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.

(Mr. ROEMER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) for giving me the courtesy of going first.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman and my friend from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) noted, I introduced H. Con. Res. 310, which is a resolution supporting a National Charter Schools Week. It is also a bipartisan resolution introduced by myself, but with the support of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN), the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), and others. So we are acting in the best spirit of this House in trying to go forward with a bipartisan resolution on charter schools.

Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain once said that there is a big difference between using the right word and the almost right word, like the difference between ''lightning'' and a ''lightning bug.'' There is a big difference there, just as there is a requirement as we approach public education today in America that we have the right ideas; the right reforms; the right bold, creative initiatives to help move this country in public education forward in this brand new century. Charter schools are part of that right reform and right-now idea.

This National Charter Schools Week seeks to recognize the many accomplishments of charter schools around the country. Seven out of ten charter schools currently have waiting lists.

I also joined in 1998 with the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS), to draft a bill that was signed into law to strengthen the accountability provisions, to provide even new support for charter schools around the country.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the role that President Clinton and Secretary Riley have played in supporting this innovative new idea of charter schools. In 1994 there were less than a dozen charter schools through the whole Nation. In 1999, there are over 1,700 charter schools, and we will probably have over 3,000 charter schools by the year 2002.

Charter schools in many States serve significant numbers of students with lower incomes, students of color, students with disabilities. They are not schools that attempt to cream the best students or cherry pick the best students; they are public schools that attempt to educate in innovative new ways all of the available students.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the big areas we have seen progress in for charter schools, and I will give a example, to dismiss one of the myths about charter schools, is that we recently had a hearing on the growth of charter schools in our Subcommittee on Education last month. We had Irene Sumida, the Director of Instruction at the Fenton Avenue Charter School in California, testify before the committee. Her school has a population in which about 84 percent of the students are identified as Title I students, meaning many of the poorest students. Sixty-four percent of the students at Fenton are limited English proficient. Ninety percent of the students qualify for free and reduced meals. Eighty-one percent are Hispanic, 14 percent African American. That is the demographics and the composition of the Fenton school.

Since they have been chartered, since they have public school choice, since they have more parental flexibility, here are some of the astounding results that we have seen in that charter school.

Fenton had the highest rate of gain in student attendance of all the schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, the highest rate of gain in student attendance of all schools in the L.A. Unified School District. A great accomplishment.

Parental participation has increased from a handful of parents attending school meetings to over 400 parents a week, 400 parents a week utilizing Fenton's Family Center to participate in that inner-city school.

Then, you might say, what about the academics? On the California Test of Basic Skills, the number of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile has increased by 383 percent in reading, 253 percent in mathematics, and 280 percent in language.

When we talk about, Mr. Speaker, new ideas, and my constituents at home in Indiana want us to come up with new ideas for public education, it is probably the most important issue to my constituents today, they also want, secondly, better accountability of our schools, better quality in our schools, better achievement from the students. When you get those first two components, thirdly, they are willing to put more resources in to our public schools.

So when you see the results of the Fenton Avenue Charter School in California, which is one example of many of the 1,700 charter schools across the country, you can see why charter schools are part of the reform effort of public school choice in America, of new ideas, of helping all students achieve, regardless of where they live, regardless of income, regardless of color, regardless of religion, charter schools can be part of that effort. So that is one of the reasons that we have targeted and I have introduced this National Charter Schools Week, to provide more information and more knowledge about what charter schools can do.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me conclude and simply say this: In America today, and I spent the last 2 weeks going door-to-door, farm-to-farm, factory-to-factory, back home in Indiana, in the north central part of the State, education is the most important issue to our parents. We do not have a more important issue in America today than investing in our children, making sure they have a good public education system.

At the same time, we are going through a technological revolution in America, maybe more significant than the agricultural revolution or the industrial revolution. We must make sure that our public schools are ready and equipped with the technology and the computers, and that we do not have a huge digital divide between rich and poor in access to this technology.

Thirdly, our businesses everywhere are saying we need more workers. We have a 2.5 percent unemployment rate in northern Indiana and our businesses are saying, across the board, public education reform is part of the effort to get us more workers.

