

and Financial Institution Subcommittee Ranking Member BIGGERT for their cosponsorship and support in bringing this important bill to the floor today.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4049, the Money Service Business Act of 2007, and ask for its immediate passage. We do need to pass this legislation.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is important and long overdue. Despite expressions of concern by Members of this Congress asking both regulators and financial institutions to ensure fair treatment of money service businesses, or what we refer to as MSBs, financial institutions continue to be uncomfortable offering accounts to MSBs, and, in fact, most banks have discontinued offering such accounts, which is the issue.

Madam Speaker, the banks have good reason to be concerned. MSBs provide a valuable service to consumers, and in some instances are the only financial service providers available to them. But the regulatory regime that ensures that MSBs comply with all applicable laws to prevent the laundering of money or the financing of terror is muddled, to say the least.

After a series of regulatory actions in which banks were fined millions of dollars in connection with the accounts they offered MSBs, most banks felt they had to make a choice, either do their own on-site investigation of an MSB's anti-money laundering program, or live with the liability of not knowing how good or bad that particular program is.

Madam Speaker, banks are not regulators. And we should not expect them to act like regulators for a different industry. No one disagrees that banks and the MSBs should comply with all applicable anti-money laundering guidance; nonetheless, terminating account services to an entire industry could end up forcing its customers into the underground financial service. That in itself creates a significant money laundering risk.

The measure before us, drafted with a great deal of bipartisan cooperation by the gentlelady from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), one of the stars of this institution, and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), would set up a system in which the Treasury Secretary posts a set of guidelines MSBs would need to meet to satisfy anti-money laundering requirements. When they comply, MSBs would self-certify their compliance to their bank.

This self-certification function is balanced by strict penalties for those MSBs that misrepresent their compliance, and in no way would excuse banks from reporting any suspicious activity under the laws and regulations of the Bank Secrecy Act. But it would relieve banks of the requirement to be

the de facto regulator of MSBs, which is not the bank's job or obligation.

In reviewing this bill, the Department of Justice has raised a good point that I would like to emphasize. The bill requires the MSBs to certify, to the satisfaction of the Treasury Secretary, that they are in good compliance, but only requires them to file their certification with their banks. Madam Speaker, I think that among the regulations the Treasury Secretary posts to ensure compliance, the Secretary should require the MSBs to file a duplicate form with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network at Treasury where it would be studied for compliance and would be available for the DOJ to view as well.

□ 1645

Madam Speaker, while we are on this subject, I would like to make an additional point. Regulation of MSBs is a complex and not very effective patchwork of effort between the States and the Federal Government. While some States do a terrific job, some really don't. In the future I hope Congress can work to find a good solution to make thorough, uniform, and effective regulation of MSBs a reality. I know they would appreciate it. In the meantime, let's let the banks get back to providing accounts and doing what they do best.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is supported by both the MSBs and the banking industry and would benefit those who work hard and have limited resources. I urge my colleagues to agree to this commonsense solution to the bank discontinuance dilemma.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4049, the Money Service Business Act. This Act eliminates the regulatory burdens imposed on insured depository institutions and money services business and enhances the availability of transaction accounts at depository institutions for such businesses, and for other purposes. I support this bill and I encourage my colleagues to do likewise.

Check cashers, money transmitters, and other legally authorized and regulated money transmitting businesses (also designated as money services businesses) provide a wide range of necessary financial services and products to customers from all walks of life, including the under-banked and urban communities. Those services include domestic and international funds transfers, check cashing, money order and traveler's checks sales, and electronic bill payments.

Regulatory guidance issued by, and expectations of, the Federal banking agencies and the Secretary of Treasury urge insured depository institutions to conduct reviews of money services businesses' anti-money laundering compliance programs, placing such depository institutions in the position of quasi-regulators. Consequently, many insured depository institutions have refused or closed money services businesses' accounts in order either not to incur the burden, risk or potential liability for undertaking a de facto regulatory function, or else to avoid supervisory sanctions for not exercising such oversight. This trend endangers

the existence of legitimate, regulated money services businesses industry and the ability of such businesses to deliver financial services and products. Loss of depository institutions accounts by money services businesses threatens to drive the customer transactions of such businesses underground through unregulated channels, including bulk cash smuggling or other means.

