

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. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 657) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 657

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 2005–2006 academic year is about 2.5 million and the student-teacher ratio is 15 to 1;

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students;

Whereas more than 27 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are from minority backgrounds, and nearly 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 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 29 to February 4, 2006, 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 Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 657.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 657 offered by the gentleman from Minnesota. This resolution increases the awareness of Catholic education while honoring the contributions of America's Catholic schools.

January 29 through February 4, 2006, has been designated Catholic Schools Week, an annual tradition in its 32nd 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 a values-added education with high standards of quality and excellence to the over 2.4 million students enrolled in Catholic schools across the country. In just my home State of Delaware, there are over 30 Catholic schools.

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 to postsecondary training at 4-year colleges, community colleges or technical schools. This success could be also 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 academically, but also good citizens.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2006 is "Character, Compassion, Values." This theme resonates with the Catholic schools this academic year in particular. Catholic schools demonstrated an enormous amount of character and compassion in their response to the devastating hurricanes that hit the gulf coast last year. 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 costs of that education. Instead, the Catholic schools knew their first priority was to educate these children, and, second, figure out how to cover the greater costs they incurred.

In addition, the Catholic schools in New Orleans proved to be the most resilient by becoming some of the first schools in the hurricane-damaged area to reopen their doors to students.

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.

I again commend the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) for introducing this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution recognizing the contributions Catholic schools make to our society.

Both public and Catholic schools provide a strong foundation for our Nation's children. While our public schools educate the vast majority of our children, our Catholic schools provide an excellent and enriching alternative.

I have attended Catholic schools myself. I received a high-quality education from these schools and have benefited greatly. Sister Jean and Sister Jerome taught me to read and master phonics. Sister Hilary taught me Latin, which I in turn taught also. They were the greatest influence outside of my family. They not only challenged me intellectually, but forced me to examine my own personal formation.

At St. Mary's I learned the greatness of God and the dignity of humanity. In Congress, my basic principle is that government's role is to promote, protect, defend and enhance human dignity. I examine every bill on these principles of human dignity that I learned at St. Mary's. Children across America have benefited from the same positive influence a Catholic education had on me. H. Res. 657 recognizes and celebrates our Catholic schools for this contribution.

I believe that one of the greatest aspects of the American education system is its diversity. The goal of American education is to provide anyone with the opportunity to succeed. Catholic schools are a critical part of that equation, teaching critical values and providing their students with beneficial and life-enriching experiences.

The contributions which Catholic schools make to our Nation and our children strengthen our society and our place in the world. Our children have more opportunities because both Catholic and public schools can provide them with a high-quality education. Together these two sectors of our education system will work to ensure our excellence in the world.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY), the sponsor who has undertaken to pursue this resolution.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from

Delaware and the others who are speaking on behalf of this resolution. I am pleased to be here to honor the contributions of Catholic schools.

My first real encounter with Catholic elementary and secondary students was my interaction with graduates from Catholic schools that I met at St. John's University. These students impressed me. They were not only well prepared for college, but they were courteous, kind, respectful, caring and friendly to me. They say you can tell a tree by its fruit. By this measure I assume Catholic schools must be great.

I remember a conversation I had while in college with a few graduates of Catholic high schools reminiscing on their high school experience. One of these students was so cynical about his Catholic education that I resolved never to send my children to Catholic schools. Well, it turns out the cynical student became a priest, so I changed my mind. Catholic schools really do nurture one's faith.

My wife Debbie and I have four wonderful children. They have been able to experience the best of both worlds. They all graduated from Watertown Mayer Public Middle School, and they all chose to attend Catholic high schools, not just to get a great education, but to be able to talk about how God influences history and the world around us.

We are pleased to see that they have been nurtured in the Catholic spirit of helping others. They participate in many programs to help those in need. For example, my daughter Emily organized a food drive for Mary's Place, an outreach center for the needy, while she was at Holy Family Catholic High School. She collected enough food from her fellow students to fill up a van and feed many in need.

I have so much faith in Catholic schools because they consistently provide a great education for 2.5 million students across America and have a student-teacher ratio that averages 15-1.

I can attest to the quality education with two of our children now attending the University of Notre Dame. Catholic schools have done an extraordinary job of reaching out to the disadvantaged youth throughout our country. More than 27 percent of students enrolled in Catholic schools are from minority backgrounds, and nearly 14 percent of them are non-Catholics.

Mr. Speaker, Catholic schools make fantastic contributions to education in this country, but every school must recognize that there is more that can be done. Well, at St. John's Prep my son's physics teacher was a former engineer at 3M. My son, his classmates, and likely hundreds or thousands of other students were not only able to benefit from his invaluable real-world experience, but they also gained an understanding of the success that can be achieved by those who study math and science.

That is why I introduced the Teachers for Tomorrow's Career Act, H.R.

4622, with my Democrat colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT). This legislation will bring down barriers so that math and science professionals can make the transition into teaching and offer real-world experience to the critical task of teaching math and science to our children.

