

"National Homeless Youth Awareness Month" was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 693

Whereas between 1,600,000 and 2,800,000 children and teens are homeless in the United States each year, with many staying on the streets or in emergency shelters;

Whereas families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population and now make up approximately 1/3 of that population;

Whereas many homeless youth experience isolation and trauma while residing on the streets or in precarious housing situations and may eventually develop depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder;

Whereas homeless youth are typically too poor to secure basic needs and are unable to access adequate medical or mental health care;

Whereas many youth become homeless due to a lack of financial and housing resources as they exit juvenile corrections and foster care;

Whereas 12 to 36 percent of foster youth experience homelessness at least once after exiting foster care;

Whereas homeless youth are most often expelled from their homes by their guardians after physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or separated from their parents through death or divorce without adequate resources; and

Whereas awareness of the tragedy of youth homelessness and its causes must be heightened so that greater support for effective programs involving businesses, families, law enforcement agencies, schools, and community and faith-based organizations, aimed at helping youth remain off the streets becomes a national priority: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the values and efforts of businesses, organizations, and volunteers dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless children and teens;

(2) applauds the initiatives of businesses, organizations, and volunteers that employ time and resources to build awareness of the homeless youth problem, its causes, and potential solutions, and work to prevent homelessness among children and teens; and

(3) should recognize the month of November 2008 as "National Homeless Youth Awareness Month" and encourages these businesses, organizations, and volunteers to continue to intensify their efforts during the month of November.

NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

The resolution (S. Res. 694) designating the week beginning October 19, 2008, as "National Character Counts Week" was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 694

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 19, 2008, 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.

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the week including Veterans Day—November 9–15, 2008—be designated as "National Veterans Awareness Week." This marks the ninth year I have introduced such a resolution, which has been adopted unanimously by the Senate on all previous occasions, and has been recog-

nized by the President as an important objective. With our military men and women continuing to be on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is no doubt appropriate that we recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of those who are currently serving to protect our freedom, as well as those who have served in the past.

The idea behind National Veterans Awareness Week actually came from a Delaware student, Samuel I. Cashdollar. In 2000, as a 13-year-old seventh grader at Lewes Middle School, Samuel won the Delaware VFW's Youth Essay Contest with a powerful presentation titled "How Should We honor America's Veterans?" Samuel's essay pointed out that we have Nurses' Week, Secretaries' Week, and Teachers' Week to rightly emphasize the importance of these occupations, but no comparable week to encourage, and honor, service in the military. That is why, every year since 2000, I have introduced a resolution designating National Veterans Awareness Week to focus on educating our youth on the contributions, heroism, and service of our veterans.

The reality is, during both World Wars and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, families were more likely to have a relative serving in the military. That is not the case today; tremendous advances in military technology, an all-volunteer force, and increases in productivity have greatly reduced the number of families with relatives who are active servicemembers or recent veteran. Coupled with the fact that the number of veterans who served in major conflicts like World War II is declining, it is more important than ever that we take the time to make sure students comprehend and appreciate the service and sacrifice of our veterans. National Veterans Awareness Week provides us with an opportunity to do just that. Additionally, with soldiers returning from the front lines with service-connected injuries, National Veterans Awareness Week reminds us how important it is that we keep our promise to veterans by providing them with the proper support and services they need once they return home. This promise is the most sacred obligation we have, and it is imperative that our children are also aware of the debt we owe our veterans.

In closing, let me add that, although many of us will not have the opportunity to serve our country in uniform, we must not forget our responsibility as citizens to fulfill the obligations we owe, both tangible and intangible, to those who have served and sacrificed on our behalf. By passing along this shared responsibility and recognition to future generations, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will continue to appreciate and honor what our veterans have accomplished in order to appropriately confront the many challenges they are sure to encounter. •

NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise in support of a resolution designating the week of October 19 through 25 as the 2008 "National Character Counts Week." I would also like to recognize and thank my colleague and good friend, Senator CHRIS DODD, for his support of Character Counts and his partnership on numerous legislative issues throughout the years.

Our character is the foundation of who we are as people and how we are perceived by the world. Every day our character and ethics are tested through the decisions we make and the behavior we exhibit. The National Character Counts program focuses on "Six Pillars of Character," which are promoted through school- and community-based character education programs across the country. The six pillars are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

I have supported Character Counts throughout the years because I believe this program reaches out to all youth and adults, as the Character Counts Coalition states, no matter the individual's race, creed, politics, gender, or wealth. In my home State of New Mexico, we have run many successful Character Counts programs throughout the years. While many schools initiate Character Counts programs there are also many other organizations that develop character-based programming. As I prepare to leave the Senate, I would like to reflect upon some of the tremendous accomplishments of this program and how it continues to affect New Mexicans in a positive way.