It is critical to the interests of national security that transparency of money services business transactions be maintained by ensuring such businesses have a reasonable process to demonstrate to insured depository institutions the compliance by such businesses with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing obligations. Money services businesses are subject to Federal money laundering and terrorist financing control programs and reporting requirements as enforced by State and Federal regulators. These entities are authorized to conduct compliance oversight and to impose sanctions through licensing, registration or other powers.

These State and Federal regulators have committed to coordinate their supervision and enforcement of such money services business obligations.

Insured depository institutions and Federal banking regulators should be able to rely upon a regulatory process for conducting oversight of money services businesses' compliance. Accordingly, to eliminate regulatory burden imposed upon insured depository institutions and promote access by money services businesses to the banking system and to give full recognition to Federal and State agency authority to supervise and enforce money services businesses' compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing obligations and their implementing regulations, it is appropriate and necessary to provide for self-certification process established pursuant to this Act.

I support this Act and encourage my colleagues to support it also.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and will yell a hearty "yea" when asked for those who support this bill.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4049, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 364) Recognizing the Significance of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 364

Whereas people of Caribbean heritage are found in every State of the Union;

Whereas emigration from the Caribbean region to the American Colonies began as early as 1619 with the arrival of indentured workers in Jamestown, Virginia;

Whereas during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, a significant number of slaves from the Caribbean region were brought to the United States;

Whereas since 1820, millions of people have emigrated from the Caribbean region to the United States;

Whereas much like the United States, the countries of the Caribbean faced obstacles of slavery and colonialism and struggled for independence;

Whereas also like the United States, the people of the Caribbean region have diverse racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds;

Whereas the independence movements in many countries in the Caribbean region during the 1960s and the consequential establishment of independent democratic countries in the Caribbean strengthened ties between the region and the United States;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton, a founding father of the United States and the first Secretary of the Treasury, was born in the Caribbean;

Whereas there have been many influential Caribbean-Americans in the history of the United States, including Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, the pioneer settler of Chicago; Claude McKay, a poet of the Harlem Renaissance; James Weldon Johnson, the writer of the Black National Anthem; Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American Congresswoman and first African-American woman candidate for President; and Celia Cruz, the world-renowned queen of Salsa music;

Whereas the many influential Caribbean-Americans in the history of the United States also include Colin Powell, the first African-American Secretary of State; Sidney Poitier, the first African-American actor to receive the Academy Award for best actor in a leading role; Harry Belafonte, a musician, actor, and activist; Roberto Clemente, the first Latino inducted into the baseball hall of fame; and Al Roker, a meteorologist and television personality;

Whereas Caribbean-Americans have played an active role in the civil rights movement and other social and political movements in the United States;

Whereas Caribbean-Americans have contributed greatly to education, fine arts, business, literature, journalism, sports, fashion, politics, government, the military, music, science, technology, and other areas in the United States;

Whereas Caribbean-Americans share their culture through carnivals, festivals, music, dance, film, and literature that enrich the cultural landscape of the United States;

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean are important economic partners of the United States;

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean represent the United States third border;

Whereas the people of the Caribbean region share the hopes and aspirations of the people of the United States for peace and prosperity throughout the Western Hemisphere and the rest of the world;

Whereas in both June 2006 and June 2007, President George W. Bush issued a proclamation declaring June National Caribbean-American Heritage Month after the passage of H. Con. Res. 71 in the 109th Congress by both the Senate and the House of Representatives; and

Whereas June is an appropriate month to establish a Caribbean-American Heritage Month: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Caribbean-American Heritage Month;

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe Caribbean-American Heritage Month with appropriate ceremonies, celebrations, and activities; and

(3) affirms that—

(A) the contributions of Caribbean-Americans are a significant part of the history, progress, and heritage of the United States; and

(B) the ethnic and racial diversity of the United States enriches and strengthens the Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H. Con. Res. 364, a resolution that recognizes the significance of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

H. Con. Resolution 364, which has cosponsorship of 59 of our colleagues, was introduced by Representative BARBARA LEE of California on May 22, 2008. It was considered by and reported from the Oversight Committee on July 16, 2008, by voice vote.

