Dr. Ibanez has served successfully on the Smithsonian's Board of Regents for the past 6 years.

I urge my colleagues to support S.J. Res. 42, which reappoints Dr. Ibanez for another 6-year term.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, again I rise in support of this resolution.

I have listened to the words of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) with reference to Dr. Ibanez, and I concur in those remarks.

Mr. Speaker, the Smithsonian Institution is, as my colleagues know, both a museum of extraordinary note but also a very distinguished academic institution. It not only displays knowledge, but it diffuses knowledge, as well.

Dr. Ibanez has served with distinction on the Smithsonian Board. So we have had Mr. Spoon, who is going to bring a new perspective, and Dr. Ibanez, who will continue to have an institutional memory of what has come before and what should go in the future.

So I am very pleased to rise in support of this resolution and to, frankly, thank Dr. Ibanez for agreeing to continue to expend his very valuable time in this volunteer way on behalf of a great American institution, in fact a great world institution, the Smithsonian Institution.

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for his comments and I tell him that I appreciate those comments. Because Dr. Ibanez, of course, does live down near the valley in Texas and it is hard to get here, and sometimes those regents come from far away and we are proud to have representation from all over this Nation. It is a great institution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution, S.J. Res. 42.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S.J. Res. 42.

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

There was no objection.

AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3629) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the program for American Indian Tribal Colleges and Universities under part A of title III, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3629

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. APPLICATIONS FOR AND AWARD OF GRANTS.

(a) SIMPLIFICATION OF APPLICATIONS.—Sections 316(d)(2) and 317(d)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(d)(2), 1059d(d)(2)) are each amended by inserting after the first sentence the following: ''The Secretary shall, to the extent possible, prescribe a simplified and streamlined format for such applications that takes into account the limited number of institutions that are eligible for assistance under this section.''.

(b) SPECIAL RULES FOR AWARDS.—

(1) TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.—Section 316(d) of such Act is further amended by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(A) ELIGIBILITY.—No Tribal College or University that receives funds under this section shall concurrently receive funds under other provisions of this part or part B.

''(B) EXEMPTION.—Section 313(d) shall not apply to institutions that are eligible to receive funds under this section.

''(C) DISTRIBUTION.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall, to the extent possible and consistent with the competitive process under which such grants are awarded, ensure maximum and equitable distribution among all eligible institutions.''.

(2) ALASKAN NATIVE AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN INSTITUTIONS.—Section 317 of such Act is further amended by striking subsection (e) and by inserting at the end of subsection (d) the following new paragraph:

''(3) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(A) ELIGIBILITY.—No Alaskan Native-serving institution or Native Hawaiian-serving institution that receives funds under this section shall concurrently receive funds under other provisions of this part or part B.

''(B) EXEMPTION.—Section 313(d) shall not apply to institutions that are eligible to receive funds under this section.

''(C) DISTRIBUTION.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall, to the extent possible and consistent with the competitive process under which such grants are awarded, ensure maximum and equitable distribution among all eligible institutions.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall be effective on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MARTINEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3629, as amended, which makes technical improvements to sections 316 and 317 of title III of the Higher Education Act.

I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) for introducing H.R. 3629 and bringing this matter to our attention.

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The bill we are considering today takes two technical improvements to title III that relate to tribal colleges and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions. These institutions are located primarily in remote areas not served by other postsecondary education institutions.

They offer a broad range of degree and vocational certificate programs to students for whom these educational opportunities would otherwise be geographically and culturally inaccessible.

Under title III, grant funds are provided to postsecondary institutions for improving academic programs, for improving their management and fiscal operations, and to help institutions make effective use of technology. Funding is targeted to institutions that enroll large proportions of financially disadvantaged students and have low per-student expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, last year, 17 institutions received grant awards under this program. One used its funds to add computer hardware and software to improve the college's physical management, academic programming, and student services.

These improvements will include Internet access for instructors. Another institution is using its grant award to acquire new technology and provide staff development related to distance education programs.

Another institution is using its grant to acquire computers and Internet access for its students in order to improve academic achievement and increase student retention. Others are using their grant funds for many similar purposes.

The first technical improvement that we are making in this bill directs the Secretary of Education to simplify the application process for the limited number of institutions eligible for funds under this section 316 and 317.

Currently, institutions spend a great deal of time and money preparing applications for funds under the highly competitive title III grant program. For poorer institutions, these costs are often prohibitive. However, if the process is simplified, it is possible that more of the poorer institutions will apply for assistance.

The second improvement will allow these institutions to apply for a new grant without waiting until 2 years lapse after the expiration of a prior grant. Under current law, an institution receives a grant for a 5-year period and then must wait 2 years after the expiration of the grant before applying for another grant.