The Kennedy-Holt legislation goes a long way toward fulfilling President Bush's new proposal of bringing 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in our classrooms, and make sure our children are competitive in the 21st century no matter what kind of school they attend.

Mr. Speaker, last week was Catholic Schools Week. The theme was "Catholic Schools: Character, Compassion, Values."

I urge my colleagues to join Mr. LIPINSKI and I in supporting this resolution to commend our Catholic schools and their teachers, the parents, and religious communities that support them in their service to our Nation's youth.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 657, honoring National Catholic Schools Week and the tremendous contributions that Catholic schools have made to our country.

Since 1974, Catholic Schools Week has celebrated the important role that Catholic schools play in American education, and their excellent reputation for providing a strong academic and moral education, as well as teaching social responsibility.

□ 1545

This year's theme of Catholic Schools Week is: "Catholic Schools: Character. Compassion. Values." These words embody the mission of Catholic education beyond providing top-notch academic training. Compassion is at the heart of the Catholic faith. It teaches so many young men and women the strength of character and the strong convictions that they need to be successful adults and to contribute to our society.

My wife and I are each products of 12 years of Catholic elementary and secondary school: my wife in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, at Saint Patrick's grade school and Bishop McCourt High School; myself in Chicago at Saint Symphorosa Grammar School and Saint Ignatius College Prep. Like so many others, I understand how important Catholic schools are in providing a spiritual, moral, and intellectual foundation. My 12 years of Catholic education provided me with the knowledge, discipline, and the love of learning that enabled me to go on and earn my Ph.D. and become a teacher before I came to Congress.

As we recognize Catholic Schools Week, we must pay special tribute to the dedicated teachers and administrators who sacrifice so much, usually

getting paid less than they could elsewhere, to dedicate their lives to teaching at Catholic schools. I have fond memories of my teachers, who taught me not only the value of a good education but also the values of faith and service. Although it was almost 35 years ago, I can still remember Sister Mildred, my first grade teacher; Miss Ivers, my second grade teacher. And the memories go on.

I will never forget Sister Diane, who was my student congress coach when I was in high school. To this day, when I speak in front of crowds, I still envision Sister Diane sitting there, nodding, giving me confidence when I was a nervous young kid trying to make my first public speeches. I related these memories while attending a celebration at Saint Richard's School last week. After the celebration, many people came up to me with similar memories, memories of teachers who gave their heart and soul and made such a big difference in the lives of their students.

To thank these men and women and their tireless contributions and service, I held a breakfast last week at Saint Lawrence High School during Catholic Schools Week. We talked about the successes of Catholic schools and also the challenges that they face. Nationally, more than 2.4 million young people are enrolled in nearly 8,000 Catholic schools. These schools have more than 160,000 full-time professional staff, boasting a student-teacher ratio of 15-1.

The Chicago archdiocese has had one of the most successful school systems. Today, more than 106,000 students attend 276 schools. In my district alone, there are 34 grammar schools and five high schools. The success of students in the Chicago archdiocese is phenomenal. The high schools have an amazing graduation rate of 99 percent, and about 95 percent of those graduates go on to college. This is clearly a record to be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, as an important complement to our public schools and other private institutions, Catholic schools contribute a great deal to America. They have made a big difference in my life and a big difference in the lives of countless others. They deserve our praise and our support; and I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution, the Kennedy resolution, honoring Catholic schools during this Catholic Schools Week.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who turns out to be a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, which is a real insult to Philadelphia Eagles fans like myself.

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of this resolution recognizing Catholic schools throughout the country. In particular, I would like to recognize those in the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania, with several of whom I celebrated National Catholic Schools Week.

National Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration, as mentioned by my colleagues; and I am very pleased to have been a part of it in the communities I represent. It is inspiring to see the students focus, students who are very lively, normal students, but who also focus on service and on faith and on commitment.

The young people that I encountered last week were just like any other student, but in one way very different. They were able to express for me their moral commitment to service, their commitment to their fellow man in a way that obviously is a further expression of their faith. These are the students who I expect will grow up to be public servants in the future, to be the teachers of the future, to be those who become missionaries in the future, and those who will make our world a better place.

I know firsthand the benefits of a Catholic education that emphasizes that intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical and social values in students, having attended Saint Richard's School in North Olmstead, Ohio; St. Mary's in Glenshaw, Pennsylvania; and finally graduating from the sixth grade at Saint Alexis in Wexford, Pennsylvania, which is currently my parish.

I have also had the opportunity, as I mentioned earlier, of visiting many schools throughout the six counties I represent in Pennsylvania District Four. One thing I learned when I was a State senator was that these schools not only provide all of these advantages for students but they provide a significant advantage to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For every student who attends a Catholic school, the taxpayers of the commonwealth save a significant amount of money that would have been spent in the public school system. So financially, a benefit; socially, a benefit.

I congratulate the Catholic schools, the teachers, and the parents for sending their kids to these schools and making the United States's future much brighter.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding me this time, and I rise to recognize the contributions of Catholic schools to Chicago and to the Nation.

Children all across America have benefited from Catholic education. I applaud these schools for their long commitment to education, to a value system and character development, and to developing the kind of lifestyles that students as well as adults need to seek.