Throughout the history of the United States, persons of Caribbean descent have made significant contributions in the shaping of America's culture and character. Caribbean-Americans have become one of our greatest leaders, entrepreneurs, and entertainers, including such individuals as Sidney Poitier, Harry Belafonte, Colin Powell, James Weldon Johnson, Shirley Chisholm, Marion Jones, Juan Carlos Finlay, Oscar de la Renta, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, and many others.

I would like to thank Representative LEE for introducing this resolution. It provides us with an important opportunity to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Caribbean-Americans to the history, progress, and heritage of the United States. It is essential that we in the House support our fellow Americans and agree to the resolution, H. Con. Res. 364, recognizing the significance of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of this resolution recognizing the significance of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

Since 2006 each June our Nation has celebrated the influence and contributions of Caribbean-Americans, and we pay tribute to the bonds of friendship that unite us to our third border to the east: the Caribbean nations. A captivating mosaic of racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds, Caribbean-Americans come from a heritage sharing many historical and economic ties to our great Nation. Enduring the yoke of colonialism, the trials of slavery, and ultimate freedom of independence, Caribbean nations mirror our vision of regional and global peace and prosperity.

Since first arriving in America in 1619, generations of Caribbean immigrants have enriched our Nation, weaving their vibrant culture, music, and rich traditions into our national fabric. Their talent, faith, and values helped shape the history of our country.

From Founding Father Alexander Hamilton to baseball legends such as Roberto Clemente and musical talents such as Bob Marley and Toots and the Maytals, they have strengthened the United States heritage. Their music enriches our ears and unique flavors warm our pallets. Their art and traditions enrich our souls.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution in honor of the contributions of the past, the enduring vibrance of the more than 5 million Americans that share a Caribbean heritage and the historical bonds that unite our nations.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. First, let me thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for yielding, for managing the floor this afternoon on this resolution, and also for your leadership and for your support.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my resolution, H. Con. Res. 364, recognizing June as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. This resolution acknowledges the important contributions which Caribbean-Americans have made to our Nation's history.

Let me begin by thanking Chairman WAXMAN of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee and Ranking Member TOM DAVIS for helping to bring this bipartisan resolution to the floor today. I also want to thank Congressman DANNY DAVIS for his tremendous leadership on the subcommittee and for his support of this bill. I would like to also recognize all of our colleagues, and there are so many of our colleagues here on both sides of the aisle, who have worked on issues related to the

Caribbean for many, many years. I would like to acknowledge the Institute for Caribbean Studies and all other Caribbean-American organizations that worked to make Caribbean-American Heritage Month a great success.

As a long-time supporter of the Caribbean and a frequent visitor to the region, I was very proud to see us celebrate this important commemorative month for the 3rd year this year. Since the resolution's initial passage by Congress in 2006, the President has issued a proclamation recognizing Caribbean-American Heritage Month in June, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

People of Caribbean heritage reside in every part of our country. Since 1820, millions of people have emigrated from the Caribbean region to the United States. Throughout United States history, we have been fortunate to benefit from countless individuals of Caribbean descent who have contributed to American government, politics, business, arts, education, and culture, including one of my personal heroes, the Honorable, our beloved, the late Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm.

Shirley Chisholm was a woman of Bajan and Guyanese descent who never forgot her roots in the Caribbean. She was the first African American woman elected to Congress and the first woman and first African American to run for President. My political involvement actually began as a volunteer during her historic presidential campaign in 1972. Through her mentorship, she strengthened my interest in addressing issues of importance to the African Diaspora both here in the United States and abroad, including the Caribbean and in Africa.

