

or mutual responsibility. On this day, Americans of every age and background celebrate Dr. King through service projects that:

Strengthen Communities—Dr. King recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals. Through his words and example, Dr. King challenged individuals to take action and lift up their neighbors and communities through service.

Empower Individuals—Dr. King believed each individual possessed the power to lift himself or herself up no matter what his or her circumstances—rich or poor, black or white, man or woman. Whether teaching literacy skills, helping an older adult surf the Web, or helping an individual build the skills they need to acquire a job, acts of service can help others improve their own lives while doing so much for those who serve, as well.

Bridge Barriers—In his fight for civil rights, Dr. King inspired Americans to think beyond themselves, look past differences, and work toward equality. Serving side by side, community service bridges barriers between people and teaches us that in the end, we are more alike than we are different.

These ideas of unity, purpose, and the great things that can happen when we work together toward a common goal—are just some of the many reasons we honor Dr. King through service on this special holiday. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation and the man who epitomized community service—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Just yesterday, January 20, 2009, this Nation witnessed a historic moment. We stood in awe and watched the inauguration of this Nation's first African American President. We have come a long way since Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Yesterday, we have seen another part of the "dream" fulfilled. I am hopeful and expectant that America's future will be bright, and that it will be even brighter under the helm and leadership of President Barack Obama. President Obama has taught us that yes we can! I am delighted to be living the dream.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman VERN EHLERS.

Mr. EHLERS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

It is a great honor to speak about Martin Luther King. I don't have a prepared statement because I was not aware this resolution was coming up, but over the years I have just been tremendously impressed by him, by his talent, by his ability, and particularly the way in which he handled himself and his movement. And I use the term "his movement" advisedly, because he became the leader of it, the right man, at the right time. I am always amazed at how the Lord seems to provide the right leader at the right time for good causes such as this.

Monday morning, I went to the annual breakfast in Grand Rapids, Michigan where we honor Martin Luther King. The room was filled with people honoring him and just joyous about his contributions to our Nation and its future. That evening, close to 3,000 people joined in another celebration. You may think this is a little surprising in the frozen North, which was not heavily in-

involved in the Civil Rights program, but we feel very strongly about it in our community. We have an excellent community in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In particular, Mr. Walter Brame, who heads the Urban League in our area, has been a strong leader for years in providing equal opportunity for minorities in the workplace, in schools and other places.

Martin Luther King started something wonderful, which ended up being even more wonderful, and for that I am grateful to him. I am also grateful to God for sending us the right man at the right time to resolve a major national crisis.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Michigan for his heartfelt comments.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The point that I would like to make in closing on our side is that one of the most important things that President Obama made to me was something I had never heard a President say before, and that was that he wanted all of the people that voted and that may or may not have supported him to continue to advise him. Normally, Presidents get elected and say, "Well, I am grateful to my supporters," and then remove to inside the Beltway with the Cabinet and the Capitol and the people in the three branches of government, and that's it. He asked for continuing advice. Some said, he did not have to make that statement because he was going to get that anyway, but others have said, "This is wonderful and this is great." And I think it ties in with the people's moment that undergirded the King civil rights legacy; that is, that everybody has a continuing responsibility to perfect this democratic system of constitutional government that we have.

It is so important that we all feel we have a role to play over and above voting, and it is that King-like theory that the President now publicly extols that is so very important. And, I think, we embark here in the second day of this new administration on a new path that encourages citizen participation; I think it brings us all here in government closer together, and I think that it augers well for the challenges that we all face here in the 111th Congress and a new President currently in his second day in office.

And so in this moment of remembering Dr. King and his legacy, celebrate his life and contributions, I am very pleased that this resolution is brought at this highly opportune moment. I thank the author of this legislation.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for H. Res. 73, a resolution that promotes the observance of the birthday, life and, legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

It is a historic time in our Nation's Capital with yesterday marking the swearing-in of

Barack Obama, our Nation's first African-American President.

As we listened to President Obama's inaugural address we were all reminded of how far our Nation has come. This resolution is also a reminder that without Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., there would be no President Obama.

Dr. King was a beacon of change on whose shoulders we all stand. His leadership, courage, and conviction helped pave the road for all of us.

He understood government has a fundamental responsibility to meet the needs of all Americans regardless of race or economic class.

He gave people the faith and courage to work peacefully for change to stop racial discrimination, and promote equality and opportunity across America.

