on the great leadership they have provided on this. I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for his leadership on this bill and rise in strong support of H.R. 4731, a bill to extend the authorization

of the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program. This popular program provides Federal assistance to local stakeholders to implement locally designed management plans for the protection of the Nation's estuaries.

At the same time, the program serves as a national clearinghouse for successful management approaches, technologies and ideas, providing local communities with concrete examples of what works in addressing the unique needs of estuaries. This program authorizes funding for the development and implementation of comprehensive conservation and management plans for estuaries of national significance.

A comprehensive approach to addressing estuary health is particularly important as the stressors on the health of estuaries continue to expand. EPA's most recent water quality report indicated that 50 percent of estuary waters do not meet their designated uses. Programs such as this, coupled with significant additional resources for wastewater infrastructure, may allow for water quality in estuaries to improve and ecosystems to be restored.

□ 1845

I strongly support authorization for the National Estuary Program. And I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on H.R. 4731.

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GERLACH), the author of this legislation.

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4731, a bill I introduced to reauthorize the National Estuary Program. I would like to particularly thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for his efforts on this bill and for his work as chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee.

H.R. 4731 is a simple reauthorization of a highly respected and successful National Estuary Program. A program whose authorization will expire at the end of fiscal year 2005. Like the previous authorization, the bill will authorize \$35 million annually for the program and will extend the authorization through fiscal year 2010.

Estuaries are coastal bays, harbors, sounds and lagoons, places where rivers meet the sea. Estuaries and the lands surrounding them are places of transition from land to sea and from fresh to saltwater. Up to 80 percent of the fish that we catch spend at least part of their lives in estuaries. EPA's National Estuary Program was established by Congress in 1987 to improve the quality of estuaries of national importance. Section 320 directs EPA to develop plans for attaining and maintaining water quality in an estuary. This includes protection of public water supplies and propagation of a balanced indigenous population of shellfish, fish