There are almost 8,000 Catholic schools nationwide. Illinois is one of the 10 States with the highest enrollment of Catholic students, with over 181,000 students in 538 schools in the State. In Chicago, as in other urban

areas, Catholic schools play an important role in providing quality academic training for children and youth.

Indeed, the archdiocese of Chicago is the second largest Catholic school system in the Nation. There are 34 outstanding Catholic schools in my congressional district, and I recognize all of them as being outstanding, as a matter of fact, some of the very best schools in the Nation, such as Saint Ignatius Prep, known nationally as an outstanding school. But all of them are outstanding schools. They do an exceptional job.

Catholic schools, however, like all other components of education, Mr. Speaker, are facing difficult times. And almost every time I meet with residents and students and staff, we are all trying to figure out how do we keep the resources available to keep these educational institutions intact. So I would hope that as the year goes on and as we discuss and debate education, that we will find ways to put as much resources into education as we possibly can, knowing that the investment will pay off in the end.

Again, I salute the Catholic schools for their outstanding contributions, and I would like to recite for the RECORD those in my district, which are as follows:

Chicago Jesuit Academy, Divine Infant Jesus School, Divine Providence School, St. Bernardine School, St. Edmund School, St. Jerome School, St. Stanislaus Kostka, St. Elizabeth School, St. Helen School, Children of Peace School, Santa Lucia School, St. Pius V School, St. Therese School, Visitation School, St. Domitilla School, Ascension School, St. Giles School, St. Luke School.

St. Vincent Ferrer School, Old St. Mary's, St. Angela School, St. Malachy School, St. Nicholas Cathedral, San Miguel-Comer Campus, Frances Xavier Warde, Our Lady of the Westside, St. Catherine/St. Lucy, Immaculate Conception School, Archbishop Quigley Preparatory, Fenwick High School, Holy Trinity High School, St. Ignatius College Prep., St. Joseph High School, Trinity High School.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY), alas another Steelers fan.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I am pleased to join my colleagues in support of this resolution to recognize the students, teachers, faculty, and graduates of Catholic schools. At Catholic schools across my State of Pennsylvania and the Nation, students will receive the highest-quality teaching in all academic subjects. But perhaps more important, beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, students will be exposed to well-rounded, values-based curricula that teach the mind, the heart, the body, and the soul. Indeed, Catholic schools don't shy away from matters of right and wrong.

The late Pope John Paul II, himself a great advocate for education, chal-

lenged Catholic schools to "foster in your students a social consciousness which will move them to meet the needs of their neighbors and to discern and to seek to remove the sources of injustice in society." I believe Catholic schools do promote social awareness and help make the world a better place to live.

Last week, as we know, was Catholic Schools Week, and the theme was "Catholic Schools: Character, Compassion, and Values." As a young student at St. Barnabas Elementary School myself and Walsh Jesuit High School, I was taught these traits at early ages. I greatly value my Catholic school education, as I do my public school education.

The 18th Congressional District of Pennsylvania has this diversity of many Catholic schools, 67 in Allegheny County alone, five in Washington County, 19 in Westmoreland County. With over 183,000 students educated in Catholic schools across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the impact is huge. Eighty percent of Catholic school students go on to college, and Catholic schools saved more than \$1 billion last year in taxpayer funds in Pennsylvania alone by a reduction of the dropout rate to less than 3 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of this legislation. I commend the authors and all those who teach and are students of Catholic schools.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops once stated, "Education fosters the dignity of a person and the building of a community." Today, I am honored to thank my friend, Congressman MARK KENNEDY, for his leadership in recognizing America's Catholic schools for their continued commitment to education, and I appreciate Congressman MIKE CASTLE for his managing of the resolution.

I know firsthand of the effectiveness of Catholic schools from my school visits in the Second District of South Carolina to the elementary schools of St. Mary Help of Christians in Aiken; St. Peter in Beaufort; St. John Newmann of Columbia; and St. Joseph of Columbia, where I have two godsons, Jackson Gossett and Joseph Fisera; St. Martin DePorres of Columbia; St. Peter of Columbia; and additionally, St. Francis by the Sea of Hilton Head Island, along with Cardinal Newman High School in Forest Acres, South Carolina.

□ 1600

For generations these schools have served as an origin of opportunity for millions of Americans by teaching a broad, values-added education. Catholic schools play a pivotal role in helping American children develop into responsible and productive members of

society. Today, almost 8,000 Catholic schools are educating nearly 2.5 million students. Because of their excellent curriculum and strong emphasis upon values, these schools consistently outperform other public and private schools. Ninety-nine percent of Catholic high school students graduate, and 97 percent attend some form of postsecondary schooling.

Catholic schools also serve willingly in our communities. After Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, Catholic schools in almost every State graciously welcomed displaced children from devastated areas without charging them for tuition, uniforms, books and supplies. Their recent generosity is simply another example of Catholic schools faithfully following the Gospel message. As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, I join my colleagues in supporting the resolution expressing our sincere appreciation for America's Catholic schools.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim the balance of my time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and for offering this resolution recognizing the contributions of Catholic schools to our communities and to our Nation, and join in the remarks of those who have spoken before me on this measure.