Most importantly, Dr. King called upon each of us to truly commit ourselves to changing and working to bring about change for all Americans.

President Obama reminded us of that call yesterday when he said that we each have a responsibility to rebuild our country and get us out of this storm. Let us heed this call to action and work hand-in-hand to help bring prosperity back. Together we can do it. Yes we can! I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 73.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 73.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 39) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 39

Whereas America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a superior scholastic education;

Whereas Catholic schools ensure a broad, values-added education emphasizing the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people;

Whereas the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2007-2008 academic year was nearly 2,300,000 and the student-teacher ratio was 14 to 1;

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students;

Whereas more than 25 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are from minority backgrounds, and over 14 percent are non-Catholics;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities by providing an

intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual, character, and moral development;

Whereas the Catholic high school graduation rate is 99 percent, with 80 percent of graduates attending four-year colleges and 17 percent attending two-year colleges or technical schools;

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: "Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives."; and

Whereas January 25, 2009, to January 31, 2009, has been designated as Catholic Schools Week by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event co-sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and established to recognize the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools; and

(2) congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on H. Res. 39 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1300

Mr. LOEBSACK. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 39, which recognizes the achievements of Catholic schools across the Nation. I am pleased to honor these outstanding elementary, secondary and higher learning institutions. I commend them for their commitment to academic excellence and moral values. In doing so, I support January 25 to January 31 as Catholic Schools Week.

In the late 19th century, Catholic schools emerged as an alternative to public schools and to traditional private schools. As private institutions, Catholic schools were able to design their own academic curriculum by

teaching religious values and ethics while maintaining high academic standards. And after 100 years of existence, Catholic schools remain very popular and respected institutions.

Last year, Catholic schools served over 2 million students while maintaining a 14 to 1 teacher-student ratio, giving students the benefit of a small-classroom environment. Catholic schools also boast a diverse enrollment; 25 percent of its students nationwide are from minority backgrounds and 14 percent are non-Catholics. The schools provide unique experiences where students can excel. Catholic high schools have a 99 percent graduation rate with 80 percent of their graduates advancing to 4-year colleges, while 17 percent pursue 2-year colleges. It's clear that Catholic schools are encouraging their students to pursue higher education opportunities, and I applaud them for their efforts. There are 7,500 Catholic schools across this Nation. With modest tuition rates, Catholic schools are affordable for most working and middle-class families. As Congress salutes these religious educational institutions, we reaffirm our commitment to education, excellence and diversity.

Madam Speaker, I support the Catholic Schools Week, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. It is with great pleasure that I rise today in support of House Resolution 39 offered by a good friend of mine, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI). This resolution increases our awareness of Catholic education while honoring the contributions of America's Catholic schools. I am also very pleased to be a cosponsor of this resolution. I have a long background with education and religious schools. My father was a pastor, and our denomination has supported Christian day schools for a considerable length of time and shares the approach and the ideas of the Catholic schools. Our schools were very effective in educating students. Emphasis was on academics, but also on how that applied to the world today and what responsibility we as students, and later adults, had to use our religious beliefs in the benefit of our fellow human beings and our Nation. Catholic schools have followed in this tradition.

I am pleased that January 25 through January 31, 2009, has been designated Catholic Schools Week, an annual tradition in its 35th year, and jointly sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association, as well as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. With this resolution, we recognize the vital role Catholic elementary and secondary schools play in providing an education with high standards of quality and excellence to the nearly 2.3 million students enrolled in Catholic schools across the country.

One thing I have always admired when I visit Catholic schools and speak to their students is the tremendous dis-

cipline in the classroom. And I wish all of our schools in this Nation had this discipline and that attention on learning.

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic schools have a graduation rate of over 98 percent, and about 97 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to post-secondary training at 4-year colleges, community colleges or technical schools. This success can also be attributed to the importance Catholic educators place on character and morals. By making the development of moral and social values an integral part of the curriculum, Catholic schools are ensuring that their students are not only good academicians, but also good citizens.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week this year is "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service." This theme highlights the mission of Catholic schools to provide a faith-based education that supports the whole child academically and spiritually and impresses upon them the importance of civic engagement. Catholicism has a long and rich tradition of direct service to those in need. Catholic schools incorporate service projects into the curriculum, teaching students the value of helping others as an expression of faith and good citizenship.

