

that the bill can go on to the White House for the President's signature.

What is the Certified State Mediation Program? When producers and the USDA are in disagreement regarding loans, wetlands remediation, conservation compliance, grazing, pesticides, and other issues deemed appropriate by the Secretary of Agriculture, any State with a program can allow a mediator to help solve the differences between the producers and USDA. Both sides must agree to the mediator chosen to help resolve the dispute.

Mediators can only help reach an agreement that both sides agree to abide by. The mediators are not arbitrators whose decisions are legally enforceable. The mediators work to find consensus. If the two sides involved in the dispute cannot reach agreement, they still have all the legal options available to them. States that decide to participate in the program must go through a certification process and provide 30 percent of the program's operating costs.

The program is authorized to spend up to \$7.5 million per year but, in 2004, only \$3,950,000 was needed to operate the program in over 30 States. The program provides a great deal of bang for the buck and has been highly successful and useful.

The USDA's Farm Service Agency, FSA, works with States to ensure that their mediation programs are meeting all required standards, and it also helps those States that are interested in becoming certified to navigate and complete the approval process. One of the most important aspects of the program is that it provides strict confidentiality for those who decide to use the mediation program.

I have a breakdown of the States that are currently certified mediation States and the amount of money they received in 2004, I am happy to make that information available to any interested Member.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on S. 643 to ensure that an extremely practical and cost-efficient program continues to be utilized.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I also rise today in strong support of S. 643, which is the companion legislation of H.R. 1930 introduced by my distinguished colleague on the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS).

This legislation would extend the authorization for the State Mediation Grant Program carried out by USDA's Farm Service Agency to provide Federal matching grants to State mediation programs.

Currently 32 States, including my home State of South Dakota, are certified to receive matching funds under this program, and two more States are working on becoming certified. To re-

ceive Federal funding, a State program must meet certain criteria and have at least a 30 percent match in State funding.

This program was created in 1987 as a result of the credit crisis facing agriculture in the mid-1980s. Since its inception, an original intent of dealing with credit and loan disputes, Congress has expanded its scope to cover a number of other issues stemming from farm program participation, everything from wetland determinations to commodity program eligibility and pesticide drift.

Early on, leaders in South Dakota recognized the value that such a program could provide to the farmers, ranchers, and lenders in our State, and they created a program in 1988 to deal with agricultural credit disputes. It has been a resounding success. In the more than 16 years that the South Dakota Department of Agriculture has operated its mediation program, it has received more than 4,500 requests for mediation.

In South Dakota, mediation is available for agricultural credit disputes involving any amount of money. However, a creditor must submit to mediation in any credit dispute involving more than \$50,000.

This popular program provides many benefits to both agricultural borrowers and lenders in many States across the country. We all know that lending disputes can become contentious, and this program enables participants to negotiate and create their own mutually agreeable solutions to such disputes.

Also, the cost of mediation is much less than the formal appeals process at USDA, averaging less than \$700 per year, as opposed to the thousands of dollars it can cost to go through the National Appeals Division. The length of time to reach conclusions is also much shorter, normally several days, in contrast to appeals cases that can stretch for months.

Mediation works because it is a time-saving and affordable alternative to litigation and appeals. It also promotes communication between disputing parties rather than confrontation and animosity. And, in my communications with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture staff, mediation generally results in more successful and enduring resolution to most credit disputes.

This program has worked for farmers and agricultural lenders in South Dakota and across the country for almost 20 years, and I am pleased to support S. 643 to extend the authorization of this program through 2010.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 643.

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. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Madam 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 643, the bill just considered.

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

There was no objection.

COMMENDING THE ESTABLISHMENT IN COLLEGE POINT, NEW YORK, OF THE FIRST KINDERGARTEN IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 47) commending the establishment in College Point, New York, of the first kindergarten in the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 47

Whereas in 1854, Conrad Poppenhusen, a successful businessman from Germany, built a factory in College Point, Queens, New York, and, breaking with many entrepreneurs of his time, worked to create an environment beneficial to the immigrant community, which included schools;

Whereas the Poppenhusen Institute was established in 1868 with a \$100,000 donation;

Whereas the Poppenhusen Institute was to serve the fundamental educational needs of the community and began as a free adult evening school for the residents of Flushing Town;