Clearly, as we travel our congressional districts and we recount our own life experiences with Catholics schools, both in attending them and in interacting with them in our congressional roles, the magnificent and incredible contribution they make to our communities and to building the lives of young people in the fullest sense of the word, not just the academic performance of these young people, but the efforts that they make to integrate them into the community in terms of community service and building their character and building their moral values and building their recognition of the community in which young people live, and the diversity of that community and understanding the need to be accepting of that community, these are characteristics, these are values, these are principles that we hold dear as a Nation, and Catholic schools have been fundamental to building those within the young people that attend these schools.

I had the honor of attending Catholic high school, but only for 1 year, Bellerme High School in San Jose, and I just wanted to express my support of this resolution and the continuation of the contribution of Catholic

schools to our Nation's education system and the character-building of our young people.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my support to House Resolution 657, which honors the contributions of Catholic schools on America's youth, and more than this, their contribution in enhancing the social framework of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago President Reagan's Secretary of Education, Secretary Bennett, remarked that during the first 150 years in the history of this Nation, that education was not just about the development of the mind, it was also considered to be the architect of the soul, and Catholic schools have never forgotten that second, most important, part of the mission of education.

As someone who has benefited greatly from Catholic education, I can say unequivocally that the values taught to me by the Catholic school system prepared me for the challenges and the opportunities I have met during my lifetime. My Catholic education prepared me to stand up and make the hard decisions in life with the comfort of having complete confidence in who I am as a person, and the deep understanding of human dignity that is so easily forgotten in today's overly commercialized, media-driven society.

My education taught me the value of developing not only my mind, but my commitment to my family, my community and my faith. The sisters, priests and teachers of Bishop Egan High School in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania, and my professors at St. Thomas University in Florida helped me develop those core values, and for that I will be forever in their debt. Therefore, I call on my colleagues to join with me in strong support of this resolution, to show their support for Catholic school systems, educators, students, and contributors.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I wish to submit these comments for extension of remarks.

I would like to speak in strong support of H. Res. 657, a resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic Schools and thank Mr. KENNEDY for his good work.

As a proud graduate of St. George's Elementary School, St. John the Baptist High School, and Fordham University, I know firsthand the great value of a Catholic School education.

Catholic school has been a longstanding tradition in my family. My three sons graduated from Catholic schools prepared for the challenges they have faced in their professional and personal lives.

As we celebrate the 32nd Annual Catholic Schools Week, I am proud to report that Catholic schools continue to play a vibrant and integral role in the educational and cultural life of our Nation.

Today, nearly 2.5 million children attend Catholic elementary, middle and high schools.

Minority enrollment is nearly 30 percent and non-Catholic enrollment is over 13 percent of the total.

There are nearly 400 Catholic schools in my home State of New Jersey alone, serving nearly 130,000 students, and many of these schools serve our urban districts.

Impressively, the student/teacher ratio in Catholic schools is 15:1, a ratio which provides teachers the opportunity to truly get to know the individual needs and strengths of the student body.

Catholic schools provide a disciplined, multi-faceted educational experience for children.

A Catholic education merges critical thinking and knowledge-based learning with a spirit of tolerance, empathy and service to others. This unique approach is exemplified in the theme of this year's Catholic Schools Week: Character. Compassion. Values.

Teaching students to serve their communities and to develop fundamental human values enhances self-esteem and enthusiasm, brings abstract subjects to life, and empowers students to think about worlds beyond their own.

It may also have a significant salutary effect on academic performance. Recent studies have demonstrated that Catholic students consistently perform up to a very high standard on tests assessing reading, writing, math and science abilities.

What transpires during the education of each and every child has repercussions beyond the classroom: It will shape the character of the country that we will become.

That is why I would like to thank the Catholic Schools of America for the tremendous success they have had in producing a student body well educated and well prepared to take an active role in strengthening our society.

This is perfectly illustrated in the generous response that Catholic schools students have had toward students devastated by the recent hurricane in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Catholic students delivered more than \$1 million to Katrina students and opened their hearts and schools to thousands of victims. After the hurricane, New Orleans, with its deep Catholic roots, had 52,000 displaced students enroll in Catholic schools around the Nation, and Biloxi and Mobile had thousands more.

This is only one example of the contributions that Catholic Schools are making to our society. I am pleased to add my voice to the chorus of those who celebrate and honor the achievements of these valuable institutions.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the importance of America's Catholic schools and share my support for House Resolution 657.

As a product of Sacred Heart School in Lake Worth, Catholic parochial education was a major part of my life and that of my family. My father first attended Sacred Heart himself as a teacher and then moved on to Cardinal Newman High School to work as coach and science teacher.

At Sacred Heart, I was taught how to be a better citizen because of their focus on discipline and moral values. I often fall back on lessons learned during my formative years—especially in the case of November 22, 1963. I was in 4th grade and our teachers asked us to pray for our Nation and for our assassinated President. Though the shock of the

tragedy could have easily given way to anger among the faculty at Sacred Heart, it instead encouraged us to focus on a compassionate tone by praying for our country and the Kennedy family.

