

Whereas the overturning of Fred Korematsu's conviction and the findings of Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians influenced the decision by Congress to pass the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (50 U.S.C. App. 1989b et seq.) to request a Presidential apology and symbolic payment of compensation to persons of Japanese ancestry who lost liberty or property because of discriminatory action by the Federal Government;

Whereas on August 10, 1988, President Reagan signed that Act into law, stating, "[H]ere we admit a wrong; here we reaffirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under the law";

Whereas on January 15, 1998, President Clinton awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award of the United States, to Fred Korematsu, stating, "In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for millions of souls: Plessy, Brown, Parks. To that distinguished list, today we add the name of Fred Korematsu.";

Whereas Fred Korematsu remained a tireless advocate for civil liberties and justice throughout his life, particularly speaking out against racial discrimination and violence targeting Arab, Muslim, South Asian, and Sikh Americans in the wake of the September 11, 2001, tragedy, and cautioning the Federal Government against repeating mistakes of the past by singling out individuals for heightened scrutiny on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion;

Whereas on March 30, 2005, Fred Korematsu died at the age of 86 in Larkspur, California; and

Whereas Fred Korematsu was a role model for all Americans who love the United States and the promises contained in the Constitution, and his strength and perseverance serve as an inspiration for all people striving for equality and justice; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors Fred T. Korematsu for his loyalty and patriotism to the United States, his work to advocate for the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans, and his dedication to justice and equality; and

(2) expresses its deepest condolences to his family, friends, and supporters on his death.

CONGRATULATING CHARTER SCHOOLS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 127, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 127) 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 I am joined by my colleagues Senators LIEBERMAN, FRIST, LANDRIEU, SUNUNU, ALEXANDER, DEMINT, DOLE, VITTER, BURR, in support of this resolution to designate the week of May 1 through May 7, 2005 as National Charter Schools Week. This year marks the 13th anniversary of the opening of the nation's first charter school in Minnesota. Since that time, charter

schools have experienced tremendous growth as more and more parents discover for themselves why surveys show such high levels of parental satisfaction with charter schools. Today, there are almost 3,300 charter schools serving nearly 900,000 students in 40 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, up from 3,000 schools serving 750,000 students just 1 year ago. Nearly 40 percent of these schools report having waiting lists, and there are enough students on these waiting lists to fill another 1,000 average-sized charter schools.

Charter schools serve a unique role in public education. They are designed to be free from many of 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 strictly accountable for student performance—if they fail to educate their students well and meet the goals of their charters, they are closed. Most importantly, charter schools are raising student achievement. Research has shown that charter school students are more likely to be proficient in reading and math than students in neighboring traditional schools, and that the greatest achievement gains can be seen among African American, Hispanic, and low-income students. Research also shows that the longer charter schools have been in operation, the more they outdistance traditional scores in student performance.

Since each charter school represents the unique vision of its founders, these schools vary greatly, but all strive for excellence. There are countless examples of charter schools that are having an enormous impact on their students both academically and personally, and on the surrounding community.

For example, the Vaughn Next Century Learning Center in San Fernando, CA, serves students in grades K-12, 97 percent of whom qualify for free lunch, and 87 percent of whom speak limited English. Fifteen years ago, the Vaughn Street School was a haven for drug deals and violence, and students' test scores were the lowest in the San Fernando Valley. Since it converted to a charter school in 1993, Vaughn rose from the ninth percentile in language arts and the eleventh percentile in math to become a National Blue Ribbon School. Test scores have gone up 330 percent in the past 5 years alone. As a result of the autonomy granted by converting to charter status, Vaughn has been able to redirect considerable resources to programmatic efforts, including an extended school year and comprehensive afterschool program. The school has also expanded its offerings to the greater community, including a school-based clinic, family center, business co-op, and library.

Cincinnati's W.E.B. DuBois Academy, serving children in grades 1 through 8,

recently became the only elementary school in the city and one of only 102 schools in Ohio to be recognized as a "School of Promise." The recognition follows a period of remarkable improvement for the low-income school, which now boasts that 100 percent of its students passed State tests in six areas. The school has met the State's requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress, and is closing the achievement gap—and has generated a lengthy waiting list along the way. The W.E.B. DuBois Academy attributes its success to extended research-based instructional time, performance-based pay for teachers, strict discipline, and a rewards system that reinforces outstanding academic performance. Says founder Wilson H. Willard III, "We've implemented a research-based system that addresses the constraints that compromise traditional education. In doing so, we've generated successful academic results for hundreds of our students. . . . defying convention has built success for the school, and most importantly, each student in it. In the end, that's what really matters."

These are but a few of the promising schools in the charter 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 am pleased that four such schools have launched in New Hampshire this year, ranging from the State's first school for deaf and hard of hearing students to academies focused on the arts, technology, and business. Several more schools will soon open their doors in the Granite State, offering additional options for parents and students, including those most at risk.

I expect that we will see charter schools continue to expand both in New Hampshire and nationally. Three 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 charters 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 are helping 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 during National Charter Schools 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 communities in which they reside.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 127) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 127

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 3,300 charter schools are now operating in 40 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and serving approximately 900,000 students;

Whereas over the last 10 years, Congress has provided more than \$1,500,000,000 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 sixth annual National Charter Schools Week, to be held May 1 through 7, 2005, is an event sponsored by charter schools and grassroots charter school organizations across the United States to recognize the significant impacts, achievements, and innovations of charter schools: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the 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 sixth 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on today's Executive Calendar: Nos. 55, 56, 60, 64, 65, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk. I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Charles F. Conner, of Indiana, to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Howard J. Krongard, of New Jersey, to be Inspector General, Department of State.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Luis Luna, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

Major General Don T. Riley, United States Army, to be a Member and President of the Mississippi River Commission.

Brigadier General William T. Grisoli, United States Army, to be a Member of the Mississippi River Commission.

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

COAST GUARD

PN304 COAST GUARD nominations (2) beginning Curtis L. Sumrok, and ending Jed R. Boba, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 14, 2005.

PN305 COAST GUARD nominations (292) beginning Michael T. Cunningham, and ending David K. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 14, 2005.

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

PN390 NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION nominations

(15) beginning Paul Andrew Kunicki, and ending Lindsey M. Vandenberg, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 4, 2005.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2005

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, Thursday, April 28. I further ask that following the prayer and the pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate then proceed to a period for morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the final 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee; provided that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 3, the highway bill.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Tomorrow, following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the highway bill. We will continue the amending process, and the chairman and ranking member will work through amendments as they are offered throughout the day. Rollcall votes are expected in relation to those amendments. On behalf of the majority leader, I encourage Senators who wish to offer amendments to the bill to contact the bill managers as soon as possible.

In addition to the highway bill, we will also act on a budget reconciliation conference report, should it become available. The Senate may also act on any nominations available for floor consideration.

Just moments ago, I filed two cloture motions with respect to two Cabinet-level nominations. These votes will occur on Friday of this week, unless some other agreement is reached prior to that time. Therefore, Senators should expect a busy day tomorrow and Friday, with rollcall votes possible throughout as we complete our work prior to the recess.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator CARPER and the remarks of the distinguished Democratic leader, who is on the floor.