

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;

Whereas the celebration of “National School Counseling Week” would increase awareness of the important and necessary role school counselors play in the lives of students in the United States; and

Whereas the week of February 2 through February 6, 2009, would be an appropriate week to designate as “National School Counseling Week”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives—

(1) honors and recognizes the contributions of school counselors to the success of students in our Nation’s elementary and secondary schools; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe “National School Counseling Week” with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the crucial role school counselors play in preparing students for fulfilling lives as contributing members of society.

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 their remarks and insert extraneous material on H. Res. 56 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 56 which honors and recognizes the contributions of school counselors in our Nation’s education system.

Nearly 100,000 people serve as school counselors, and I am grateful for their commitment to our Nation’s youth. I support February 2 through February 6 as National School Counseling Week.

School counselors work tirelessly to ensure every child has the opportunity for personal and educational growth. They provide essential academic, college prep, career, and emotional support for students. But in many situations, school counselors are overlooked, overworked, making it nearly impossible to give every child the time and attention they deserve to meet their national potential.

Nationally, the current student to counselor ratio is 475 to 1, while the American School Counselors Association recommends at most a 250-to-1 student to school counselor ratio.

Today, not only are children dropping out of high schools at alarming rates, but anywhere from 10 to 15 percent of students report feeling depressed. From dealing with death to addressing learning disabilities, school counselors provide emotional support for students, but the need for additional school counselors has never been more pressing. Though I am honored to recognize and celebrate School Counselors Week, our country still needs more school counselors.

National data prove that school counselors improve teacher quality, bolster student achievement, and lower dropout rates. Despite limited resources, counselors work to enhance educational opportunities for our youth. They inspire students to reach for the stars while working through their academic and social obstacles.

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They may not get a lot of credit, but quality school counselors dramatically improve students’ and teachers’ lives.

I thank the American School Counselor Association and the National Education Association for supporting this resolution. National School Counseling Week reminds us of the crucial role school counselors play in students’ lives.

Madam Speaker, again, I support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill as well.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of House Resolution 56 offered by the Representative from California, Ms. LINDA SÁNCHEZ, and I am very pleased to join her as the lead Republican cosponsor of this important resolution.

National School Counseling Week is celebrated annually the first full week of February to help focus public attention on the unique contribution of professional school counselors. School counselors are employed in school districts in public and private schools of all levels across America to help students reach their full potential. They are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests and talents as these traits relate to academic success and career awareness and development.

School counselors serve as a vital resource for parents by helping them focus on ways to further the educational, personal and social growth of their children. They work with teachers and other educators to help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves. They often seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs that help students become productive members of society. These comprehensive developmental school counseling programs are considered an integral part of the educational process which enables all students to achieve.

National School Counseling Week highlights the impact that counselors can have in helping students achieve academic success and plan for a career. It is particularly important that school counselors encourage students to pursue challenging academic courses to prepare them for college majors and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This year’s theme, “School Counselors: Making a Difference,” truly sums up the results

of the efforts they put forth daily to ensure that no child is left behind.

I have a personal interest in this aspect of counseling. As many here know, I have spent a good deal of my time trying to improve elementary and secondary school math and science education because that is going to be crucial for the jobs of the future. And if the students do not take math and science, they are not likely to get good and meaningful jobs in the future. School counselors can make a huge difference by making students aware of the need for those subjects in their future workplace, but, secondly, to assure them that, regardless of the reputation of these courses as being tough, the students can make it through and they can improve their learning.

I wish to close by expressing my sincere gratitude to all school counselors, not only from my State of Michigan, but from across this great Nation.

Again, I thank the Representative from California, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, for her work bringing this resolution forth today. And I also want to thank Chairman GEORGE MILLER’s and senior Republican BUCK MCKEON’s staff, especially Chad Miller, for their input and assistance in bringing this resolution to the floor in a timely manner.

I urge my colleagues to support school counselors and this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from the 39th District of California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) for 3 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 56 and support the goals of National School Counseling Week.

I want to thank Chairman GEORGE MILLER and Ranking Member BUCK MCKEON, as well as Representative VERNON EHLERS, for their support of this very important resolution.

This resolution aims to highlight the very important work that school counselors do in our schools every single day. The best counselors inspire young people to dream big. They help young people get on the road to accomplish their dreams. And, when necessary, they enlist the support of parents, teachers, mentors, tutors, and anyone else that it takes in order to keep our children moving along that path to accomplishment.

As I know from visiting schools in my district, counselors—though there are far too few of them—play a critical role in student success. Unlike teachers, who often only get to know students one semester or year at a time, counselors follow students throughout their many years at an elementary, middle or high school.

They are adept at spotting long-term trends in student progress or behavior and arranging the appropriate intervention or enrichment. They assist

teachers in developing instructional and behavioral programs tailored to meet the individual and unique needs of a particular student.