Catholic schools demonstrated an enormous amount of character and compassion in their response to the devastating hurricanes that hit the gulf coast nearly 4 years ago. In the wake of this national disaster, more than 300,000 students were displaced from their homes, schools and communities. Catholic schools opened their doors and hearts and welcomed these students into their classrooms. They provided these children with the opportunity to continue their studies without stopping to consider how to cover the cost of that education. Instead, the Catholic schools knew their first priority was to educate these children and worry about the financing later on.

I appreciate the great work being done by Catholic schools, their administrators and teachers as well as their parents and volunteers. Catholic schools carry out their servant mission by building the academic achievement, character and values of their students.

Again, I commend the gentleman from Illinois for introducing this resolution and urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased today to recognize a good friend, the gentleman from the Third District of Illinois, Mr. DAN LIPINSKI, for 6 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Iowa for yielding.

Today I rise in support of H. Res. 39, honoring Catholic Schools Week and recognizing the outstanding contributions that Catholic schools have made to America.

As a product of St. Symphorosa Grammar School and St. Ignatius High School and a strong supporter of Catholic education, I am proud to sponsor this resolution again this year. And I would like to thank my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for joining me in working on this resolution.

Since 1974, Catholic Schools Week has celebrated the positive impact that Catholic schools have had on our country and recognize their outstanding contributions in providing a strong academic and moral education, as well as teaching the importance of responsibility to one's family and community.

As we heard in President Obama's inauguration address yesterday, responsibility is critical to our Nation's success, and responsibility requires service to others. Very appropriately, the theme for next week's Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service." President Obama rightfully sees public service as a way to unify the country, to bridge divisions and to teach responsible citizenship.

This is nothing new to America's Catholic schools. They have always taught the intrinsic value of service to others. Nearly 95 percent of Catholic schools have a service program, and the average student completes approximately 80 hours of public service. My strong desire to serve was fostered by my dedicated teachers at Catholic schools. Nearly 95 percent of Catholic schools have a service program, and the average student completes approximately 80 hours of public service.

Today, almost 2.3 million elementary and secondary students are enrolled in nearly 7,500 Catholic schools. These schools have more than 160,000 full-time professional staff. Through individual attention and quality education, Catholic school students, on average, surpass other students in math, science and reading in the three grade levels tested by the NAEP test. The graduation rate for Catholic high school students is 99 percent, and 97 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college or technical schools. These are truly remarkable statistics in a country where we read all-too-many reports of deep problems in our educational system and worrying declines in our student's international competitiveness.

Catholic schools are known for embracing students from all walks of life and are highly effective at providing excellent educational opportunities for minority students and disadvantaged youth. Almost one in seven students of Catholic schools is not Catholic. And over the past 30 years, the percentage of minority students enrolled in Catholic schools has more than doubled. And the success of Catholic schools does not depend on selectivity, accepting nine out of every 10 students who apply.

In addition to producing well-educated students with a commitment to service, Catholic schools save American taxpayers billions of dollars every year by lessening the number of stu-

dents in already overburdened public schools. In fact, it is estimated that taxpayers save over \$1 billion from students attending Catholic schools in the Chicago area and approximately \$20 billion nationwide. This savings is crucial to American taxpayers, especially during these harsh economic times.

Unfortunately, the current economic turmoil combined with much longer travails of middle class in our country have been hard on Catholic schools in some areas. Just like me, my wife Judy attended Catholic schools for 12 years. She went to St. Patrick's Grade School and Bishop McCort High School in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, less than 2 weeks ago it was announced that St. Patrick's would be closing. This closing is a great loss not just to the students of St. Patrick's, but the entire community of Moxham, demonstrating just how important Catholic schools are to the greater community.

I was born and raised and lived in the Chicago Archdiocese, which still has one of the most successful school systems in the country. More than 98,000 students attend 256 schools. In my district alone, there are seven Catholic high schools and approximately 50 grammar schools, including one of the best in my home parish of St. John of the Cross in Western Springs.

My experiences have taught me the important spiritual, moral and intellectual foundation that Catholic schools provide to students. Catholic education has granted me the knowledge, discipline, desire to serve, and a love of learning that enabled me to achieve my doctorate degree and become a teacher before being elected to Congress. In recognizing Catholic Schools Week, we pay a special tribute to dedicated teachers and administrators who sacrifice so much, in most cases working for much less than they could earn elsewhere. Many of my formative memories are of teachers who taught me the values of faith and service. After 35 years, I can still fondly remember Sister Diane, my Student Congress coach when I was in high school, and from Sister Mildred in first grade to Sister Xavier in eighth grade at St. Symphorosa. Throughout the United States, millions of others have similar memories of their dedicated sisters, priests and lay teachers who gave their hearts and souls to touch the lives of their students.