This 2-year wait-out rule was part of the original title III legislation, and its

purpose was to ensure that title III funding reached the maximum number of institutions. However, in the case of section 316 and 317 institutions, the 2-year wait-out rule is unnecessary.

Based on the current funding available and the limited number of institutions eligible for this program, there is no need for a wait-out period. By removing this restriction, funds for institutional development can go to the maximum number of institutions that submit a qualified application during next year's competition.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education has included the elimination of the wait-out period in its lists of technical amendments to the higher educational amendments of 1998 and agrees that the wait-out is unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support these technical amendments to title III of the Higher Education Act. I want to express my thanks again to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) for introducing this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3629. As our Nation becomes increasingly diverse, it is imperative that all of our segments of the population are afforded the opportunity to receive a quality postsecondary education if this Nation is to remain a world power.

Currently, 30 tribal colleges and universities and 13 Alaska-native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions are doing an excellent job of reaching out and providing services to some of the hardest to reach and most disadvantaged minority students in the country.

During the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress created two grant programs, based on the existing Federal aid program for historical black colleges and universities to assist these 43 institutions whose mission it is to serve Native Americans and Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiian students.

Eligible institutions can use program funds for a number of activities including faculty and academic program development and instructional faculty construction and maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, in many cases, these grants make the difference in an institution's viability. However, the Congress inadvertently placed hurdles between these vital institutions and this essential funding by requiring an unnecessary 2-year waiting period and an overly burdensome application process.

H.R. 3629 removes these hurdles by eliminating the waiting period and streamlining the application process. H.R. 3629, which provides some of the poorest schools educating some of the neediest students with easier access to funding that Congress made available to them in 1998, was reported favorably by the Committee on Education and the Workforce and has the support of the administration.

Mr. Speaker, as such, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3629.

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

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN), the sponsor of the bill, the original author of H.R. 3629

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my friend and colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), for his support and work on this legislation, as well as my colleague across the aisle, the gentleman from California (Mr. MARTINEZ). I do appreciate their help on this.

Mr. Speaker, today we have a chance to reach out to educational institutions all across America. These institutions may be small in number, but they serve a very great need. Most importantly, the need they serve is experience by a dramatically underserved portion of the population. And for this portion of the population, these Americans, it offers, I believe, some great hope.

Today, we reach out to tribal colleges, not by spending more money, but making sure that for the dollars we do spend that those dollars are more accessible, distributed more equitably and easier to access by all involved. There are 32 tribal colleges in America right now and 12 States serving 25,000 Americans. My own home State of Wisconsin has two, the Lac Courte D'Oreilles Community College and the Menomonee Indian Tribal College.

For the Native Americans served at these institutions, these colleges are closing the gap between the America that is and the America that can be.

In 1998, Congress created the American Indian Tribally Controlled College and University Institutional Development Act. In fiscal year 2000, $6 million has been awarded in a competitive grant program for these institutions in this program.

Last year, 16 tribal colleges applied for grants and eight received grants. We can do more, I believe; and we can reach more tribal colleges, and we can reach more Americans, the Americans that they serve; and that is what this bill attempts to do. Through technical changes that have been supported on both sides of the aisle, voice voted through the subcommittee and supported by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, this bill will, by removing barriers, get more dollars to more tribal colleges.

As was mentioned previously, it makes some very simple changes. Number one, it directs the Secretary Of Education to simplify and streamline the application process. The current application process requires applicants to address no less than 16 different subject areas, well intended. Unfortunately, I am afraid it may be overkill. It has the unfortunate effect of discouraging fledgling tribal colleges from taking on the grant application process.

We worked closely with the Department of Education in developing these minor changes.

Secondly, this bill would direct the Secretary of Education to ensure a more equitable distribution of these limited dollars to the maximum number of institutions. We are not talking about a lot of dollars here, but it is obviously crucially important that those dollars go as far as they can.

Finally, as has been mentioned, this bill would exempt tribal colleges from the 2-year wait-out period required under title III part A. Again, we have a small number of institutions; but we want to make sure that this money is available to the institutions that most need it, a small number of institutions and perhaps a small number of Americans. But I believe the ripple effect in the area surrounding these institutions will be enormous and help them realize the potential of the American dream.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the 1998 amendments to the Higher Education Act require all institutions receiving funding under part A of title III to wait 2 years after their 5-year grant expires to apply for an additional grant. We created this wait-out period to maximize fundings to institutions receiving funds under title III. This wait-out period applies only to tribal colleges, universities and Alaska-native and native Hawaiian-serving institutions. Without eliminating this wait-out requirement, there will be a situation in which Federal grant dollars are available but no tribal colleges, universities and Alaska-native and Hawaiian-serving institutions would be eligible to apply because of the small number of these institutions that exist.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill so that these institutions can continue to provide the very high quality education to their students.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this member is pleased to be a cosponsor of H.R. 3629, the American Indian Tribal Colleges Universities Improvement Act. I commend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) for introducing this legislation and the committee for bringing it to the floor.