I am and have always been a strong proponent of public education. But by the virtue of its very nature—publicly funded schools cannot offer the type of spiritual education that Catholic schools have long provided. In search of a complete education with the ideals of trust, faith, understanding and compassion, many families are turning to the structure, discipline and academic standards of Catholic schools. Parochial schools in the United States are also responsible for educating students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including many who are non-Catholic.

I think one of the unique aspects of Catholic school education is the opportunity to care for the material and intellectual needs of the child in a community atmosphere. By offering an education centered on values, the faculty in Catholic schools can create an interactive setting between parents and students that is geared toward long-term healthy character and scholastic development for all enrolled children.

Please join me and my colleagues as we celebrate the contributions of Catholic schools following National Catholic Schools Week.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 657, a resolution honoring the contributions of Catholic schools across America, including those in my congressional district of El Paso, Texas.

On September 21, 2005, with representatives of the school watching from the House gallery, I proudly rose to recognize the 80th anniversary of Cathedral High School in my district. Cathedral and other Catholic schools in El Paso and throughout our country offer a quality education and produce men and women committed to a broader idea of learning—one that extends beyond just textbooks.

Catholic schools offer—in more than one sense—a value-added approach to education. They instill in their students a moral compass, a sense of purpose, and a commitment to service. Indeed, many of the men and women who inspired me to spend my life in public service were themselves encouraged to enter that field by the virtues conveyed through Catholic education. I count among that group Ambassador Raymond Telles, the first Hispanic mayor of El Paso, an American ambassador, an advisor to presidents, and a man whose success in life was built in large part upon the ideals he learned at Cathedral High School.

Today, Catholic schools teach 2.5 million young Americans, almost 15 percent of whom are not Catholics. This resolution reaffirms the House of Representatives' support for the countless Catholic school teachers and administrators who dedicate their lives to a particular vision of education, and for the values of love, charity, and hope that are tenets of a Catholic education.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support H. Res. 657 and urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this important resolution.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 657. This resolution honors the contributions that Catholic schools make to our communities and, in par-

ticular, recognizes the annual Catholic Schools Week, celebrated from January 29–February 4 this year. I thank Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota for introducing H. Res. 657, for recognizing Catholic Schools Week, and for his ongoing support for Catholic schools nationwide.

Catholic Schools Week is an event co-sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Honored during the Week are Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education. The Catholic schools community has a significant role in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for our communities, our country and, most of all, for our children.

Guam's association with the Roman Catholic Church dates back to Ferdinand Magellan's arrival on our island in 1521. Guam became an important port-of-call along trade routes through the Pacific sailed by Spanish Galleons. Padre Diego Luis de San Vitores, a Spanish Jesuit missionary, arrived in Guam in 1662 during his journey from Mexico to the Philippines. Padre San Vitores vowed to return to Guam upon leaving the island.

Three years later, through his close ties to the royal court, he persuaded King Philip IV of Spain and Queen Maria Ana of Austria to order the establishment of a Catholic mission in Guam. Padre San Vitores established a mission in the village of Agaña which later became the site of the island's first Catholic Church. It is now the seat of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Agaña, canonically erected in 1911, elevated to a Diocese in 1965—300 years after Padre Diego Luis de San Vitores kept his promise to return to the island. The Diocese was further elevated in 1984 to a Metropolitan Diocese. Today it enjoys a congregation of 101,000 strong throughout Oceania.

The Roman Catholic faith grew strong on Guam over the years. This strength is represented in the quality of Catholic school education on the island. Our island has four nursery schools, six elementary and middle schools, and three high schools that teach the Catholic faith in addition to academic curriculum.

The Catholic school tradition on Guam began with Bishop Appollinaris Baumgartner. He recognized our island's need for quality education inspired by the Catholic faith. In 1946, he invited the Three Sisters of Mercy from North Carolina to Guam. They established The Academy of Our Lady, the first all girls' Catholic high school on Guam. This school remains in operation today. Also, Bishop Baumgartner invited the School Sisters of Notre Dame of La Crosse, Wisconsin to come to Guam in 1949. Soon after arriving on the island the Sisters founded Notre Dame High School, a Catholic co-educational high school. Notre Dame High School also remains operational today. Father Duenas Memorial High School is the third Catholic high school on Guam. Its namesake, Father Jesus Baza Dueñas, was executed on July 11, 1944, by the Japanese forces occupying Guam. Father Dueñas, a resistance figure on the island, was executed along with his nephew because he would not betray the location of an American sailor hiding on the island. Father Dueñas Memorial High School continues his legacy of courage and integrity. All three schools offer rigorous curricula to prepare students for col-

lege while instilling strong moral values and an understanding of the Catholic faith.

Bishop Baumgartner initiated a strong tradition of Catholic elementary and middle school education on Guam, as well as providing advanced theological study opportunities for the island's faithful in minor seminary.