In addition to Shirley Chisholm, during Caribbean-American Heritage Month, we also recognize people like Alexander Hamilton, Hazel Scott, Sidney Poitier, Wyclef Jean, Eric Holder, Colin Powell, Harry Belafonte, Celia Cruz; and, of course, our colleagues, daughters of the Caribbean, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE, and many others who helped shape this country and continue to work on each and every issue related to the U.S.-Caribbean affairs. These colleagues of ours, they are making a remarkable mark on the leadership which they bring to every issue as it relates to not only our domestic policy but our foreign policy. So they should be recognized and honored each and every day as well as during June of every year.

Caribbean-American Heritage Month also provided an opportunity for us to strengthen our long-term partnership with CARICOM through greater dialogue and engagement. From disaster preparedness, education, and the campaign against HIV/AIDS and other health disparities, trade and aid and development, we share a number of mutual policy interests with our Caribbean neighbors.

For example, last month we were able to address these important issues relating to the Caribbean through the Institute for Caribbean Studies' Caribbean-American Legislative Forum held right here on Capitol Hill. And I have to take a moment to thank a member of my staff, Nicole King, a daughter of St. Lucia, for her very effective staff work on this resolution and many of our legislative efforts related to the Caribbean.

In addition, the Caribbean People International Collective, Inc. held a roundtable discussion on health in the immigrant community. This event promoted the goals and ideals of National Caribbean-American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

Most recently, this year's global rise in food costs keenly affected the people of the Caribbean, particularly our friends in Haiti. The crisis highlighted the need for reengagement and opened the door for innovative policy solutions. Under the extraordinary leadership of the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, Members of Congress visited Haiti to come back with recommendations to address the emerging food crisis in Haiti, and it is a crisis. Last month CARICOM heads of state held their New York Conference on the Caribbean—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 additional minute to the gentlewoman.

Ms. LEE. As I was saying, Madam Speaker, CARICOM heads of state held their New York Conference on the Caribbean under the theme "A 20/20 Vision," where they met with regional policymakers, the academic community, private sectors, and financial institutions, as well as members of the Caribbean Diaspora, to better integrate policy interests between the United States and the Caribbean.

H. Con. Res. 364 promotes the importance of recognizing that our policies in the Caribbean affect us here in the United States. Caribbean-American Heritage Month reminded us of the large and diverse constituencies of Caribbean-Americans in our Nation and provided an opportunity to send a message of goodwill to the Caribbean community both here and abroad. This month also provided an opportunity to celebrate and share in the rich history and culture of our Caribbean neighbors through showcases of Caribbean art festivals, concerts, and film. As an example, in my own district in Oakland, the Caribbean-American Association of Northern California celebrated the rich cultural heritage of the Caribbean through a musical concert and family day picnic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman.

Ms. LEE. Thank you for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I just want to conclude by recognizing once again activities in my district, the Second Annual Caribbean-American Heritage Legacy Award honoring the contribution of Caribbean-Americans. And here, of course, in Washington, D.C., the Caribbean Carnival hosted their annual carnival parade that drew more than 300,000 participants.

So just as we commemorate the achievements of the many diverse communities in our Nation, the United States Government should encourage all people to celebrate the rich history and diversity of Caribbean-Americans.

Thank you again for yielding the time, for your leadership, and for supporting this bill.

□ 1700

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I would now yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York, YVETTE CLARKE.

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

Ms. CLARKE. First, I would like to thank Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, the lead sponsor on this legislation, for her ongoing commitment and diligence in championing such an important resolution. She has served as a true advocate for national recognition of Caribbean people and their descendants in the United States. I also want to thank Congressman HIGGINS for his leadership and his support and management of this resolution to the floor today.

As a second generation Caribbean American, American by birth, Caribbean by parentage, specifically Jamaican, I am proud to be a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 364. National Caribbean Heritage Month is for the millions of Caribbean people and their American descendants, an affirmation and much deserved recognition of their role and contribution to the growth and development of our Nation, as well as the region within this hemisphere from which these Americans, like myself, have come.