Madam Speaker, American Catholic schools deserve our praise, our support and our gratitude. I would like to thank everyone who has cosponsored this resolution. And to share our praise and support for Catholic schools, I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution.

Mr. EHLERS. I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 39, which recognizes and honors the exemplary contributions of Catholic schools across our Nation.

The resolution salutes the commitment, professionalism and faith of the teachers and administrators as well as the achievements in the classroom and in the lives of the students. And we commend today the support of the Catholic Church itself in making this educational opportunity possible.

I would also like to thank Mr. LIPINSKI for his leadership in bringing this resolution to the floor and ask that my colleagues join us in supporting its passage.

Madam Speaker, Catholic education has and continues to make a tremendous impact in the lives of students, families and communities across America and in my home State of New Jersey. Last year, more than 2.3 million children were enrolled in over 7,000 Catholic schools nationwide. The performance of Catholic schools is impressive. More than 99 percent of its students graduate high school, and approximately 97 percent go on to college. The record clearly shows that students at Catholic schools receive a quality education with an integrated focus on the transcendent importance of God, academic excellence, advancement beyond high school and fundamental morals.

Next week, January 25 to 31, marks the 36th annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week. And this year's theme is to live the Gospel with an emphasis on service. Students are encouraged to help others and generously give of themselves expecting nothing whatsoever in return. In the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus admonished believers to live a life of selfless service to others and specifically asked that we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, care for the sick and disabled, visit the prisoner and welcome the stranger. Identifying with the disenfranchised, the vulnerable and the weakest among us, our Lord said, and I quote, whatsoever you do to the least of My brethren, you do unto Me.

This year's theme celebrates service, encourages students to embrace Matthew 25 and make a positive difference in the lives of others. Many of America's poor and at risk will benefit from the students' benevolence.

Catholic schools, Madam Speaker, are indeed an integral part of our Nation's fundamental commitment to education and serve a cross-section of American students. Catholic schools have a rich history of welcoming, serving and educating new immigrants. With over 25 percent of Catholic school enrollment from minority backgrounds and approximately 14 percent actually being non-Catholics, it is evident that this extraordinary institution meets the needs of a highly diverse group of young people.

Finally, Madam Speaker, a 1972 pastoral message by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops concerning Catholic education summed up the unique and extraordinary vision of Catholic education. They said in pertinent part, and I quote: Education is

one of the most important ways by which the church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and the building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his or her solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities to which he or she lives.

□ 1315

Again, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important element of faith-based education which serves alongside America's public and private schools to strengthen and reinforce our educational system.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) for 3 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 39, honoring Catholic Schools Week. Since the beginning of our Nation's history, Catholic schools have played an important role in American education. Catholic schools have an excellent reputation for providing a strong academic and moral education, as well as teaching social responsibility.

The Catholic schools in my district work hard to create an environment where academic excellence and value-driven pride can be fostered and embraced.

My wife Laurie and I and our two sons, Ken and B.J., attended Catholic schools in northern Michigan, and realize the benefits of the Catholic education system.

This week, let us pause, reflect and congratulate the administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents as we celebrate the dedicated tradition of promoting education through our Catholic faith.

The long rich history of Catholic education would not be possible without the financial commitment of those who make up our local parishes and dioceses across our Nation.

H. Res. 39 acknowledges the hard work and dedication that Catholic schools have contributed to building our local communities and our Nation.

I am proud to cosponsor House Resolution 39, and support the many Catholic schools in my district and across our Nation. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in strong support of H. Res. 39, to honor the contributions of Catholic schools across the country, and in honor of National Catholic Schools Week from January 25 through January 31.

I want to thank my colleagues, Mr. LIPINSKI from Illinois and Mr. SMITH

from New Jersey, for their leadership in bringing this resolution to the House floor today.

