

years. While many schools initiate Character Counts programs there are also many other organizations that develop character based programming. I would like to take the time to recognize some of the successful programs we have had in New Mexico for 2007.

Character Counts works in New Mexico because it is truly a community partnership. There was a brilliant example last week during the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. The Balloon Fiesta staff hosted 60 selected school kids for 2 days of festive activities. Northrop Grumman provided tethered balloon rides. Meals on Wheels fed the young people lunch, and the Albuquerque Balloon Museum gave some of the students a tour of the exhibits to show them the history of hot air balloons. These were fun days, but the children certainly learned about civic responsibility with some of our state's top business and community leaders. A once in a lifetime experience for many of these kids, and exposure to adults demonstrating respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship, and caring; the "Six Pillars of Character."

During the week of October 21, I hope everyone takes the time to participate in a Character Counts event in their local area. I know in New Mexico we will be having some special celebrations. On October 19 in Albuquerque, NM, there will be a Character is the Heart of New Mexico Parade, put on by Duranes Elementary beginning at the Old Town Plaza and ending at the Albuquerque Museum. On October 25, Roswell will celebrate 13 years of Character Counts with a Character Counts Super Celebration at Roswell High School. And on October 27, Gallup will celebrate with a Character Counts Parade starting at Fourth and Coal and ending at Lincoln Elementary School. All of these organizations and schools as well as the many others not mentioned here, are to be commended for their hard work in developing these programs and spreading the message that character truly does count.

I believe this program is making a difference in my home State and across the country. I want to encourage more people to become involved with the Character Counts program, but most of all I hope individuals will take the time to reflect on what the "Six Pillars of Character" mean to them.

I hope all of my colleagues will support this effort.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 the well-being of the United States requires that the young people of the United States become an involved, caring citizenry with good character;

Whereas the character education of children has become more urgent as violence by and against youth increasingly threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character and the positive effects that good character can have in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and that, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by institutions and individuals that influence youth to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas, although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play an important role in fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the importance of character education in preparing young people to play a role in determining the future of the United States;

Whereas effective character education is based on core ethical values, which form the foundation of democratic society;

Whereas examples of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and honesty;

Whereas elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society, and, therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character;

Whereas Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those who have an interest in the education and training of the young people of the United States, to adopt the elements of character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society;

Whereas many schools in the United States recognize the need, and have taken steps, to integrate the values of their communities into their teaching activities; and

Whereas the establishment of National Character Counts Week, during which individuals, families, schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, civic groups, and other organizations focus on character education, is of great benefit to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning October 21, 2007, as "National Character Counts Week"; and

(2) calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups—

(A) to embrace the elements of character identified by local schools and communities, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and

(B) to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED STATES-MONGOLIA RELATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 352, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 352) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 20th anniversary of United States-Mongolia relations.

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

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 352) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 352

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations with the Government of Mongolia in January 1987 and established its first embassy in Ulaanbaatar in June 1988;

Whereas the United States and Mongolia are both fully democratic states committed to the rule of law;

Whereas, in 1991, the United States established normal trade relations with Mongolia and began a Peace Corps program that now boasts approximately 100 volunteers;

Whereas the United States has a continued commitment to Mongolia's economic and political development and has contributed over \$150,000,000 in aid for that purpose since 1991;

Whereas the United States has supported Mongolia's participation in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank;

Whereas the United States and Mongolia strengthened their trade relationship through the signing of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in 2004 to boost bilateral commercial ties and resolve trade disputes;

Whereas Mongolia continues to work with the United States to combat global terrorism and, since April 2003, has contributed engineers, troops, and medical personnel to Operation Iraqi Freedom and has participated in training National Army artillery units in Afghanistan;

Whereas Mongolia has demonstrated an expanding desire to join the United States in global peacekeeping activities by sending a contingent of 250 soldiers to protect the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a platoon to participate in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission in Kosovo, and personnel to serve as United Nations observers in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea;

Whereas the United States and Mongolia share an interest in promoting peaceful cooperation in south central Asia; and

Whereas Mongolia was named eligible for Millennium Challenge Compact assistance on May 6, 2004, submitted its official proposal on October 13, 2005, and had its proposal approved by the Millennium Challenge Corporation on September 12, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the strength and endurance of the partnership between the United States and Mongolia should be acknowledged and celebrated;

(2) the United States should encourage continued economic cooperation with Mongolia, including in areas such as mining, construction, information technology, tourism, and meat processing, to the betterment of both our economies;

(3) the United States should continue to work with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank to improve Mongolia's economic system;

(4) the United States should provide Mongolia assistance under the Millennium Challenge Compact and work to finalize the compact in a timely fashion; and

(5) the United States should encourage greater academic and cultural exchanges with Mongolia.

