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## Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who desires truth in our inward parts, strengthen us to live with integrity. Remind us that only the pure in heart will see You. Give us the discipline of introspection that strips the soul to its bare essence. Remove from us every mask of pretense and clothe us with Your righteousness.

Bless the Members of this legislative body. Teach them that truth is not merely academic but commands commitment. Grant that they will not only speak the truth but do it as well. Give them the courage to follow truth wherever it leads them. Empower them to advocate for right, even though unpopular. Make them champions for justice even when they must stand alone.

Lord, show each of us the path that leads to life. We pray this in Your righteous Name.

Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today we will resume debate on the motion to proceed to highway legislation. On Friday, a cloture motion was filed to the motion to proceed. Under the order, that cloture vote will occur at 11:45 tomorrow morning.

On behalf of the leadership, we hope that cloture will be invoked and that we will be able to begin consideration of the underlying bill. If the Senate can proceed to the highway bill tomorrow, Senators should expect another rollcall vote as the Senate considers amendments to the bill. Finally, I would like to announce the Senate will this week also consider any conference report that may become available.

### NATIONAL KINDERGARTEN RECOGNITION DAY

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 119, submitted today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 119) designating April 21, 2005, as "National Kindergarten Recognition Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the resolution that nationally recognizes the critical role the kindergarten year plays in the lives of our Nation's children. This resolution designates April 21, 2005 as National Kindergarten Recognition Day.

I have chosen this day because exactly 168 years ago the first kindergarten classroom was opened. In 1837, many believed that young children did not have the ability to focus or to develop cognitive and emotional skills. However, Friedrich Froebel, a German school teacher and private tutor, held a

different opinion and opened the first kindergarten classroom with the goal of shaping young children in a nurturing, educational, and protected environment.

Since then, Mr. Froebel's idea has been confirmed time and again by research—early years are learning years and kindergarten has a long history of enhancing children's cognitive, physical, and social development.

In the United States, kindergarten was first introduced to American communities in 1856. Now, close to four million children participate in kindergarten programs throughout the country. With attention now focused on increasing access to high-quality child care and pre-school programs, kindergarten is frequently overlooked.

While I support both of these laudable goals, I believe we cannot ignore the impact of the kindergarten year on the development of our Nation's children. And as policy makers, we must ensure that the kindergarten programs are using developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate curricula and have teachers who have specialized knowledge and skills to address their unique needs.

On a personal note, I fondly remember my kindergarten year with my teacher, Mrs. Espinoza, who encouraged my curiosity and creativity. As a parent, I recall taking my daughters to their first day of kindergarten—they came home excited to tell my wife and me what they learned and to showcase their art and science projects in our home. Kindergarten prepared my girls for their later school success and cultivated their life-long love of learning. I will be just as proud to see my daughter Melinda graduate from high school next month as I was the day of her first school graduation, her kindergarten graduation.

It is a pleasure to introduce this resolution that honors kindergarten. It is my hope that we can use this day now, and in the future, to call attention to

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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kindergarten and to discuss ways in which we can improve kindergarten classrooms throughout the Nation.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 119) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 119

Whereas Friedrich Froebel, known as the "Father of Kindergarten", opened the first kindergarten classroom on April 21, 1837, with the goal of shaping young children in a nurturing, educational, and protected environment;

Whereas kindergarten has a long history of enhancing children's cognitive, physical, and social development in the United States and throughout the world;

Whereas Margarethe Meyer Schurz opened the first German-speaking kindergarten in the United States in 1856, Elizabeth Peabody opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1873, and the first public school kindergarten classrooms were established under the leadership of Susan Blow and William Torrey Harris in St. Louis, Missouri, in the early 1870s;

Whereas kindergarten is a critical year in children's formal education, as well as in their continued physical, social, and emotional development, that prepares them for later school success and lifelong learning;

Whereas quality kindergarten programs use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate curricula, teaching practices, and assessments to support each child's learning and development progress to reach his or her maximum potential;

Whereas teachers who teach kindergarten need to have specialized knowledge and skills in working with young children to respond to the unique interests, learning styles, and developmental characteristics of children in their kindergarten year;

Whereas kindergarten programs need to be ready for all children who are eligible, including children with disabilities and children who are not native English speakers, and their families;

Whereas kindergarten programs should collaborate and coordinate with preschools and with the other early elementary grades in order to provide a continuum of appropriate, effective early learning for all children as they transition to and through the early grades of school;