As a graduate of Catholic elementary and high schools, Sacred Heart Academy and Aquinas High School in Augusta, Georgia, I am keenly aware of the contributions that they provide to the 2.3 million students educated in Catholic schools across the country every year. These include close to 1,200 students at three Catholic schools in my district: St. Catherine of Siena in Kennesaw, St. Joseph's in my hometown of Marietta, and St. Mary's in Rome, Georgia.

Not only do Catholic schools, like Sacred Heart and Aquinas, provide a strong and competitive academic environment, they also teach moral and ethical standards, skills for living and self-esteem, discipline and respect for authority, and a Christian integration of spirit, mind and body in each of their students.

Upon graduating from Aquinas, I thought that the Catholic school curriculum would be what best prepared me for my future. However, I must admit that I was wrong about that. While the strenuous academics at Sacred Heart and Aquinas did lay the foundation for my success at both Georgia Tech and The Medical College of Georgia, it was the faith and ethical standards taught at these schools that truly prepared me for any of life's struggles.

Madam Speaker, while opening and running my medical practice, the respect for life taught at Sacred Heart and Aquinas led me to value and care for life at all stages, indeed from the moment of conception until natural death. Now that I have left my medical career to serve as a Member of Congress, I find the lessons learned from my days at Catholic schools more valuable now than ever. On a daily basis, I am confronted by difficult questions that affect millions of lives. If it were not for the moral standards and faith in God taught at Sacred Heart and Aquinas, I do not believe I could properly represent the people of northwest Georgia.

Madam Speaker, our education system is only made stronger by Catholic schools in northwest Georgia and throughout the Nation which fully prepare their students for a brighter future.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 39.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, while in my district in North Carolina we are blessed with excellent public schools, many districts across the country are not as fortunate. Some places, though, are fortunate to have the choice of having charter schools and Catholic schools. It is important that citizens

continue to have these choices, particularly because of the excellent record that Catholic schools have in this country.

Catholic education is a vital linchpin in America's education system. Catholic educators, with their emphasis on academic excellence, as well as the development of each student's character and spiritual well-being play a vital role in cultivating the next generation of leaders in the Nation.

There are two Catholic schools with a strong reputation for education excellence in the Fourth Congressional District of North Carolina: Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School and St. Leo the Great Catholic School.

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School was founded in 1959, and has been recognized by the Catholic High School Honor Roll as one of the top 50 Catholic high schools in the United States. This coed college prep high school is located in Kernersville, North Carolina, in the heart of the Triad.

St Leo's is a K-8 Catholic school located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, built in 1953. St. Leo's is the oldest Catholic school in Winston-Salem, and has a reputation for educating students who are not only academic achievers but also people of sterling character.

It is an honor to represent these two fine schools in Congress, and I look forward to seeing the lives they change in the coming years through their emphasis on high quality Catholic education. It is a pleasure to join my colleagues here today in congratulating Catholic schools, students, parents and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I thank you for your competent and professional manner in presiding today, and I yield myself the balance of my time in wrapping this discussion up.

I am very pleased to participate in this discussion today because I believe that Catholic schools and religious schools play an extremely important part in our American educational system.

I often deplore the fact that the Catholic schools and other religious schools, Christian and otherwise, do not get a fair shake in this Nation as compared to many other nations. I know when I lived in Europe for a year you could designate on your income tax how much you wanted to be delegated to schools of your choice, and they could be private schools, public schools, religious schools, what have you. That struck me as an eminently fair system. I don't expect we will ever have that in this country, but I do regret, given the excellent work that the Catholic schools do, and that other Christian and religious schools do in

educating students who are troubled, that we do not call upon these schools more often to help educate more of the children of this Nation.

I recall years ago when I joined some others in helping to raise money for scholarships for children who were troubled in their public schools, and who had great difficulties with their fellow students, and were getting into fights. We raised scholarship money so they could attend the Christian schools. Then a remarkable transformation occurred. Many of them became far better students and graduated and went on to good careers. I am convinced we can multiply this effort many times over, and I hope that the people of this country continue to contribute to these schools.

I was sorry to hear Mr. LIPINSKI say that the school that his wife attended is closing. That is a story that we are hearing far too often across this land. We are losing something very important when we have schools this good, with the superb records that we heard outlined by several speakers here, that they are closing while at the same time the students who would go there are going to other schools which are not serving them as well.

So I just want to do a little editorializing here because I do think that the Catholic schools, and many other schools in this country, do so much for our Nation, and yet do not receive the recognition and certainly do not receive any financial support from either Federal or State governments. I think it is our loss if they close and are no longer able to help the students that they do help so well.