EXPRESSING IMPORTANCE OF A SOVEREIGN, DEMOCRATIC, AND PROSPEROUS LEBANON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 353, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 353) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the importance of a sovereign, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon and the need for free and fair presidential elections in Lebanon without intimidation or foreign interference.

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

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 353) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 353

Whereas, in 2004, the term of the current President of Lebanon, Emile Lahoud, was extended through the interference of the Government of Syria in the internal affairs of the Government of Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, adopted on September 2, 2004, called for free and fair presidential elections in Lebanon conducted in accordance with the constitution of Lebanon and without foreign interference and influence;

Whereas such a presidential election has not yet occurred;

Whereas the Parliament of Lebanon is preparing to elect a new president of Lebanon before the November 24, 2007, conclusion of the mandate of the current President;

Whereas the Governments of Syria and Iran, through their proxies in Lebanon, have sought undue influence over the election of the next president of Lebanon;

Whereas the preparation for these elections has thus far been characterized by violence and intimidation tactics, and on September 19, 2007, Member of the Parliament of Lebanon Antoine Ghanem became the 8th Lebanese leader to be assassinated since 2005;

Whereas the democratically-elected Government of Lebanon has been under steady attack by domestic and foreign elements and forces that have been instigating civil unrest, disrupting the operation of the cabinet and Parliament, and perpetrating acts of terror against the people of Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted on August 11, 2006, reiterated "strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders", and called on states to "take the necessary measures to prevent . . . the sale or supply to any entity or individual in Lebanon of arms and related materiel of all types";

Whereas President Lahoud has threatened to create an unconstitutional rival cabinet and hand over power to it if the opposition is not satisfied with the results of the constitutional electoral process;

Whereas the Governments of Syria and Iran, in clear contravention of numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions, have violated Lebanon's sovereignty by providing arms to illegitimate militias in Lebanon and to other terrorist organizations;

Whereas the armed forces of Lebanon are protecting Lebanon and its people from terrorist organizations like Fatah al Islam;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1757 established a Special Tribunal for Lebanon, to be convened outside of Lebanon, to try those accused of the assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafiq Hariri and others; and

Whereas a sovereign, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon is in the national security interest of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls for free and fair presidential elections in Lebanon, conducted according to the constitution of Lebanon and free from foreign interference and influence or the use of intimidation tactics;

(2) supports ongoing efforts by leaders in Lebanon to reach agreement on a presidential candidate committed to upholding Lebanon's sovereignty and independence;

(3) condemns the Governments of Syria and Iran for their undue material interference in the internal political affairs of Lebanon, including in the election of a new president, and for their repeated violations of the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, and calls on the Governments of Syria and Iran to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, particularly with respect to preventing unauthorized shipment of arms into Lebanon;

(4) affirms its strong support for the armed forces of Lebanon as they work to secure Lebanon against terrorists and illegal armed militias, and conveys its readiness to provide support to assist in these ends;

(5) urges the Secretary of State to continue efforts in support of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon to end impunity for political assassinations, including assisting in efforts to convene the Special Tribunal as soon as possible, affirms its readiness to continue to provide material support to this cause, and calls on all countries to make timely and generous contributions to this end; and

(6) urges the President to use all peaceful means at the disposal of the United States to help promote an independent, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon, including increased diplomatic coordination with key partners in Europe and the Middle East, and supports efforts by the United States to provide ongoing and substantial assistance for reconstruction efforts in Lebanon.

SUPPORTING "LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL"

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 51, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 51) supporting "Lights on Afterschool", a national celebration of after school programs.

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

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD)

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today Senator ENSIGN and I, along with 29 cosponsors, are submitting a concurrent resolution with the House of Representatives designating October 18, 2007 as Lights On Afterschool Day. Lights on Afterschool brings students, parents, educators, lawmakers, and community and business leaders together to celebrate afterschool programs. This year, more than 1 million Americans are expected to attend about 7,500 events designed to raise awareness and support for these much needed programs. In addition, Lights On Afterschool 2007 marks the 10th anniversary of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the primary Federal initiative supporting afterschool programs.

Approximately 90 percent of parents say that having a safe, positive place where their child can go after school will improve their child's well-being. However, 14 million school-age children—or 25 percent of all school-age children—are left unsupervised after school and miss the opportunity to attend a safe, positive place that supports their growth and well-being.

Quality afterschool programs benefit youth, families, and communities. Students enrolled in afterschool programs are more likely to be engaged and go farther in education. They are also more likely to avoid risky behavior and criminal activity. Afterschool programs help parents successfully balance their work and home-life. In addition, these programs promote adult involvement with youth, which helps to create more cohesive communities invested in the future of our children.

In our work on the Senate Afterschool Caucus, Senator ENSIGN and I have been working for more than three years to impress upon our colleagues the importance of afterschool and are proud to say that 35 of our colleagues have joined the Caucus. We hope that they, along with other Members of the Congress, will join us on October 18 to celebrate the importance of afterschool programs in their communities back home.●