Whereas in 1870, the Poppenhusen Institute's services expanded to serve as the first free, public kindergarten in the United States for the children of Mr. Poppenhusen's factory and the community;

Whereas children who attend a high-quality kindergarten demonstrate higher levels of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills than those who do not attend kindergarten;

Whereas a number of studies, including studies commissioned by the Department of Education, demonstrate that children enrolled in kindergarten more rapidly acquire the knowledge and skills integral to succeed in school and life;

Whereas the United States is a stronger, better place because of the children who are able to enrich their academic and social development through free kindergartens across the country;

Whereas for some children, kindergarten is the first common ground where they interact with students from a myriad of cultural, economic, racial, and religious backgrounds to learn about their world, each other, and themselves; and

Whereas universal, free, high-quality kindergarten for the Nation's children provides benefits both to these children and to society at large: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress commends the Poppenhusen Institute and the College Point community for establishing the first free, public kindergarten in the United States; and

(2) the Congress supports the strong beginnings kindergartens across the United States provide for the Nation's children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 47.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 47 commending the establishment of the first free public kindergarten in the United States. Madam Speaker, we can all agree on the merits of early education to the academic success of America's children. From the time that Conrad Poppenhusen offered free, public kindergarten to his community in College Point, New York, millions of American children have benefited from a foundational first year of school.

Kindergarten is a common experience for most American children. Today, 98 percent of children of kindergarten age in America attend kindergarten programs for at least half of the school day, and a growing number of schools, today about 60 percent, now offer full-day kindergarten programs. At age 5, the age at which most children enter kindergarten, children's development varies greatly. Because they often begin with a range of knowledge and skills, the kindergarten experience can substantially reduce educational disparities and help build a foundation for future school success.

Research demonstrates that children generally develop both cognitive and noncognitive knowledge and skills during the kindergarten year. In the year 2000, the National Center For Education Statistics, a research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, published findings from a large-scale study to evaluate the effectiveness of kindergarten. The study showed that after a year of kindergarten, children demonstrate a greater understanding of reading and mathematics concepts, as well as specific knowledge and skills. By the end of the kindergarten year, nearly all children recognized letters,

numbers, and shapes, and an increased number of children can add and subtract numbers.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for recognizing the importance of kindergarten and the contribution of Conrad Poppenhusen for establishing the first free, public American kindergarten.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of House concurrent resolution 47, which recognizes the establishment of the first free, public kindergarten in the United States located at College Point, Queens, New York.

I am pleased to manage the time on this legislation, which is offered by my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) who represents College Point, Queens, here in the House of Representatives.

The history of kindergarten in America has been colorful. Many areas of the country can claim credit for advancing education of our youth through kindergarten classes. From Wisconsin to Massachusetts to New York, many folks have had a hand in developing kindergarten. However, Queens, New York is home to the first free, public kindergarten class, and it is proper today, Madam Speaker, that we honor that achievement. Public kindergarten has played a meaningful role in the lives of many Americans, including the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the author of this legislation, as well as me.

For many children in Missouri, in New York, and throughout the countryside, kindergarten is the first place in which students interact with youth from many cultural backgrounds and where they learn about the world into which they were born. Kindergarten also reinforces and builds reading and math skills which are important tools for our children to have when advancing through the educational system.

The establishment of the first free, public kindergarten in College Point, Queens, New York, has made our Nation stronger.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), and I thank the House for considering this bill today.

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today the House considers H. Con. Res. 47, Commending the Establishment in College Point, New York, of the First Kindergarten in the United States.

The resolution honors the first free Kindergarten established in the United States in 1870 by Conrad Poppenhusen. I would like to note for the record that Margarethe Meyer Schurz—wife of Carl Schurz—opened the first Kindergarten in the United States in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1856.

The following is an article from the August 19, 1998 Capital Times (Madison, WI) detailing the work of Margarethe Schurz that led to the first U.S. Kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin.

[From the Capital Times, Aug. 19, 1998]

AUG. 27, 1832: 1ST KINDERGARTEN SPROUTS; SCHURZ WANTED THE BEST EDUCATION FOR HER DAUGHTER

(By Kathy Maeglin)

As a young mother in Watertown in 1856, Margarethe Schurz wanted her little daughter to have the educational advantages she would have had back in their native Germany.