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Catholic Schools Week.

Next week, the Nation's nearly 8,000 Catholic schools will celebrate Catholic Schools Week. Catholic schools have made many significant contributions to the education of our Nation's children.

In the Greater St. Louis region, Catholic schools have had a longstanding and proud tradition in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. The percentage of Catholic families who choose Catholic schools for their children is among the highest in the country. Currently, there are about 51,000 students enrolled in our Catholic elementary and high schools.

Catholic schools foster an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students learn to value God, themselves, and others. As Pope Benedict XVI noted in his remarks at Catholic University during his Apostolic Visit to the U.S. last spring, "Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church."

Today I would like to recognize and commend our Catholic educators who are com-

mitted to a living and vibrant faith community founded on the Catholic tradition of academic excellence and thank them for enriching the lives of the children they teach spiritually, academically and socially.

I strongly support the goals of Catholic Schools Week 2009 and laud their efforts to educate students dedicated to their faith, families, and values.

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for H. Res. 39, a resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

I thank my colleague from Illinois, Representative LIPINSKI, for sponsoring this important resolution.

Catholic schools are a true treasure—not just in my district in the Inland Empire of California—but throughout the United States of America.

Teachers and administrators in America's Catholic schools work tirelessly to educate students of all backgrounds, in communities across the Nation—including some of our most impoverished neighborhoods.

They do a tremendous job of teaching and imparting critical values, while often working under the most difficult school funding circumstances.

In a time when the No Child Left Behind Act has failed too many of America's best and brightest—the vast majority of Catholic school students not only graduate from high school, but also go on to college.

I commend the men and women who make America's Catholic schools a reality and thank them for the commitment and faith they place in the well being of their students.

I urge my colleagues to honor the positive impact of Catholic schools on the children of the United States, and support H. Res. 39.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 39 to honor the immense influences and contributions that Catholic schools have made on their students and their surrounding communities. For centuries, Catholic schools have provided families with a strong alternative to the public school system, offering a vital faith component that enhances a child's overall education sadly unwelcome in the halls of our local public schools.

A Catholic education prepares our Nation's youth to lead lives of commitment to the message of Jesus Christ while at the same time fostering an environment for academic success. It continuously challenges its students to a life-long pursuit of intellectual growth both in and outside the classroom while also stressing the need to take an active role in the betterment of their neighborhood and community. But most importantly, Madam Speaker, Catholic schools instill in their student body the precious ideal of setting one's heart upon things above, not merely on goods on earth—a much needed lesson in a society that is quick to get caught up in the latest gadget and the never-ending chase for dollars.

Madam Speaker, I stand today to humbly honor the contributions Catholic schools make to the betterment of our society, and pray for their continued success.

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I want to thank speakers on both sides of the aisle for supporting this resolution, it is a wonderful resolution, and I urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 39.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 56) expressing support for designation of the week of February 2 through February 6, 2009, as "National School Counseling Week".

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 56

Whereas the American School Counselor Association has declared the week of February 2 through February 6, 2009, as "National School Counseling Week";

Whereas the House of Representatives has recognized the importance of school counseling through the inclusion of elementary and secondary school counseling programs in the last reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;

Whereas school counselors have long advocated that the education system of the United States must leave no child behind and must provide opportunities for all students;

Whereas school counselors have long emphasized the importance of personal and social development in academic achievement;

Whereas school counselors help develop well-rounded students by guiding them through their academic, personal, social, and career development;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in ensuring that students are aware of financial aid and college opportunities;

Whereas school counselors may encourage students to pursue challenging academic courses to prepare them for college majors and careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields;

Whereas school counselors provide support for students whose family members have been deployed to conflicts overseas;

Whereas school counselors help students cope with serious and common challenges of growing up, including peer pressure, mental health issues, school violence, disciplinary problems, and problems in the home;

Whereas school counselors are also instrumental in helping students, teachers, and parents deal with personal trauma and community and national tragedies;

Whereas school counselors are among the few professionals in a school building that are trained in both education and mental health;

Whereas, despite the important contributions of school counselors to student success, counseling positions are not always protected when budgets are cut, especially in tough economic times;

Whereas the average student-to-counselor ratio in America's public schools, 475 to 1, is almost double the 250 to 1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association, the American Counseling Association, and other organizations;