

to all Americans, including those in the territories.

CONCERNS WITH GOVERNMENT-RUN HEALTH CARE PLAN

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, during the August recess, I was honored to host the largest congressional townhalls in the history of South Carolina: 1,700 people in Columbia; 1,500 in Lexington; 1,500 in Beaufort; and 1,200 in Hilton Head. During my 25 years of serving the public in the State Senate and Congress, I have not seen such passionate events full of patriots, 95 percent of whom support health insurance reform, but not a government takeover.

I presented my concerns in a handout with a government-run health care plan: \$1.6 trillion in costs, 100 million people losing their current coverage, \$818 billion in taxes, 1.6 million jobs lost, according to the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and rationing of care.

I presented a better way, the Empowering Patients First Act, introduced by the Republican Study Committee led by Dr. Tom Price. It provides for portability, keeping current coverage, tax incentives to purchase insurance, lower costs through competition, and bars government-funded abortions.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th and the Global War on Terrorism.

IT'S TIME FOR US TO TALK ABOUT HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have got some news here. It says as of September 10, 11:23 a.m., reported by The Hill, Speaker NANCY PELOSI said, Democrats should cease efforts to sanction Representative JOE WILSON. It goes on to quote her and says, It's time for us to talk about health care, not JOE WILSON.

But Democratic leaders, it goes on to say, were looking into what formal action the House might take against WILSON, and then, But PELOSI dismissed that idea as well as a call for WILSON to apologize on the floor.

I am on to health care reform. I am not going to discuss JOE WILSON, she said. I think his actions spoke for itself. He has apologized. He will figure out what is appropriate for him to do.

And I am really confused. What do you call it when somebody says something that they are going to do, and then they don't do it? What is that statement?

AMERICANS' TRUST IN MEDIA REACHES NEW LOW

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Americans' trust in the media has plummeted to an all-time low, according to a new survey by the Pew Research Center. According to Pew, only about a quarter of Americans say that news organizations are not politically biased, less than one-third say the media generally get the facts straight, less than one in five say that the media deals fairly with all sides of the story, and just 29 percent had a favorable opinion of the liberal New York Times, the lowest rating for any international organization in the Pew survey.

Americans have lost faith in the national media. Whether it's health care or other issues, it's up to the media to restore the public's trust by reporting the facts fairly.

APOLOGY ACCEPTED

(Mr. KING of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to make the point that last Wednesday night during a joint session there was a very brief breach of decorum here by Congressman JOE WILSON, someone who is a true consummate Southern gentleman, an officer and a gentleman.

He immediately called the White House, the White House immediately accepted JOE WILSON's apology, and that must be the end of it. A gentleman that conducted himself as a gentleman immediately in the aftermath, without putting his finger to the political winds, he did the right thing.

No one has a claim to any further redress if the President of the United States accepts an apology, and he did.

So I stand with JOE WILSON. Let's get on with the business of this House, and let's start running this country instead of doing cheap political points, which I expect will be coming to the floor of this House sometime about tomorrow.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bill was signed by Speaker pro tempore VAN HOLLEN on Tuesday, August 25, 2009:

H.R. 3325, to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to reauthorize for 1 year the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program and the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security program.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules

on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

RECOMMENDING TEACHING CONSTITUTION TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 686) recommending that the United States Constitution be taught to high school students throughout the Nation in September of their senior year, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 686

Whereas the United States Constitution is the fundamental law of the United States;

Whereas people in the United States of all ages, income levels, and political beliefs fail tests of civic literacy;

Whereas a 1998 survey revealed that more teenagers knew who the "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" was than the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, more knew the star of the motion picture "Titanic" than who was the vice president of the United States, and more can name the Three Stooges and the 3 American Idol judges than can name the 3 branches of government;

Whereas fewer than half of all people in the United States can name the three branches of the United States Government;

Whereas students at top colleges and universities in the United States scored an average of only 59.4 percent for seniors and 56.6 percent for freshmen on tests of civic literacy;

Whereas people in the United States aged 25 to 34 score an average of 46 percent on a test of civic literacy and people aged 65 and over score the same 46 percent;

Whereas research shows that an increase in civic knowledge, including that of the United States Constitution, almost invariably leads to the beneficial use of that knowledge; and

Whereas research shows that greater civic learning leads to more active citizenship, and people in the United States who fulfill their civic obligations beyond voting are more knowledgeable about their country's history and institutions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) all high school seniors across the country should spend at least one week learning about the United States Constitution in September of their senior year, as knowledge of this historic document, which constitutes the very foundation of our country, is critical to being an effective citizen; and

(2) upon reaching voting age, high school seniors should engage in civic learning activities on an issue of importance to them to demonstrate their understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 686 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 686 and thank Mr. GRAYSON, the sponsor of this resolution, for his leadership.