So Margarethe invited four little cousins to come to the house each day for games, singing and crafts. She had been an early student of the "kindergarten" movement in Germany, and now she was employing what she had learned in her own frontier home.

As word of Margarethe's "class" spread, friends petitioned her to let their own children join in. The group moved to a more convenient location downtown, and thus the first kindergarten in America was created.

As Hannah Werwath Swart wrote in her biography "Margarethe Meyer Schurz," Margarethe's background likely would have led her to establish the first American kindergarten even if she had not had any children of her own.

Margarethe Meyer was born on Aug. 27, 1832, to a wealthy merchant family in Hamburg, Germany.

In 1850, when she was a teenager, her older sister Bertha became involved in a Jewish-Christian women's group that had decided to focus on training young children as a way to promote idealism and understanding among all people.

The group invited Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel, the man who created the first kindergarten in 1840, to come to Hamburg to help them establish one there. Margarethe listened to Froebel's lectures for two years, thereby gaining the knowledge and inspiration that would motivate her later in life.

When she was 19, she moved to London to run a kindergarten that had been established there by her sister Bertha. It was there that she met Carl Schurz, a German revolutionary who had fled his native country.

Carl Schurz was determined to migrate to America, where he could have the free citizenship he so desired and where much of his family had already gone. So after their marriage, the two idealistic young Germans set sail for America.

After living in Philadelphia for a few years, the couple eventually settled in Watertown, which at the time was the second largest city in Wisconsin.

It was shortly after they arrived in Watertown that Margarethe started the activities that would result in the kindergarten (which is German for "children's garden").

But Watertown did not turn out to be the major railroad center that Carl had hoped when he chose to settle there. So Carl made the most of his speaking skills and passion for politics, and he ended up serving as a minister to Spain, a general in the Civil War and finally a U.S. senator from Missouri.

Since her husband's career took her away from Wisconsin, Margarethe entrusted the continuation of her kindergarten to Carl's cousin, Miss Juessen.

Others took over the school in later years and it continued until World War I, when it was closed because the teacher refused to teach in any language other than German, which had become unpopular.

Margarethe Schurz died at the age of 43 on March 15, 1876, in Washington, D.C. But her legacy lives on in schools throughout the country as young minds are cultivated in kindergartens, which Margarethe once described as gardens "whose plants are human."

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Resolution H.

Con. Res. 47, which recognizes the establishment of the first, free public kindergarten in the United States, located in College Point, Queens, New York.

As a native of Queens, I grew up learning about the history of this community, which includes the creation of the first free public kindergarten in the United States.

The community of College Point, just a stone's throw from LaGuardia Airport, Shay Stadium—home of the Mets—and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park—the home of the U.S. Open Tennis tournament—this community was one of the first seeds in the creation of public education in America. Something that represents the Great Equalizer in American society.

It all started in 1854, when Conrad Poppenhusen, a businessman from Germany, built a factory in College Point.

There, he stressed an environment in which his immigrant workers could educate themselves in order to succeed financially, socially, and, most significantly, intellectually.

Just as Henry Ford paid his employees high wages so they, in turn, could purchase his cars, Conrad Poppenhusen represented another industrial genius—that if educating his workforce to make them and their families more successful people in the community.

Fourteen years later, in 1868, Mr. Poppenhusen continued his illustrious educational work by donating \$100,000 and establishing the Poppenhusen Institute.

His Institute sustained his original educational mission and expanded on it, by promoting the education of all adults from the greater community—not just his employees.

In 1870, the Poppenhusen Institute once again expanded its educational services to include the first, free, public kindergarten in the United States, a seminal moment in American education and something we celebrate today with this resolution.

The history of kindergarten has been a colorful one in America . . . and one that is big enough for all of us to share, recognize, and honor today.

My friends from Wisconsin will happily point out that the first kindergarten in the United States was based in Watertown, Wisconsin and was founded in 1856 by Margarethe Meyer Schurz.

This private, German-language kindergarten represented a landmark in the educational development of young Americans and we all salute her accomplishments.

Additionally, any debate on the history of kindergarten would be incomplete without reference to the works of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, a Massachusetts educator who opened the first English-language kindergarten in the United States in 1860.

When she opened her kindergarten in 1860, the concept of providing formal schooling for children younger than six was largely confined to German practice.

