

Airland programs and provisions contained in the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal year 2005.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPETITION, FOREIGN  
COMMERCE, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Competition, Foreign Commerce, and Infrastructure be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 4, 2004, at 2:30 p.m. on Lessons Learned From Security at Past Olympic Games.

COMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 4, 2004, at 3:30 p.m., in closed session to mark up the Seapower programs and provisions contained in the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 4, 2004, at 5 p.m., in closed session to mark up the Emerging Threats and Capabilities programs and provisions contained in the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Sara Hagigh of Senator LIEBERMAN's office be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of the JOBS bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the request of the Senator from Montana is granted.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, after consultation with the members of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the Committee on Aging, pursuant to Public Law 100-175, as amended by Public Laws 102-375, 103-171, and 106-501, appoints the following individuals as members of the Policy Committee to the White House Conference on Aging: The Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY and the Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAIG.

AUTHORIZING PRODUCTION OF  
RECORDS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 350.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 350) to authorize the production of records by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs has received requests from various law enforcement and regulatory officials and agencies for assistance in connection with pending investigations into the credit counseling industry, which has been the subject of recent investigation by the subcommittee.

The resolution would authorize the chairman and ranking member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, acting jointly, to provide investigative records obtained by the subcommittee in the course of its investigation in response to these requests.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 350) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 350

Whereas, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs has been conducting an investigation into the credit counseling industry;

Whereas, the Subcommittee has received a number of requests from law enforcement and regulatory officials and agencies for access to records of the Subcommittee's investigation;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate can, by administrative or judicial process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate;

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate is needed for the promotion of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, acting jointly, are authorized to provide to law enforcement and regulatory entities and officials records of the Subcommittee's investigation into the credit counseling industry.

CONGRATULATING CHARTER  
SCHOOLS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 351, which was submitted earlier today by Senator GREGG.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 351) congratulating charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, today my colleagues, Senators LIEBERMAN, FRIST, CARPER, DOLE, SUNUNU, ALEXANDER, DOMENICI, CRAIG, COLEMAN, LANDRIEU, DURBIN, DEWINE, and BROWNBACK joined me in submitting S. Res. 351, a resolution to designate the week of May 3 through May 7, 2004 as National Charter Schools Week. This year marks the 12th anniversary of the opening of the Nation's first charter school in Minnesota. We have come a long way since that auspicious moment when one teacher, collaborating with parents, started a public school specifically designed to meet the needs of the students in the community.

Today, we have almost 3,000 charter schools serving nearly 750,000 students in 37 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Charter schools are immensely popular. Forty percent report having waiting lists, and there are enough students on these waiting lists to fill another 1,000 average-sized charter schools. Survey after survey shows parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with their children's charter schools.

Charter schools are popular for a variety of reasons. They are generally free from the burdensome regulations and policies that govern traditional public schools. They are founded and run by principals, teachers, and parents who share a common vision of education, a vision which guides each and every decision made at the schools, from hiring personnel to selecting curricula. Furthermore, charter schools are held accountable for student performance in a very unique way—if they fail to educate their students well and meet the goals of their charters, they are shut down.

Since each charter school represents the unique vision of its founders, these schools vary greatly, but all strive for excellence.

For example, Summit Middle School in Boulder, CO is a charter school serving grades 6 through 8 in mixed-age classes grouped by interest, motivation, ability, developmental level, and mastery of previous material. Summit provides a choice at the middle school level for students interested in a more rigorous and individualized academic program, and its students—admitted without regard to past academic accomplishment or prior testing—have risen to the challenge. In 2003, Summit was one of 214 public and private elementary and secondary schools nationwide, and the only public middle school

in Colorado, to be named a No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School in recognition of its students' outstanding performance on State tests.

Here in the District of Columbia, the Capital City Public Charter School serves 227 students and has more than 400 students on its waiting list after only four years of operation. The award-winning school uses an innovative approach to learning based on two research-based, nationally recognized education models that promote rigorous academic and character standards—and the results speak for themselves. Students at Capital City are making significant, measurable academic progress with solid gains in both reading and math. In 2003, Capital City achieved all six goals outlined for District charter schools on academic progress and excellence on the SAT-9 tests. Two new charter schools modeled after Capital City are expected to open in the District this fall, further increasing options for students and parents.

These are but a few of the success stories in the charter school movement, which includes a wide range of schools serving a variety of different learning needs and styles, often at a lower cost than traditional public schools.

I expect that we will see the popularity of charter schools continue to expand. Two years ago, the President signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act, which gives parents in low-performing schools the option to transfer their children to another public school. No Child Left Behind also provides school districts with the option of converting low-performing schools into charter schools. I believe these provisions will strengthen the charter school movement by creating more opportunities for charter school development. And as parents exercise their right to school choice and "vote with their feet", the demand for charter schools will increase.

I commend the ever-growing number of people involved in the charter school movement, from parents and teachers to community leaders and members of the business community. Together, they have led the charge in education reform and have started a revolution with the potential to transform our system of public education. Districts with a large number of charter schools have reported that they are becoming more customer service-oriented, increasing interaction with parents, and creating new education programs, many of which are similar to those offered by charter schools. These improvements benefit all our students, not just those who choose charter schools.

I encourage my colleagues to visit a charter school this week to witness firsthand the ways in which these innovative schools are making a difference, both in the lives of the students they serve as well as in the community in which they reside.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today as an original cosponsor of this resolution to support the designation of May 3 through May 7, 2004 as National Charter Schools Week. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution to recognize and honor the success of charters schools across the nation. I strongly believe that charter schools enrich our nation and enhance our public education system by providing diverse and innovative educational options for parents and their children.

Currently, nearly 3,000 charter schools are operating in 37 States and the District of Columbia and are serving about 750,000 students. We must continue to sponsor and encourage the development of charter schools. The fact is that nearly 40 percent of charter schools report having a waiting list. Indeed, with these students, we could fill over 1,000 new charter schools.

One of the many positive aspects of the charter movement is that it has managed to bring together educators, parents, community activities, business leaders, and politicians from across the political spectrum to support a common goal of better educating our children by offering more choice and more accountability within our public schools. In many cases, charter schools are built from the ground up by educational leaders and thinkers, working with teachers, parents and local leaders, to reinvent the public school with fresh ideas and expanded options. To their credit, studies have shown that student achievement gains in public schools are substantial and that charter schools are serving a higher percentage of low-income and minority students than the traditional school system.

Now, more than ever, we must continue to support and encourage the charter movement to give parents and children meaningful public school choices, particularly to children in low-performing schools. I am, therefore, most pleased to join my distinguished colleague from New Hampshire, Mr. GREGG, along with Senators CARPER, DURBIN, DEWINE, COLEMAN, LANDRIEU, DOLE, SUNUNU, DOMENICI, CRAIG, ALEXANDER and FRIST, in recognizing the success of charter schools and the value they add to public education. I also commend the Charter School Leadership Council and express my full support for the activities planned this week to celebrate charter schools, teachers and developers, and the parents and children they serve.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 351) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 351

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

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

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public entity that are responding to the needs of our communities, families, and students and promoting 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 under 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, routinely measure parental satisfaction levels, and 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, 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 impact, achievements, and innovations of charter schools: Now, therefore, be it—

*Resolved, That—*

(1) the Senate 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 Senate supports the fifth annual National Charter Schools Week; and

(3) it is the sense of the Senate 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 weeklong celebration in communities throughout the United States.