This year, the New Mexico Character Education Program, funded by the Partnership in Character Education Federal Grant, included 14 school districts and five charter schools statewide, with 50,726 students participating in 106 schools statewide. Through this program, the "Six Pillars of Character" have become a common thread of communication for students, teachers and parents across the State. In addition, 3,640 coaches, athletic directors and youth sports officials worked, in conjunction with the New Mexico Activities Association, to incorporate the goal of teaching the "Pursuing Victory with Honor" theme to students participating in sports. I am thrilled that schools and communities in New Mexico saw a marked increase in leadership role participation and a change in the school climate: Eugene Field Elementary School in Albuquerque, NM, has seen a decrease in discipline referrals from five per day to five in the school year. All of the organizations and schools who have been involved, including those not mentioned here, are to be commended for their hard work in developing these programs and spreading the message that character truly does count.

In addition to these numbers, which show the remarkable affect Character Counts is having on my home State of New Mexico, there are many individual

stories about how New Mexicans are affecting each other's lives on a day to day basis as a result of this program. One particularly touching story is that of 9-year-old Jacob Thomson, who lives in Clovis, NM. Jacob has cystic fibrosis, and when he missed the big basketball game to go to the hospital for treatment, the Clovis High School basketball team went and visited him in the hospital, bringing him a basketball, a shirt, and a smile. These athletes had been involved with the Character Counts program and displayed what a powerful impact this program has had and continues to have.

During the week of October 19, 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 17, a Character Counts Proclamation will be made at the Chaves County Court House in Roswell, NM. On October 20, Hagerman Elementary School in Hagerman, NM will be dedicating a Character Counts Mural. On October 21, a zoo tour and pillar presentation will be held at Spring River Park for grades 3-5 in Roswell, NM.

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. DODD. Mr. President, today Senator DOMENICI and I introduced a resolution designating the third week of October as "National Character Counts Week." Senator DOMENICI and I have worked together for many years on the issue of character education and hope that by designating a special week to this cause, we may highlight the importance of character building activities in schools not only this week but all year long.

In 1994, Senator DOMENICI and I first established the Partnerships in Character Education Pilot Project and have worked regularly since then to commemorate National Character Counts Week. Character Counts was founded on a simple notion: Our core ethical values aren't just important to us as individuals—they form the very foundation of democratic society. We know that we in order to face our challenges as communities and as a Nation, we need our children to be both well-educated and trained—and that begins with instilling character in our children.

Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship—these are the six pillars of character. Character education provides students a context within which to learn those values and integrate them into our daily lives. Indeed, if we view education simply as the imparting of knowledge to our children, then we not

only miss an opportunity, but as also jeopardize our future. Children want direction—to be taught right from wrong. Young people yearn for consistent adult involvement, and when they get it, we know they are less inclined to use illegal drugs, to vandalize, or commit suicide. The American public wants character education in our schools, too. Studies show that approximately 90 percent of Americans support schools teaching character education.

Character education programs work. Currently, there are character education programs across all 50 States in rural, urban and suburban areas at every grade level. Schools across the country that have adopted strong character education programs report better student performance, fewer discipline problems, and increased student involvement within the community.

Support for character education crosses party lines. Indeed, there is no stronger advocate for character education than my good friend, Senator PETE DOMENICI. I have had the distinct pleasure of working with him to ensure that all our children not only acquire strong math and science skills, but also the skills they need to develop into good and decent human beings.

Senator DOMENICI has worked tirelessly on behalf of our Nation's children, and as he winds down his career in the Senate, I would like to take a moment to thank him for his good work and friendship. He will be sorely missed in the halls of this building, and we all wish his wife, Nancy, and him the very best.

This renewed focus on character sends a wonderful message to Americans and will help reinvigorate our efforts to get communities and schools involved. With this resolution, it is my hope that even more communities will make character education a part of every child's life. I hope that my colleagues will support this important effort.

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF SENATE DOCUMENT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the tributes to retiring Senators that appear in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD be printed as a Senate document and that Senators be permitted to submit such tributes for inclusion until Friday, November 21, 2008.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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