Almost 222 years ago, on Thursday, September 17, 1787, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia for the last time to sign the document they created, a living and breathing document that stands as the world's longest surviving written charter government.

This resolution brings attention to the importance of this document by calling for all high school students to learn about the Constitution. Many students today have little exposure to this rich document and its history. And without a basic understanding of the Constitution and the benefits it provides, it is less likely that these same students will vote or engage in active citizenship.

One program that combats this lack of knowledge is, "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution." The program encourages civic awareness and responsibility in middle school and high school students through hands-on activities. Students discover firsthand how the Constitution and the Bill of Rights impact their everyday lives and participate in simulated congressional hearings. At the national level, students utilize higher-order thinking skills as they demonstrate their knowledge of constitutional theory by defending a historical or contemporary issue.

Programs like "We the People" make the Constitution come alive and help students connect what they are learning to contemporary issues and events. This type of learning is important not only for its academic aspects, but also for the way in which it improves our democracy. Learning about the Constitution promotes positive civic attitudes and fosters involvement in our democracy.

This Thursday, September 17, is Constitution Day, because on September 17, 1787, the Constitution was signed and history was made. One way students and teachers can observe this important day and celebrate the legacy of our Founding Fathers is by learning more about the timeless document signed 222 years ago and finding ways to actively participate in our democracy.

I want to express my support for this resolution and encourage young people to learn about how the Constitution affects their everyday lives. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 686, recommending that the United States Constitution be taught to high school students throughout the Nation in September of their senior year. It has been reported that just over half of all Americans can correctly identify the three branches of government. In fact, a recent poll indicated we have more people in America who can identify The Three Stooges than they can the three branches of government.

More than one in five believe that the three branches of government are the Republican, Democrat and independent branches, and only a small percentage of Americans can identify the role of the judiciary in the Federal Government. Yet, if you ask teenagers to name the three judges on "American Idol," they can rattle off their names immediately.

The word "civic" originates from the Latin word "civis," meaning "citizen." At the heart of civic education is the concept that we must understand what it means to be a citizen. The importance of civic education is that without a public informed about their civic duties, the rights and freedoms promised by our constitutional structure may not be realized.

Our young people in future generations must understand that it is our constitutional framework and the freedom and liberty it provides which forms the glue that holds our society together. The Constitution is a blueprint for connecting our large and diverse society in a peaceful coexistence, for the most part.

Passing on an understanding of our country's history and the constitutional framework upon which it was founded is the duty of one generation to the next. As my friend from the Northern Mariana Islands mentioned, September 17, 2009, will mark the 222nd anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

□ 1415

I think it is appropriate that teachers and parents across the country use this anniversary as an opportunity to discuss the importance of our Constitution and the principles it embodies with all students, but especially high school seniors, who are preparing for the next chapter of their lives, and many of them to vote for the first time.

It is also important to note that when the Founders came together and finally agreed on this Constitution, it was born out of a distrust for government. So they put this document together, and it was a long process. In fact, Benjamin Franklin, after 5 weeks, said, We've been going 5 weeks. We have more noes than ayes. And then he went on to say, Of course, We know that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without God's notice. And, How can an empire rise without his aid?

He went on to say, It's written in the sacred writing that unless the Lord

build a house, they labor in vain that build it.

He went on to point out and make a motion that they should begin each day with prayer, just as we have from 1787 until now. But then they went on to finally create a document they could agree on with a House of Representatives. But they were concerned. There was all this debate. One House still wouldn't be strong enough to have all the checks and balances to control a government that might try to run away and take away their liberty.

So they didn't feel good about just one House. They wanted two houses. But they didn't want one House, maybe a House of Lords and a House of Commons, where one is more powerful than the other. They wanted both Houses to be able to completely veto what the other is doing to stop the other House from moving forward with the law.

So they got two Houses, where they could do that. And that wasn't good enough. They said, We need an executive, but we don't want to have this thing where a legislative body then elects one of their own. We want somebody elected outside that, and then he can veto what those two Houses did.

You know, that is still not good enough, because we really don't trust government. Let's have another branch outside that, called the judiciary, and we will give them a veto over laws that are made, too. That way, we can control runaway government.

And it was ferocious argument and debate coming around to this final document that my friend from the Mariana Islands has pointed out has been such a tremendous asset for the history of mankind. And it was so moving that at the conclusion they agreed on the Constitution, they agreed to come forward with a Bill of Rights thereafter, that it's reported that Benjamin Franklin said, as he was recognized at the end, looking at the chair behind President George Washington as he stood there—and, by the way, this massive painting can be seen right outside this House—he said, Mr. President, I have been looking at the half of the sun carved in the back of your chair, wondering throughout this process if that were a rising sun or a setting sun. He said, I now believe that is a rising sun.