So, for these three reasons, parental involvement, the most important issue in America today; secondly, the technological revolution; thirdly, the businesses need more workers, we bring this charter school resolution before the floor today, in a bipartisan way, with bipartisan support, and we hope that we continue to see a lot of support from Congress, from the Republican and Democratic side, for more resources for start-up costs of more charter schools across the country, and we hope to work with the Committee on Appropriations to achieve that objective.

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

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY), and, pending that, I ask unanimous consent that the time I control be controlled by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO).

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you in support of the National Charter Schools Week. Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia currently allow charter schools to operate. Nearly 1,700 charter schools around the country are open, serving some 433,000 children. They have become an increasingly popular alternative among educators and local communities concerned about the effectiveness of traditional standards of public education. It provides alternatives for parents.

We are here to celebrate those States that have adopted that, those 37, but my hope is that it also sheds light on the 13 States, such as mine, Nebraska, that have yet to pass effective charter school legislation. So my State is not able to stand with President Clinton and celebrate charter schools. This is truly a bipartisan issue.

I got a letter just a few weeks ago from some parents in my district whose child was having difficulty learning in his home school, especially reading, under the traditional methods, and they had to send their child to a private school that would have met all the criteria of a traditional public charter school. Now, this is why for those 13 States we need to really heighten the discussion about why we need charter schools. Yet for all these parents in my district, with the needs for their children, the Nebraska legislature has refused to provide charter schools as an option for our students.

Political leaders from both sides of the aisle here today, from top to bottom, from President Clinton to local districts, openly embrace this new concept. I am hopeful that in the next legislative session legislators in Nebraska will make it a priority, bringing our school children in our State the type of educational reform supported by parents, educators, and politically elected officials alike.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI).

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of this bill which commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public schools. I have been a supporter of the charter school movement since 1992, when former Representatives McCurdy and Penny and I introduced the Public Schools Redefinition Act of 1992. This bill was based on legislation introduced the previous year by Senators Durenberger of Minnesota and LIEBERMAN of Connecticut. That was the very beginning of Congressional efforts to encourage charter schools.

I am delighted to say that the bipartisan efforts of a handful of dedicated individuals resulted in the subsequent creation by Congress of a Federal public charter schools program in 1994. Later, the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 revised the public charter school statute by, among other things, increasing its authorization and giving priority for grants to states, providing charter schools with financial autonomy.

We should remember that the charter school movement is a true grassroots movement. It is a movement that was started in the early 1990's by worried parents and frustrated teachers who were sick and tired of the status quo, sick and tired of battling the bureaucracy that strangles educational innovation, and sick and tired of seeing their children wallow in mediocrity and, in some cases, in failure.

It is, therefore, important to keep in mind that Congress should shy away from federally prescribing requirements such as teacher certification. According to the Charter Friends National Network, ''More than two-thirds of the states—with more than 80 percent of the charters—currently have some degree of flexibility in allowing use of teacher qualifications other than traditional certification.''

Any attempt to apply a teacher certification mandate to charter schools would jeopardize their very nature, which is based on autonomy in exchange for academic excellence.

In my State of Wisconsin, I am proud to say we have a strong charter school and school choice program, particularly in the City of Milwaukee, where we have the prominent support of our Governor and other education reform-minded individuals, such as former School Superintendent Howard Fuller and Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist.

1615

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that charter schools work. They work because they are free from burdensome regulations; and in return, they are held accountable for academic results. I want to commend the gentleman from Indiana for introducing this resolution; I thank him for the opportunity to speak in support of this measure. I urge all of my colleagues to sport and promote this week as the national charter school week.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT).

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, imagine an educated America where all children get a world-class education and the opportunity to achieve their dreams. Can we imagine a great school in every community for every child, or the best and brightest teaching our children? How about graduating 95 percent of high school seniors and enabling every willing child to receive a higher education. That is our dream for education, and that is why we believe so strongly in charter schools.

Charter schools are springing up throughout the Nation as innovative minds create new ways to offer students a quality education that meets their individual needs. Why do charter schools work? Because they are public schools which receive public support, but they are free from the red tape and the bureaucracy which hinders the success of so many of our schools in the public education system.