These educational pioneers led to the creation, by Conrad Poppenhusen, of the Nation's first, free public kindergarten—a sweeping educational development and a strong basis for the kindergartens we all know and recognize in our country today.

It has always been known that education is the Great American Equalizer—the first step in young Americans lives to live the American Dream.

The actions of Conrad Poppenhusen and his revolutionary kindergarten—the first kinder-

garten free and open to all, helped engrain the idea of free and public kindergartens throughout our great Nation—opening up the ideals of the American Dream to tens of millions of Americans since then.

The American Dream of using education as a foundation for supporting oneself, one's family. The American Dream of using education as a foundation for a good job, home ownership, and a brighter future overall.

This important moment, when this kindergarten opened in 1870 in College Point, Queens, NY, is all the more profound today, as Department of Education studies show the impact of kindergarten on the children that attend.

Children who are enrolled in kindergarten benefit immensely from the knowledge and skills they learn, while simultaneously profiting from their interaction with children of a similar age.

The reading and math skills, which students learn in kindergarten, are invaluable to a child's later education.

Moreover, for many children, kindergarten is one of the first places in which they interact with students from a multitude of cultural, economic, racial, and religious backgrounds. These early interactions are pivotal in establishing relationships, which promote awareness of the importance of numerous cultures and ideas, something particularly important in Queens, New York, which is seen as one of the most diverse areas of the country.

The effort that began in College Point today remains a significant feature of our education system.

One of the greatest aspects of our nation is that through education, which often starts in kindergarten, each successive generation of children can succeed.

Quite simply, the establishment of the first free, public kindergarten in College Point has made our nation a stronger, better place for generations.

I want to close by recognizing the continued importance of the Poppenhusen Institute and those who serve it. This notable list extends from the first days of class to the work that persists. This list must include the first teacher, Bertha Ploedterl, all the way to Susan Brustmann, the current Executive Director, and James Trent, the President of the Board of Directors.

Today, the work of these individuals and this community has resulted in activities, exhibits, and programs for people of all ages. Programs cover the fields of music, drama, karate, stress reduction.

There are exhibits, such as one on the tragic events of September 11th as well as another on Native Americans.

Individuals can take tours reviewing the archives of College Point to learn, not only about the history of this community, but about our shared American history, in this area, one of the most diverse and welcoming in the world.

Additionally, the Institute collects the living histories of area seniors, so that they are documented for future generations.

While the earliest days of this kindergarten will be remembered for being truly significant to New York and our nation, the true testament to the significance of this Institute is in the proud legacy that continues to live on through its works.

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

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 47, as amended.

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

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "A concurrent resolution commending the establishment in College Point, New York, of the first free, public kindergarten in the United States."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1430

HONORING THE SIGMA CHI FRATERNITY ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 163) honoring the Sigma Chi Fraternity on the occasion of its 150th Anniversary, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 163

Whereas the Sigma Chi Fraternity was founded in 1855 by 7 young men at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio in order to establish "an association for the development of the nobler powers of the mind, the finer feelings of the heart, and for the promotion of friendship and congeniality of feeling";

Whereas the Founders of the Fraternity believed that admission to the Fraternity should include men of good character and fair ability with ambitious purposes, congenial dispositions, good morals, a high sense of honor, and a deep sense of personal responsibility;

Whereas for 150 years, the Sigma Chi Fraternity has played an integral role in the positive development in the character and education of hundreds of thousands of young men;

Whereas the brothers of Sigma Chi, being of different talents, temperaments, and convictions, have shared countless friendships and a common belief in the founding ideals of the Fraternity;

Whereas the Sigma Chi Fraternity experience has served as a foundation for post-collegiate success and achievement in all fields of endeavor, from the sciences to education to business to professional athletics to public service;

Whereas the Sigma Chi Fraternity has 202,600 active brothers in 219 active chapters at colleges and universities in 2 countries, making it one of the most highly respected and well-regarded national fraternities in the world; and

Whereas Sigma Chi brothers continue to enrich and contribute to the quality of life in their communities by volunteering innumerable hours of service to nonprofit activities and organizations locally and, at the national level, to the Children's Miracle Network, an alliance of 165 hospitals and healthcare facilities across the United States and Canada that provide needy children with critical healthcare services: Now, therefore, be it