Caribbean American Heritage Month was created to herald the unique historic relationship between the people of the Caribbean region and the United States and the many great contributions they have made to our country. For centuries now, Caribbean Americans have fortified this great Nation. Alexander Hamilton, born 1755 in the Caribbean island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis, was the first Caribbean American from New York to serve in this body, then known as the Continental Congress. He has held numerous cabinet positions, including Secretary of State. Another influential New Yorker of Caribbean ancestry, Colin Powell, also held the position of Secretary of State in more recent times.

As it relates to my district, I must mention the late, great Caribbean American of Barbadian and Guyanese

ancestry, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, who worked in the Congress from 1969 to 1983 and was the first black woman to run for President of our Nation. Ms. Chisholm paved the way for me to serve in this body, second in the line of succession in the same constituency that she once served.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman from New York has expired.

Mr. HIGGINS. I yield the gentlewoman 1 additional minute.

Ms. CLARKE. As a Caribbean American woman and a Member of Congress, it's my hope that we can continue to improve our diplomatic and economic relationships and arrangements with many of our neighbors in the Caribbean region, such as Haiti, the Netherlands Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica and other Caribbean nations.

The Caribbean communities, known as CARICOM, have worked with their citizen ambassadors in the American Caribbean diaspora to develop a diversified economy that is favorable to foreign direct investment from the United States and human resource and intellectual capital from the region. As such, the Caribbean nations have cooperated on tax enforcement matters, transparency and exchange for information with the United States.

These Caribbean nations are also strategic partners and assist the United States' counter transnational terrorism activities, crime and illegal narcotics importation. These contributions and importance of the Caribbean region to the United States is reflected in the millions of people who contribute to acknowledge the pride heritage of the region by way of the Caribbean Carnival styled parades and festivities that occur across this Nation.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I would now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. DANNY DAVIS. (Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. And I want to commend my colleague, Representative BARBARA LEE, for its introduction. I also want to commend the Caribbean community, not only in my city of Chicago, which has a large population—as a matter of fact, we just finished celebrating the Festival of the Arts, which is a large celebration recognized by many people throughout the Midwest as a place to be—but we've heard accolades extended to individuals who have been great states persons, individuals who have been businesspeople and academicians. Every kind of person that you can think of has some heritage from the Caribbean.

And I think that we don't have to look far when we think of our own colleagues that we interact with every day. And so I commend them for being a part of the American population, but of the African-Caribbean diaspora. And

I commend again Representative BARBARA LEE.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 364, which recognizes the significance of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. I am proud to have joined my friend, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE in sponsoring this resolution once again.

Madam Speaker the term "Heritage" is the amalgamation of things that make us who we are and where we are, as individuals, the people we are and, in this case, the nation we are.

During "Caribbean American Heritage Month," we celebrate the great contributions of Caribbean Americans to the framework of the United States of America. This celebration should mark an accolade to the common culture and liaison that create the unity between the United States and the Caribbean.

The "Caribbean American Heritage Month" marks our appreciation for the many ways in which Caribbean Americans have contributed to our great Nation. We may look as far back as the period of 1900 to 1920 which marked the initiation of mass labor migration from the Caribbean to the United States and the formation of the first large Caribbean communities in the United States.

Let us not forget World War I when the recruitment of labor from the Caribbean became imperative. These laborers atoned for the reduced number of the European immigrants to the United States. More than 100,000 Caribbean laborers were recruited for agricultural and tedious jobs as part of war labors. Some of them were men and women who fought for our country upon being granted citizenship. We should acknowledge the Caribbean American men and women who served our country and those who continue to serve this nation today.

When we look at the history of the Caribbean Americans, we see the enormity of their contribution to our Nation. Likewise, we see the similarity in the senses that just like America; the countries of the Caribbean faced slavery and were colonized. We now have millions of people who have emigrated from the Caribbean to the United States.

We should acknowledge the enrichment that they have contributed to the United States. The uniqueness in their culture has helped in diversifying and shaping America; thus, pulsating our States, cities and towns. The countries of the Caribbean have also played a role in the economic growth of the United States.