I want to recognize all the dedicated counselors from my district who accomplish amazing things every day that they go to work. Lisa Torres from Cleveland Elementary and Brian Kamper of Artesia High School are just two of the many exceptional counselors that I have heard of. Lisa and Brian help their students to believe in themselves and achieve their goals, and their reputations are well known. Parents are rightly proud of these counselors and secure in the knowledge that Lisa and Brian are looking out for their children's academic achievement as well as their emotional well-being. I want to applaud the work of all those like Lisa and Brian, who are an integral part of the education team.

I also hope that this year, as Congress continues to address No Child Left Behind and the role of our Federal Government in our local schools, that we can find a way to encourage schools to invest in counseling. The nationwide average student-to-counselor ratio of 475-to-1 is simply inadequate to provide students, teachers, and parents with the counseling services that they need.

Just think of all the students who are considering dropping out who need extra help from a literacy coach or who don't think that they can pay for college who could be reached if we simply had the counselors in those schools dedicated to those students.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Let me conclude by giving a personal example of why counseling is so important, even though I was not counseled by a school counselor, but my example illustrates the importance.

When I was a senior in high school, I had no idea what I was going to do with my life and my career. I didn't even intend to go to college; fortunately, my father persuaded me to do that. But I had no idea what I wanted to do. That summer I was driving a truck. I ended up sitting in a diner next to another person. We began speaking, and he told me that he was a mechanical engineer at Ford Motor Company. He talked to me about what he did, and it sounded really interesting and it sounded like fun. So when I got to college, I went through the registration line and at one point someone said, what is your major? I said, I don't know, I have no idea. They said, well, you have to declare a major. I said, well, I'm not sure. So they said, well, you have to pick something. I said, okay, I'm going to be a mechanical engineer. And I found it amazing that based on a 10-minute conversation with a total stranger I decided what the rest of my life was going to be like.

That illustrates the important impact that a school counselor—or for

that matter a teacher—can have in advising students on what to do with their lives. As it so happens, after one year as a mechanical engineering student, my physics professor persuaded me to be a physicist instead, but nevertheless, the point is still made: Counseling is crucial, and counseling must be done and must be done well and professionally if we're going to provide a good service for the students of this Nation. And because of that, I am pleased to be a principal cosponsor of this resolution, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I am very, very pleased to recognize "mi amigo" from Texas, the gentleman from the 15th District of Texas, who also, of course, serves as the Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee Subcommittee on Higher Education, Mr. RUBÉN HINOJOSA, for 3 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 56, expressing support for National School Counseling Week.

I thank Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ of California and Congressman VERN EHLERS of Michigan as well as Congressman DAVID LOEBSACK for bringing this important resolution to Congress.

Madam Speaker, effective school counseling programs are critical to boosting academic achievement and eliminating achievement gaps in our Nation's schools. School counselors work with the whole child, providing guidance and support for their academic, personal, social and career development. And they can advise parents to invest in Children's Early Reading Plus Writing Equals Success in Education programs. RIF is a good example of reading literacy, and it is being used in my congressional district with great support from our school counselors.

For many first generation college students, the school counselor is their lifeline to information about preparing for, applying to, and paying for college. In many schools, the counselors office is the safe haven where students can turn for help with challenges at home or at school.

Our best counselors see themselves as student advocates. Unfortunately, school counselors are not always treated as mission-critical faculty or staff in our schools; they're often the first to be downsized in economic hard times. We can already see what's happening as local schools are forced to cut staff to make up for school budget shortfalls.

The American School Counselor Association recommends a student-to-counselor ratio of 250 to 1. Today, the national average is 475 to 1. In my own home State of Texas, the ratio is 437 to 1. And across the Nation, only four States meet the target ratio. Some States have ratios in the range of 1,000 students per counselor, and we must do better than that.

As we celebrate School Counseling Week, we should thank our school counselors for their work to prepare our next generation for success. We should also acknowledge our national failure to provide adequate counseling for our students. Most of all, we should also pledge to do something about it.

I urge all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support House Resolution 56, supporting National School Counseling Week.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I just want to thank Mr. EHLERS from Michigan and all the other speakers on this particular resolution. It's a wonderful resolution. As someone who has introduced legislation designed to call for more resources to support exactly what we're talking about here, I am very happy to support this resolution and call on my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 56, "Expressing support for designation of the week of February 2 through February 6, 2009, as 'National School Counseling Week.'" I would like to thank my colleague Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ for highlighting such essential education staff with this important resolution.

This resolution brings public attention to the unique contribution of professional school counselors within our Nation's school systems. National School Counseling Week highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career.

It recognizes that school counselors help develop well-rounded students by guiding them through their academic, personal, social, and career development. They play a vital role in ensuring that students are aware of financial aid and college opportunities as well as encouraging students to pursue challenging academic courses to prepare them for college majors and careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

School counselors provide support for students whose family members have been deployed to conflicts overseas and 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.

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

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.

As chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I understand how important school counselors are for our youth. Madam Speaker, today many youth face temptations that often lead them down destructive paths and it is vitally important that we provide guidance that helps them make good decisions.

Why do we need to highlight the work of school counselors?

There are 35.2 million young people ages 10–18 in the U.S. today; of those young people: 1 out of 4 lives with only one parent; 1 out of 10 was born to teen parents; 1 out of 5 lives in poverty; 1 out of 10 will not finish high school.