Bishop Baumgartner's legacy of shaping the character of Guam's faithful by promoting Catholic education opportunities on the island was continued by Archbishop Felixberto Camacho Flores, Guam's first Chamorro Bishop, when he became Titular Bishop of Stonj in 1970. The number of Catholic schools on Guam increased under his leadership. He expanded their programs and improved school facilities.

Today, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Agaña remains committed to serving the people of Guam. Under the direction of the Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron, OFM Cap, DD, Metropolitan Archbishop of Agaña, Catholic educational institutions on Guam provide quality academic instruction to students. The contributions of the Catholic school system to the people of Guam are reflected in our local leaders in the clergy, government, and private-sector who are alumni of the Catholic schools. The dedication shown by the Archdiocese of Agaña to the quality of Catholic school education on our island strongly reflects the theme for Catholic Schools Week: Character. Compassion. Values.

Guam has a long history of Catholicism and enjoys a strong tradition of educational institutions grounded in the teachings of the Catholic Church. I recognize and commend the Catholic schools in Guam for their commitment to instilling the principles of academic rigor, sound moral values, and respect and understanding for the Catholic faith in our children's daily lives. In honor of Catholic Schools Week, I want to recognize dedication and achievements made by the students, parents, teachers and administrators of Catholic schools in Guam and across the Nation. Their contributions to our society, both inside and outside of the classroom are significant. It is my hope that the tradition of Catholic schools education on Guam and around the United States will remain strong for generations to come.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the important role that Catholic schools play in educating the children of America, including in my hometown of St. Louis. Catholic schools not only teach our kids how to think, but also teach them how to live.

Catholic schools have always been known for their high academic standards and excellent teachers, but I would like to draw your attention to their ability to provide more than just an excellent academic education. The Catholic schools in my district are a perfect example of this—providing children from a young age with a moral foundation which leads them to serve their community through out their lives.

It was strong religious and moral beliefs that drove our Nation's Founders to develop a country where individual freedom is coupled with individual responsibility. Catholic schools across our great Nation continue to produce students who understand their responsibility and act accordingly. The values imparted and the strong faith that Catholic schools develop in their students produces citizens who understand the importance of service and diligently work for the good of our country.

I am honored to represent a district where numerous Catholic schools provide a rigorous academic education and a moral compass to guide students through their lives. Catholic schools in Missouri's Second Congressional District and throughout the St. Louis region produce well-rounded and morally grounded members of our community. The teachers, administrators, parents, and students of Catholic schools deserve this recognition for the tremendously positive impact they have on our Nation. These schools will continue to play a significant role in developing responsible American citizens for our future generations.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 657, a resolution honoring the contributions made by Catholic schools nationwide. These schools provide students with an education that instills a lifelong development of moral, intellectual, and social values in America's young people.

Our Nation's Catholic schools provide excellent opportunities for learning. Today, nearly 50 percent of students enrolled in U.S. private schools attend Catholic schools. In Connecticut, over 39,000 students are enrolled at 148 Catholic schools throughout the State. Catholic schools provide educational opportunities to a broad cross-section of our society. With over 7,000 schools and current matriculating classes of greater than 2.5 million students, it is estimated that about 27 percent of students enrolled are minorities. Catholic schools also encourage greater levels of student-teacher interaction through their small class-size ratio. The 160,000 faculty that teach at these schools provide students with both an intellectually stimulating and values-based education.

As a former student of St. Rose's School in East Hartford, Connecticut, I would like to praise the outstanding efforts of the Sisters of Notre Dame for providing students with strong academic and moral values. The Catholic education I received at St. Rose's School has guided me throughout my career in public service. At St. Rose, I was taught the valuable lessons of good works toward others and society's special obligation to consider first the needs of the poor. The Catholic teachings have given me a valuable framework for life, and have enabled me to achieve personal and professional goals.

Again, I am proud to support H. Res. 657. As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we must honor the role these schools play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation. I am proud that these schools continue to nurture students dedicated to their faith, to their values, to their communities and to their families. These schools develop the leaders of tomorrow with effective leadership and character.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H. Res. 657, a resolution to honor the contributions of Catholic schools and recognize Catholic Schools Week. I want to thank my colleagues on the Education and the Workforce Committee as well as the sponsor of this resolution, the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. KENNEDY, for their work.

Like many of my colleagues, I too am a product of Catholic schools. My upbringing is a testament to the quality education and dedicated efforts of Catholic educators to produce students, whether they are Catholic or not, dedicated to improving themselves, their community, and our Nation.

At Cathedral Carmel School in Lafayette, Louisiana, I developed a lifelong love of learning and reading. Through college and medical school, the lessons I learned in high school helped me to work through classes and assignments. Even throughout my professional career as a heart surgeon and now in Congress, I find myself relying on the personal development and classroom lessons from high school.

The Seventh District of Louisiana contains a strong Catholic school system; and I have met with many students, parents, and educators who believe these schools are helping to create students and young adults who will stay in Louisiana and become productive members of our community.