I agree with him, and I agree so wholeheartedly with my friend that this is an excellent proposal, a resolution to encourage this kind of thing, to recommend this to the State, not to ram it down anybody's throat; but young people need to know this, especially before they vote, know the three branches as well as the three judges from American Idol.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, again, I encourage my colleagues in the House to please support House Resolution 686.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 686, which recommends that the United States Constitution be taught to high school students throughout the Nation in September of their senior

year. Understanding the Constitution and fundamentals of the government of the United States is essential to being a contributing member of our society. By recommending that the U.S. Constitution be taught to high school seniors, this measure will help prepare people of voting age to participate in the democratic process.

The state of public awareness and understanding of the U.S. system of government requires action to improve civic education. Americans from all walks of life—rich and poor, young and old, and Republican and Democrat—fail civic literacy tests. Moreover, many institutions of learning of all calibers and at all levels do not adequately prepare students to be knowledgeable citizens. Nearly half of the States do not require that U.S. civics and American history be taught in school. Education is vital to improving the vitality of our democracy.

In Texas, teaching of the constitution is part of our social studies curriculum and 91 percent of our students passed our exit exams in the 2007–2008 school year. This shows an effort on our part to educate our students on the governing doctrine of our great nation and the retention by our students of this information. Instituting such requirements helps develop responsible adults who understand their responsibilities as a citizen of this great nation.

I believe that all citizens need to have a strong understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the institutions of U.S. government. Individuals must understand the basic tenets of our Constitution in order to protect their rights and fully participate in the democratic process. Furthermore, civic Recommending to the States that they teach the United States Constitution as a part of the senior year curriculum will send a clear message that civics is an important part of a high school education. Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and our government will also lead to increased civic engagement among our students. Teaching the basic tenets of government to those students who will then become voters will increase voter participation rates and create a more active citizenry.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 686, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS WEEK

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 737) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week should be established.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 737

Whereas Hispanic-Serving Institutions play an important role in educating many

underprivileged students and helping them attain their full potential through higher education;

Whereas there are currently about 268 Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the United States;

Whereas Hispanic-Serving Institutions are actively involved in stabilizing and improving their communities;

Whereas celebrating the vast contributions of Hispanic-Serving Institutions contributes to the strength and culture of our Nation;

Whereas the achievements and goals of Hispanic-Serving Institutions are deserving of national recognition; and

Whereas the week of September 20th would be an appropriate week for such recognition: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the achievements and goals of Hispanic-Serving Institutions across the country;

(2) supports the designation of an appropriate week as “National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week”;

(3) requests the President to issue a proclamation designating such week; and

(4) calling on the people of the United States and interested groups to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 737 into the record.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands?

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of House Resolution 737, which encourages the establishment of the week of September 20 as National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week. Hispanic-Serving Institutions are degree-granting institutions with full-time equivalent enrollment that are at least 25 percent Hispanic. In 1990, there were only 137 recognized Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Today, there are 268 such institutions, educating more than half of all Hispanic college and university students in the Nation.

Hispanic Americans face multiple obstacles in access and completion of higher education. While Hispanic high-school graduates are more likely than their white peers to go on to college, they are less likely to complete their bachelor's degrees because of issues linked to poverty, immigration, and enrollment status.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions play a crucial role in addressing these issues and obstacles while remaining committed to educating underserved students across the country.

Working to increase enrollment and retention, Hispanic-Serving Institu-

tions have created many innovative programs. At El Camino College in California, their “First Year Experience” class has rates 10 to 30 percent higher than the rest of the student body. The program provides a learning community through linked classes and a team of instructors and counselors who work together to increase student success.

At the University of Texas, El Paso, deep relationships with the surrounding K–12 community schools have helped bridge a path for students to obtain a higher education and be prepared for college-level work.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions continue to produce extremely accomplished members of our society. Their alumni include Members of Congress and some of the President's closest advisors in his Cabinet.

Lastly, it is important to note that September is Hispanic Heritage Month. This month celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of Hispanics in the United States while honoring the Hispanic culture in our country. It is appropriate that we include Hispanic-Serving Institutions in this honor.

I thank Representative GRIJALVA for his leadership in bringing this important resolution forward. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this important resolution and join me in my commendation of our country's Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 737, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week should be established.

I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. GRIJALVA, for introducing this resolution. Mr. GRIJALVA recognizes the important role that HSIs play for all postsecondary students, especially minority students.

HSIs and their student body are very diverse. The community of HSIs includes 2-year and 4-year institutions and public and private institutions. In 2007, 46 percent of students enrolled in HSIs were Hispanics, and the remaining 44 percent were a diverse mix of students from various ethnicities and backgrounds. Even with this diversity of the student body, geographical location and population served, the principal missions of all of these institutions is to provide a quality education.

HSIs deserve recognition for the contribution they make to the education community and the Nation. While comprising less than 10 percent of the Nation's institutions of higher education, HSIs educate over two-thirds of Hispanic students enrolled in colleges and universities. Most HSIs do not have access to the resources or endowment income that other institutions can draw