Madam Speaker, a school counselor is sometimes the only person to whom our young people can go for advice and guidance. Imagine how many young lives could be positively impacted if we increased the number of school counselors and remembered their important role when budgets are cut.

School counselors can help give those youth living in poverty to strive towards a brighter future for themselves. Every child could benefit from having someone in his or her life to turn to for advice and help in the time of need.

The positive relationships and reinforcement that school counselors provide is clearly effective. Young people today are confronted with many challenges in life. They can find the confidence to overcome many of these challenges through quality counseling.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, 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. 56.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

COMMENDING UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA GATORS FOR WINNING BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 58) commending the University of Florida Gators for winning the Bowl Championship Series National Championship Game.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 58

Whereas, on January 8, 2009, the University of Florida Gators defeated the Oklahoma Sooners 24–14 in the Bowl Championship Series National Championship Game in Miami, Florida;

Whereas the Gators have become one of the premier athletic and academic institutions in the country;

Whereas this BCS National Championship is the University of Florida's 22nd national championship in all sports;

Whereas the Gators' victory over Oklahoma was the third football national title for the University of Florida and the second in the past three seasons, the others being won in 1996 and 2007;

Whereas the Gators are the fourth school in the modern era to win two outright national titles in three years;

Whereas the Gators improved their BCS Championship game record to 2–0;

Whereas Florida made its 18th-straight bowl appearance to extend their current school record, the longest active streak by a Southeastern Conference (SEC) team representing the second-longest in the Nation;

Whereas the Gators finished the 2008 season with a 13–1 record, matching the single-season school record for wins (also 13–1 in 2006);

Whereas the Gators become the second team in the 11-year history of the BCS to win two titles;

Whereas the Gators' victory is the fifth BCS championship for the SEC;

Whereas head coach Urban Meyer became only the fifth coach since 1936 to win two national championships in his first four seasons at a school;

Whereas Coach Meyer becomes the fifth active Division I coach with multiple national titles;

Whereas Coach Meyer became the 14th youngest head coach to win a pair of national titles since 1950;

Whereas the Gators' quarterback Tim Tebow was named the game's Most Valuable Player, with 340 yards of total offense, the third-best pass-rush total in a BCS Championship game;

Whereas Tim Tebow showed why he is one of the most versatile quarterbacks in college football history by completing 18 of 30 passes for 231 yards and 2 touchdowns and rushing for 109 yards, the third highest ground total by a quarterback in a BCS title game;

Whereas Tim Tebow became only the 5th player since 1950 to win two national titles and a Heisman Trophy;

Whereas Percy Harvin, after returning from an ankle injury, ran nine times for 122 yards and a touchdown, marking the third-best rushing total in a BCS Championship game, caught five passes for 49 yards, and proved once again to be the fastest player on the field;

Whereas Tebow and Harvin became the first set of teammates to each rush for 100 yards or more in the same BCS National Championship game;

Whereas the Gators' defense shut down the highest-scoring team in modern football history and held Oklahoma to only 14 points and 363 total yards, 40 points and 199 yards below the Sooners' season average;

Whereas Florida's defense held Sooner quarterback and Heisman Trophy winner Sam Bradford to 256 passing yards, his third-lowest of the season and his first two-interception game since October 11, 2008;

Whereas the Gators' players and coaches football team represent the University of Florida and the State of Florida with honor and integrity; and

Whereas residents of Florida and Gator fans worldwide are to be commended for their longstanding support, perseverance, and pride in the team: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the University of Florida Gators for winning the Bowl Championship Series National Championship;

(2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches, students, and support staff who were instrumental in the victory; and

(3) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit a copy of this resolution to University of Florida President J.

Bernard Machen and head coach Urban Meyer for appropriate display.

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.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. STEARNS from Florida control the time on this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. 58 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Florida football team for their victory in the 2009 NCAA FedEx BCS National Championship game.

On January 8, football fans all across the country were treated to an exceptional game as the University of Florida Gators defeated the University of Oklahoma Sooners and clinched their third national title.

Defeating a tough Oklahoma Sooners team by a score of 24–14, the Florida Gators became the fourth straight second-ranked team to defeat the number one team in the Nation in the BCS National Championship.

The University of Florida serves as a premier academic institution, and is now emerging as an athletic powerhouse. The school has fielded 22 national championship teams, with the last four coming from the men's football and basketball teams.

This year's football team finished the season with a 13–1 record, matching the single season school record for wins. The outstanding players and coaches produced a great season, winning numerous awards and praise throughout the country.

I would also like to congratulate Tim Tebow, the game's most valuable player. He threw for 231 yards and two touchdowns while rushing for 109 yards. His 340 yards of total offense was the third best pass-rush total in BCS Championship history. He won the Heisman Trophy Award last year, and is a leader for his team.

And congratulations to Percy Harvin, one of the most electric and skilled athletes in America. Harvin rushed for 122 yards and caught five passes for 49 yards.

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This was quite a feat after returning to play from a devastating ankle injury last month.