

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS  
EDUCATION ACT OF 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5360) to authorize grants to establish academies for teachers and students of American history and civics, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5360

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

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "American History and Civics Education Act of 2004".

**SEC. 2. PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIES FOR TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS; CONGRESSIONAL ACADEMIES FOR STUDENTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Education (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") may award not more than 12 grants, on a competitive basis—

(1) to entities to establish Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics that may offer workshops for both veteran and new teachers of American history and civics; and

(2) to entities to establish Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics.

(b) APPLICATION.—An entity that desires to receive a grant under subsection (a) shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(c) DEMONSTRATED EXPERTISE.—The Secretary shall require that each entity, to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, demonstrate expertise in historical methodology or the teaching of history.

(d) AVAILABLE FUNDS.—To carry out this section, the Secretary may use any funds appropriated for fiscal year 2005 or any subsequent fiscal year to carry out part D of title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7241 et seq.).

**SEC. 3. NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROGRAM.**

The Secretary may award grants to the National History Day Program for the purpose of continuing and expanding its activities to promote the study of history and improve instruction.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) 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 in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5360.

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.

Today the House will consider H.R. 5360, the American History and Civics Education Act of 2004. This bill, which was introduced by my colleague from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), is intended to support programs that will help raise student academic achievement by improving the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of American history and civics education for our Nation's teachers and students.

According to the 2001 National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment in United States history, 33 percent of students in grades 4 scored below basic, 36 percent of students in grade 8 scored below basic, and 57 percent of students in grade 12 scored below basic.

In addition, the data from the assessment revealed that 92 percent of students in grade 12 could not explain the most important cause of the Great Depression, 91 percent of students in grade 8 could not list two issues that were important in causing the Civil War, and 73 percent of the students in grade 4 could not identify the Constitution from among four choices as the document that contains the basic rules used to run the United States Government.

Accordingly, H.R. 5360 is designed to improve student academic achievement in American history and civics education by authorizing the Secretary of Education to use existing funds to award grants to entities to establish Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics to help strengthen the teaching skills and knowledge of teachers in American history and civics. H.R. 5360 also authorizes the use of existing funds at the Department of Education for Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics to help broaden secondary students' knowledge of American history and civics.

Finally, this legislation authorizes the Secretary to use existing funds to award grants to the National History Day program to promote the study of history and improve instruction. The purpose of H.R. 5360 is to help our Nation's students and teachers develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of American history and civics education. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill. Just as an aside, I would like to say, as a Member of Congress, if there is any subject I wish I had paid more attention to, it would have been American history. I support this bill, which improves history and civics education, primarily by funding workshops for

history teachers. It recognizes the importance of teaching our children history and allows for Federal support for an effective and widely respected program, National History Day.

This bill creates both Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics and Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics. I am pleased that it will ensure that these are quality programs by ensuring that grants are awarded only to those who have demonstrated expertise in historical methodology or the teaching of history.

A very important feature of this legislation authorizes the Secretary of Education to award grants to the National History Day program, a highly successful, year-long national program that trains teachers and sponsors a national competition among junior high and high school students. They produce dramatic performances, imaginative exhibits, multimedia documentaries and research papers based on research related to an annual theme.

The National History Day program, which reaches 2 million people annually from nearly every State, teaches students important literacy skills and engages them in the use and understanding of museum and library resources. It inspires students to study local history and challenges them to expand their thinking and apply knowledge of local events to national and, at times, international issues. The program also teaches students to become technologically literate through the use of computer and Internet research methods and the use of technologically advanced applications in their presentations.

For more than 25 years, National History Day has used history to help students develop research, thinking and communication skills. I am pleased that this bill would help continue and expand its important activities.

All Americans benefit from a better understanding of history, and this bill is a positive step toward ensuring that future generations have the background and tools for appreciating history and applying those lessons to our daily lives.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), sponsor of this legislation in the House of Representatives, himself one who cares deeply about history.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Delaware as well as my friend from California for their remarks so far in this debate. I also want to thank the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), who, Mr. Speaker, has been enormously patient and helpful to me during this year-long effort to promote better knowledge of American history and civics. Thanks also goes to the ranking member of the full committee as well as the entire House leadership. I am very appreciative.