This is almost orphan legislation. There are too few members unfortunately that pay attention to Native American issues and certainly to tribal college issues. So I am particularly pleased that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) has taken this initiative. The committee has brought it to the floor. People like the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), always active on Native American issues, are supporting it, as I would always expect him to be supporting it.

Tribal colleges and universities do play a critical and important role in

providing postsecondary education opportunities for American Indians. These colleges are among the youngest, poorest, and smallest group of institutions of higher education in the United States.

As mentioned by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN), these 32 tribal colleges in the United States serve over 25,000 students. They are severely underfunded. There are two tribal colleges located in the first congressional district in Nebraska, the Nebraska Indian Community College and the Little Priest Tribal College. These two young colleges work with very limited resources to provide educational opportunities where none existed before.

Native Americans in Nebraska already have benefited from the services provided and the education offered by these institutions. This legislation, as we have heard, makes important technical corrections to the Higher Education Act title III strengthening institutions provisions.

This Member would focus on three that seem particularly important to my Native American constituents. First, the bill simplifies the application process. As we heard, it puts all colleges on equal footing regardless of age, size, or level of development.

Second, it directs the Secretary of Education to ensure equitable distribution of funding to the maximum number of tribal colleges possible.

Third, this measure exempts tribal colleges from the 2-year wait-out period now required under title III as mentioned by both the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

These three changes simply give tribal colleges the same application procedures now allowed for historically black colleges and universities in this country. Therefore, it is equitable. It is needed.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this Member strongly urges his colleagues to support H.R. 3629.

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor, I rise in support of H.R. 3629, Representative MARK GREEN's bill to make technical corrections to Sections 316 and 317 of Title III of the Higher Education Act with respect to Tribal Colleges and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions. Title III provides grant funds to post-secondary institutions for improving academic programs, management and fiscal operations, and the use of technology, which was something I strongly supported during reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Funding is targeted to institutions that enroll large proportions of financially disadvantaged students and have low per-student expenditures.

In Nebraska, our two fully accredited tribal colleges—Little Priest Tribal College in Winnebago, Nebraska, and Nebraska Indian Community College in Niobrara and Macy, Nebraska, will benefit from this bill. Major challenges face tribal colleges and their communities, and these schools could use all the support they can get for their important work.

H.R. 3629 helps by authorizing several technical changes that have no cost implications. The first technical change requires the Secretary of Education to simplify the grant application process for a limited number of institutions eligible for funds under Section 316 and Section 317. If the process is simplified, and institutions don't need to hire expensive grant writers, it will be possible for more of the poorer institutions to apply for assistance.

The second, and perhaps more important change, will allow institutions to apply immediately for a new grant after the expiration of the prior grant. Under current law, an institution receives a grant for a five-year period and then must wait two years after the expiration of the grant before applying for another grant.

Based on the funding available and the limited number of institutions eligible for the program, there is no need for a wait-out period. By removing this restriction, funds for institutional development can go to the maximum number of institutions that submit a qualified application.

H.R. 3629 makes small but significant changes in the Higher Education Act. The bill should have the unanimous support of the House.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3629, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3629, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evan, one of his secretaries.

1600

SUPPORTING A NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 310) supporting a National Charter Schools Week.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 310

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public body and operating on the principles of accountability, parent flexibility, choice, and autonomy;

Whereas in exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other operations;

Whereas 36 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have passed laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas 35 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will have received more than $350 million in grants from the Federal Government by the end of the current fiscal year for planning, startup, and implementation of charter schools since their authorization in 1994 under title X, part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8061 et seq.);

Whereas 32 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are serving approximately 350,000 students in more than 1,700 charter schools during the 1999 to 2000 school year;

Whereas charter schools can be vehicles both for improving student achievement for students who attend them and for stimulating change and improvement in all public schools and benefitting all public school students;

Whereas charter schools in many States serve significant numbers of students with lower income, students of color, and students with disabilities;

Whereas the Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–278) amended the Federal grant program for charter schools authorized by title X, part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8061 et seq.) to strengthen accountability provisions at the Federal, State, and local levels to ensure that charter public schools are of high quality and are truly accountable to the public;

Whereas 7 of 10 charter schools report having a waiting list;

Whereas students in charter schools nationwide have similar demographic characteristics as students in all public schools;

Whereas charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, the Congress, State governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the Nation; and

Whereas charter schools are laboratories of reform and serve as models of how to educate children as effectively as possible: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress acknowledges and commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public school system; and

(2) it is the sense of the Congress that—

(A) a National Charter Schools Week should be established; and

(B) the President should issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to demonstrate support for charter schools in communities throughout the Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI).

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

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