As a daughter of the Caribbean myself, I also honor the contributions of Virgin Islanders such as D. Hamilton Jackson, a famous laborer; Alexander Hamilton, one of our Nation's Founding Fathers and raised on the island of St. Croix; and Frank Rudolph Crosswaith, who created the Trade Union Committee for Organizing Negro Workers, the Negro Labor Committee and became a founding member of the anti-Communist Union for Democratic Action.

These and several other factors should be reflected during the Caribbean American Heritage Month. Let us honor, value and show gratitude to those who contribute in making us the nation that we are.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman BARBARA LEE for bringing recognition to a group often forgotten in this racial and ethnic melting pot known as America.

This legislation does more than recognize Caribbean-Americans or as many are called

West Indians, it recognizes and celebrates diversity. Unfortunately, this country has not always celebrated its diverse roots. It has faltered at times in remembering that the differences can be celebrated as much as those things in which we share—like humanity, like faith in a higher power, like democracy.

Even now as I stand and address the House floor, I am reminded that we have yet to pass comprehensive immigration reform. We still watch the television and see commercials using words like illegal and alien, with people that are from our southern borders of Mexico or our coastal south like Haiti or Cuba. Sadly, these commercials prey on the fears of an America in an economic crisis. These commercials speak to fear of other cultures, other religions, and other ways of doing business.

What they do not show is the thousands upon thousands of new immigrants who make their home here and work from sun up to sun down to build a better tomorrow for their families. What the commercials do not speak to is the thousands of immigrants who come from our northern borders or from Europe. More importantly, these commercials do not speak to the foundation of one land made up of many.

This resolution reminds us that although many in this country were born elsewhere or have parents who were born elsewhere they are very much Americans.

Thank you, Congresswoman LEE, for reminding us to celebrate our diverse population by celebrating Caribbean-Americans. Each Caribbean country has shared her native children with these United States. From the classic actor and activist Sidney Poitier to the former Army general and Secretary of State Colin Powell, from the charismatic Celia Cruz to the hard-rocker Lenny Kravitz, and so many more—Caribbean-Americans honor both their past and their present.

Many of the Members on this very bill have parents or grandparents from the West Indies. Thank you for celebrating them and for celebrating what makes America beautiful—her diverse people.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank all of those who strive to see an America made up of a diverse group of people. Many of them have given up not only their country of birth but their loved ones, to cross into an unknown land to build a dream. Let their love for America not be doubted because they also celebrate their native Jamaica or Bahamas or Dominican Republic or Trinidad—let it be a lesson that you can love your past, while you celebrate your future. I urge my colleagues to support a resolution that is about the celebration of diversity.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, we have no further speakers, and I yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 364.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR
NATIONAL GEAR UP DAY

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1311) expressing support for the designation of National GEAR UP Day.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1311

Whereas Congress created the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) in 1998 to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education;

Whereas increasing the number of low-income students who complete postsecondary education is critical to the health and vitality of our communities and the Nation as a whole;

Whereas GEAR UP is currently providing essential college preparatory services to 640,000 students in over 5,000 schools across 46 States, the District of Columbia, America Samoa, Palau, and Puerto Rico;

Whereas GEAR UP students are taking more rigorous and advanced courses, graduating from high school and enrolling in postsecondary education at rates significantly higher than their low-income peers;

Whereas these remarkable achievements are attributable to the selfless dedication of the students, families, education professionals, and business and community leaders involved in GEAR UP;

Whereas the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships and the Department of Education work in partnership to provide technical assistance and host national conferences to strengthen GEAR UP programs throughout the Nation; and

Whereas July 22, 2008, would be an appropriate day to designate as National GEAR UP Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives expresses support for the designation of a National GEAR UP Day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, at this time, I would yield 3 minutes to the sponsor of the bill, CHAKA FATTAH, the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. FATTAH. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Let me thank my colleague, DANNY DAVIS, for helping to move this bill to the floor out of committee. And I also want to thank all 74 of the additional cosponsors, and this is bipartisan cosponsorship, as this program, GEAR UP, has always enjoyed bipartisan support. I want to thank MARK SOUDER and TOM COLE. And I also want to ac-

knowledge the great staff work that has been done by William Miles and also the In Step organization which is the major national organization working with GEAR UP. And we will be hosting them here on the Hill.