As we recover from the devastating effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Louisiana Catholic schools have played an integral role in our relief and recovery, taking in thousands of displaced students. Keeping our students in Louisiana is a big part of restoring our state's economy. These young adults provide entrepreneurship, creativity, workforce, and ingenuity to build businesses and create jobs.

Again, I congratulate the Catholic schools of our great Nation and look forward to continuing to support them in my community and in Congress.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, President John F. Kennedy said in his Inaugural Address: "With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth, God's work must truly be our own." I rise today to thank our Catholic schools for doing God's work here on earth for generation after generation.

More than 163,000 educators teach in nearly 8,000 Catholic schools in America, and they educate nearly 2.5 million students every year. My husband and I and our five children have attended over 100 years of Catholic school education. Needless to say, we support our Nation's Catholic educational system.

I can tell you firsthand that Catholic schools provide exceptional education. They contribute to a student's intellectual, ethical and spiritual development. As a devout Roman Catholic and the product of Catholic schools, I rely every day on the values and the sense of responsibility that were deepened for me by my Catholic education.

The theme of this year's Catholic Schools Week is "Character. Compassion. Values." Education is about more than reading, writing, and arithmetic, although it's certainly about that. But it is also about teaching each child to live and work with integrity and in a way that serves others.

My Catholic education helped me appreciate that we all contain a spark of divinity, to recognize that spark of divinity in every person, and to respond to that spark with humility and awe, even when it's found in "the least of these."

Catholic schools teach their students that our personal faith means public obligation. Simply put, faith means we have work to do. My Catholic education taught me that to minister to the needs of God's creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us. That lesson should inform every debate we have here in Congress, whether it is education, health care, job creation, or the budget, which should be a statement of our national values.

Our Catholic schools truly do God's work here on earth, and they deserve our Nation's gratitude. I join my colleagues in thanking all of the teachers, parents, and students of Catholic schools who bring our Nation closer to the "beloved community" it was meant to be.

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Catholic schools of Pittsburgh. Catholic schools around the country will celebrate National Catholic School's Week from January 29 until February 4, 2006.

National Catholic School's Week is a week to promote Catholic schools. Every year there is a theme for the week, and schools hold special events for the students and their families. This year about 8,200 schools nationally will be participating in and celebrating the theme, "Catholic Schools: Character, Compassion, Values."

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring National Catholic School's Week. It is an honor to represent the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania and a pleasure to salute the Catholic schools of Pittsburgh.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for H. Res. 657, a resolution recognizing the valuable contribution of Catholic Schools.

Last week marked the 32nd annual Catholic Schools Week, a week dedicated to honor the achievements and successes of Catholic Schools throughout the U.S. More than 2.4 million children are enrolled in the 7,799 Catholic schools in our country. In addition, 720,000 students are enrolled in the 212 Catholic Colleges and Universities nationwide.

In my home State of New Jersey, 129,232 students are enrolled in Catholic Schools. In fact, New Jersey has the sixth largest enrollment of students in Catholic Schools out of all 50 States.

Of course, children do not form their core values on the sole basis of what schools teach them. Learning a respect for life and respect for the rights of others is not the purview of schools alone; it begins and is nurtured in the home. Accordingly, the Catholic school curriculum recognizes parents and family as primary educators and seeks to foster a shared vision between the school and family. As the father of four children who have attended Catholic schools, I know that Catholic school educators strive to work hand-in-hand reinforcing family values, ethical behavior, social responsibility, and academic achievement.

Placing a premium on both academic standards and moral responsibility has proven to be a successful formula for Catholic Schools. Catholic Secondary Schools have a 99 percent graduation rate and moreover, 97 percent of graduates continue their education.

Learning in a religious setting is not for everyone and America's public school system is critical to providing educational opportunities for all. We must continue to vigorously support our public schools at both the federal and local levels. At the same time, however, we should support those who seek the benefits of Catholic school and choose a religious setting as the best educational environment for their children. The contribution of Catholic schools to our Nation extends beyond the classroom. Catholic elementary and secondary schools save the government and taxpayers of the U.S. up to \$20 billion a year.

In effect, parents of Catholic school children pay twice—they pay their fair share of taxes necessary to support the public school system and they pay tuition at the school their children attend. In order to address this issue, I have introduced H.R. 441, the Education, Achievement and Opportunity Act. This bill provides refundable tax credits for the educational expenses incurred by parents for elementary and secondary school. Most significantly, the tax credit is used for private school tuition, however, it can also be used for other educational needs such as computers, tutoring or transportation fees. Thus, parents sending their children to public school can also benefit from this legislation.

A Catholic education challenges students through a combination of high standards, strong motivation, effective discipline and an emphasis on personal responsibility. It is an education that goes beyond preparation for a secular life; it is an education that prepares students for a Christian life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members lend their support to H. Res. 657, and pass it unanimously.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 657, legislation that supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, and acknowledges the crucial role that Catholic schools play in serving and strengthening our communities.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution. Catholic schools have an impact far beyond the confines of the classroom. Values such as devotion to faith, family, community, and character development, are the foundations of Catholic education. These values promote a respect for the dignity of individuals, and encourage outstanding civic participation.