Whereas in 2001, more than more 3,700,000 children between the ages of 4 and 6 years old attended kindergarten, including full-day, half-day, or alternate day programs;

Whereas the percentage of children attending full-day kindergarten programs has grown from 28 percent in 1977 to 60 percent in 2001; and

Whereas establishment of a "National Kindergarten Recognition Day" will help draw attention to the critical role kindergarten plays as the transitional year from early education programs to the elementary and secondary education system: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 21, 2005, as "National Kindergarten Recognition Day" to raise public awareness about the impact of the kin-

dergarten year on the development of our nation's children; and

(2) urges the people of the United States to recognize the historic tradition of kindergarten in the United States and its contribution to preparing children for their elementary and secondary educational achievement and experiences.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 120, which was submitted today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 120) honoring small businesses during the Small Business Administration's National Small Business Week, the week beginning April 24, 2005.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a Senate resolution that honors our Nation's 25 million small businesses and the tremendous contributions they make to our economy, as we celebrate the Small Business Administration's—SBA—National Small Business Week which runs April 24 through April 30, 2005.

Small businesses form a solid economic foundation for growth and job creation. The success of our Nation's small businesses have helped create nearly three-quarters of all new jobs and produce 50 percent of our country's gross domestic product.

Since becoming Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have made it one of my top priorities to be a megaphone for small businesses and help raise the needs and concerns of our countries' job creators in the Senate. Each year, there are 3 to 4 million new business startups—and one in 25 adult Americans take the steps to start a business. With one quarter of existing small business owners intending to form another business, this is clearly a sector that deserves our accolades and recognition.

And of course, one of our most valuable assets for ensuring the success of small businesses is the Small Business Administration. This agency is pivotal in overseeing the delivery of financial and business development tools for millions of aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses across the United States. And since 1999, the SBA's programs have helped created and retain over 4.5 million jobs.

Particularly, the SBA's financing programs have been a crucial source to accessing capital for small businesses, and have never been more in demand with both the 7(a) program and 504 program delivering measurable results. The numbers from fiscal year 2004 represent these programs indisputable success, with the 7(a) program providing over \$13.5 billion in loans to help

small businesses create 132,603 new jobs. The 504 program lent \$4 billion to support the creation of 86,847 jobs.

Furthermore, the SBA's entrepreneurial development programs assisted almost 1.5 million startup and existing small businesses. In fact, the Small Business Development Center—SBDC—program served over 725,000 clients and helped create or retain over 168,000 jobs in fiscal year 2003, while the SBA's Women's Business Center's training and counseling helped to create or retain over 6,500 jobs in fiscal year 2003.

We have also provided small businesses with tax relief to help grow their business. For example, I championed an increase in the amount a small business can deduct when they invest in equipment and other business assets capital that fuels expansion and job creation.

So as we celebrate our Nation's small businesses, we must be mindful of Congress's responsibility to ensure that each business has the opportunity to flourish. With the BA's budget drastically declining by 36 percent over the last 5 years, I will not hesitate to take action and ensure that this vital sector continues to have the valuable resources they deserve.

The SBA has been a critical partner to millions of small enterprises as well as aspiring entrepreneurs as they embark on the path to prosperity and job creation. The least we can do is strengthen, not erode, the SBA's core loan and technical assistance programs that have proven time and again to be the keystone in aiding the efforts and dreams of America's entrepreneurs.

Today we celebrate our Nation's entrepreneurs and honor America's small businesses. I urge my colleagues to show their support for the small businesses in their States and support this resolution. We must remember that the investment and support that we provide to our small business today is integral to our Nation's economic and job security tomorrow.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor America's single greatest economic resource: our small businesses. Small businesses drive our economy, making up 99 percent of all firms, and today marks the first day of the annual National Small Business Week celebration. This week, we honor the firms that are working year round to provide goods and services to us all. Every day, small businesses and entrepreneurs are making innovations, creating new jobs, and pushing our economy forward. In fact, more than 50 percent of our Nation's GDP and more than two-thirds of all new jobs in our economy are attributable to small businesses. From the high-tech startup and the small manufacturer to the family-owned bookstore and the lemonade stand run by the little girl down the street, small businesses and entrepreneurs are an exciting part of our communities. And the opportunities they create represent the American Dream.