This acknowledges the great success of this program, over \$2.7 billion Federal investment over the last 10 years. We are in the 10-year anniversary. We see graduation rates from high school, for the largest early college awareness program in our country's history, off the charts. Some 85 percent of GEAR UP students graduated from high school, a full 20-plus points ahead of where low-income students unfortunately now graduate from high school. We see this in hundreds and hundreds of programs across our country. In rural and urban areas, on Native American reservations and State programs and in partnership programs, GEAR UP has been a tremendous success, something that in a bipartisan way this Congress can take great pride in.

And as the architect of the original legislation, I'm very proud to come and ask the Congress to support this resolution, naming this National GEAR UP Day. I spoke to the almost 2,000 attendees at the national bureau conference yesterday. I had my wife and my two young daughters, Cameron and Chandler, with me. It was a great occasion to see and meet people from 48 States with, now, GEAR UP programs. And many of our territories also are represented, from Guam and Puerto Rico.

It is a tremendous success to see the college-going rate among this population of GEAR UP students, now over 2 million young people being served at 60-plus percent, 64 percent of them going on to college.

I do want to acknowledge the great work of my colleague from southwest Texas, RUBEN HINOJOSA, who has led and chairs the subcommittee on Higher Education.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution designating today, July 22, 2008, as National GEAR UP Day. Signed into law in 1998, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, GEAR UP, is a program to help increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

GEAR UP provides 6-year matching grants to States and partnerships to offer services at high-poverty middle and high schools. Grantees serve an entire range of students from seventh grade through graduation from high school.

Thanks to the passion and dedication of students, families, educators and local communities, GEAR UP has touched the lives of more than 2 million young people from underserved backgrounds. At present, GEAR UP provides college preparatory services to 640,000 students in over 5,000 schools across 46 States, the District of Colum-

bia, and territories abroad. From California to New York, Puerto Rico to American Samoa, GEAR UP students are taking more rigorous courses, graduating from high school and enrolling in postsecondary education at rates that are significantly higher than their low-income peers.

Through these grants and scholarships, underprivileged students are being introduced to a wealth of opportunities otherwise not afforded them. Their experience and educational success serves as a model to their peers and is vital to the health of our communities.

My kids attended a school, the Glasgow Intermediate School in Alexandria in Fairfax County, where we saw literally dozens of students each year sign up for GEAR UP and improve their academic ratings and potential and go on to college later on as a result of this program. It has made a difference. And I urge my colleagues to support this resolution in an effort to elevate our Nation's awareness of this important program.

It's as true now as ever that children are our future. And this program provides a significant and valuable step toward providing quality educational opportunities to our underprivileged youth.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I would now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Representative HINOJOSA.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1311, a resolution to express support for the designation of a National GEAR UP Day.

I would like to commend the authors of this resolution, my good friend from Philadelphia, Representative CHAKA FATTAH, and my colleague on the Education and Labor Committee, Representative MARK SOUDER of Indiana. They're tremendous advocates for making the promise of GEAR UP a reality for all of our youth.

GEAR UP addresses the key factors necessary to successfully navigate the college process: The aspiration to go to college, the academic preparation, understanding the admissions and financial aid processes, and having the financial resources to pay for college. GEAR UP mobilizes the community to address these factors by using Federal resources to leverage State, local and private sector resources.

GEAR UP offers a simple but very powerful bargain. It tells students and families that if you stay in school and take the challenging classes, our community will guarantee that you have the financial aid and support you need to go to college.

We have seen the power of this new bargain in south Texas. With our first generation of GEAR UP partnerships, we have seen high school graduation rates and college preparedness soar. We have seen unprecedented growth in our college enrollment.