Catholic schools are also scholastic standard bearers. With a student-to-teacher ratio of 15 to 1, they are committed to smaller class sizes. Smaller classes correlate with more accomplished students which in turn leads to the global competitiveness of American students in the 21st century.

In the 12th District of New Jersey, Catholic schools continue to work to serve communities. Corpus Christi School, a Catholic elementary school in the town of South River, at one time struggled to keep its doors open. However, through the efforts of concerned parents, alumni, and prodigious fundraising, the school was able to remain open. Corpus Christi now provides assistance to the whole community, offering a pre-kindergarten program for 3- and 4-year-old children. During Catholic Schools Week, Corpus Christi will be offering reduced tuition rates. Other schools in the 12th district will be celebrating Catholic Schools Week, including the Immaculate Conception in Spotswood, which will be using its activities to raise money for St. Jude's Hospital for Children.

These schools, and Catholic schools in general, advance ideals that we all hold dear. They enrich our communities, and I am proud to join with my colleagues in supporting this resolution.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 657 to honor the contributions of Catholic schools. Catholic schools provide students with a wonderful education and, in many cases, a quality alternative to overburdened public schools.

I am grateful for the work of the 39 Catholic schools which serve 10,395 students from di-

verse backgrounds, run by the Diocese of Bridgeport. These schools offer elementary and secondary education, as well as after-school programs. They provide a wonderful environment for learning and a strong sense of faith and discipline.

I commend the teachers, administrators, students and parents for their role in Catholic education, and the key role they play in creating a brighter, better-educated nation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 657.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

HONORING SACRIFICE AND COURAGE OF WEST VIRGINIA COAL MINERS

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 331) honoring the sacrifice and courage of the 12 coal miners killed and the stamina and courage of the one who survived the mine disaster in Sago, West Virginia, and the sacrifice and courage of the two coal miners killed in the Aracoma Alma mine disaster, and recognizing the rescue crews for their outstanding efforts in the aftermath of the tragedies, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 331

Whereas coal generates more than half of domestic electricity, providing millions of Americans with energy for their homes and businesses;

Whereas West Virginia is the Nation's second largest coal producing State;

Whereas an average of 7,600 pounds of coal per person per year is used in the United States;

Whereas the United States has an estimated 275,000,000,000 tons of recoverable coal reserves representing about 95 percent of all fossil fuel reserves in the Nation;

Whereas coal continues to be the economic engine for many communities;

Whereas coal miners are among the most productive of all American workers, producing 7 tons of coal per miner per day, which results in coal consistently being the most cost-effective choice for generating electricity in the United States;

Whereas during the last century over 100,000 coal miners have been killed in mining accidents in the Nation's coal mines;

Whereas the Nation is greatly indebted to coal miners for the difficult and dangerous work they perform to provide the fuel needed

to operate the Nation's industries and to provide energy to homes and businesses;

Whereas 13 West Virginia miners were trapped 260 feet below the surface in the Sago mine for over 40 hours following an explosion on January 2, 2006;

Whereas Federal, State, and local rescue crews worked relentlessly in an attempt to save the miners;

Whereas many residents of Upshur County, West Virginia, and the surrounding areas came together at the Sago Baptist Church to support the miners' families;

Whereas 12 miners, Thomas Anderson, Alva Martin Bennett, Jim Bennett, Jerry Groves, George Hamner Jr., Terry Helms, David Lewis, Martin Toler, Fred Ware Jr., Jack Weaver, Jesse Jones, and Marshall Winans, lost their lives on January 3, 2006;

Whereas only one miner, Randal McCloy, was safely rescued;

Whereas 2 West Virginia miners were trapped by a fire in the Aracoma Alma Mine on January 19, 2006;

Whereas Don Israel Bragg and Ellery "Elvis" Hatfield lost their lives in the Aracoma Alma Mine;

Whereas 2 West Virginia miners lost their lives in separate incidents in Boone County on February 1, 2006; and

Whereas Edmund Vance perished in the Long Branch No. 18 Mine and Paul Moss perished at the Elk Run Black Castle mine: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes Thomas Anderson, Alva Martin Bennett, Jim Bennett, Jerry Groves, George Hamner Jr., Terry Helms, David Lewis, Martin Toler, Fred Ware Jr., Jack Weaver, Jesse Jones, and Marshall Winans for their sacrifice in the Sago, West Virginia, coal mine;

(2) recognizes Don Israel Bragg and Ellery "Elvis" Hatfield for their sacrifice in the Aracoma Alma, West Virginia coal mine;

(3) recognizes Edmund Vance and Paul Moss for their sacrifice in the Boone County, West Virginia, coal mines;

(4) extends the deepest condolences of the Nation to the families of these men;

(5) recognizes Randal McCloy for his stamina and courage that enabled him to survive in severe conditions for over 40 hours;

(6) recognizes the rescue crews for their outstanding effort resulting in the safe rescue of Randal McCloy; and

(7) recognizes the many volunteers who provided support for the miners' families during the rescue operations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 331.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 331 to honor the now 16