

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.