Charter schools allow folks who care about their community to bring their ideas together and to create new ways of educating our children. At present, there are over 1,700 charter schools around the Nation, and 10 of these are in my home State of South Carolina. It is my dream and goal to help charter schools flourish in South Carolina, to revitalize our education system.

Today, I rise to praise an excellent charter school in my district which opened its doors last fall, the Greenville Technical Charter High School. This charter high school does an outstanding job of integrating solid academics with a project-based learning curriculum which allows students to experience hands-on learning. Greenville Tech Charter School has over 50 percent of parents participating in various committees and support groups. Schools that are accountable to parents produce a better education product for their students.

The business community has rallied around this new school; and the students from this school have, in turn, returned tremendous contributions to the Greenville community by logging over 1,500 hours of community service. The Greenville Tech Charter High School addresses the needs of a diverse student body. There are currently 100 9th and 100 10th graders enrolled in this school. Twenty-five percent are classified as special education students and 32 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch.

I am proud to say that Greenville Tech Charter High School is creatively tackling the challenges of providing students of many backgrounds the opportunity to receive a superior academically challenging education. This strong education will launch these students into higher education or to success in the working world. Is that not what we all want, educated children who excel in an ever-changing world?

We may have different ideas how to get there, but let us not dispute the fact that charter schools are helping lead the way in making America an educated and prosperous Nation.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

Mr. BURR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding me this time.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) for their hard work on this issue. The fact is that education should be bipartisan. Every minute that we talk about education, we should spend looking for those new ideas that the gentleman from Indiana talked about, those ideas that affect our children, the children in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand before my colleagues today as a sponsor of this legislation, this small token, a resolution to create recognition for the success of charter schools. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, North Carolina is a participant in the charter school program. This year we ranked 11th out of the 37 States, so we have a great deal of success in this. North Carolina permits 100 charter schools to be created. Currently we have 75 schools chartered and up and running; and I believe this year, 20 additional schools will be added. One that has been tremendously successful is the kindergartners at Healthy Start Academy in Durham, North Carolina. They achieved an average test score in the 99th percentile for reading and the 97th percentile for math. What an amazing statistic, given that just about all of the children at that school are eligible for the Federal free lunch program and come from low-income families.

What does this resolution do? Quite simply, it recognizes the success of new ideas, the success of people willing to put politics away and to let policy take over. In North Carolina alone, let me share with my colleagues some brief successes, some things that will happen this week. The America Renaissance Charter School in Statesville, North Carolina, is celebrating this week with a proclamation from the mayor, positive news articles, and National Charter School Week logo shirts. In Raleigh, North Carolina, at SARC Academy, the teachers there plan to go and meet with the general assembly members as our short session of the general assembly starts. In Chapel Hill where Village Charter School is, those students have been invited to a special performance of the University of North Carolina's Opera Work Shop just for the charter school kids.

Mr. Speaker, this is a week that we ought to be proud of, a week that complements the work of this body, and really the creativity and the passion of the American people. I hope every State has the opportunity in the future to introduce charter schools to their communities; and I hope that this Congress stays focused on the bipartisanship that we approached this issue with. I thank the chairman and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) for their great success.

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

I want to wrap up on my side by thanking the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), a friend of mine, for his kind comments. He is absolutely right, that what we need to do in this Congress and for this country is to try to work in bipartisan ways, with new ideas, with accountability, with increased quality, with better resources and improved public education in America today. Today, with this resolution that I have introduced, I give a lot of credit to the bipartisan nature today that we have achieved. I hope it continues into the future, and I too want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), the chairman of our committee; and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), the second ranking member on the Republican side, for their help and sponsorship. I want to thank on my side the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MARTINEZ) and others for their help. I want to particularly thank the new Democrats, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY) and the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) and a host of other new Democrats that have been very supportive of the whole initiative to start charter schools across the country and support them from a policy perspective.

Mr. Speaker, I would conclude and say again, thanks to my colleagues for the spirit that we see today, the spirit of bipartisanship. I hope it can continue into the Elementary Secondary Education Reauthorization Act. We will be bringing that vote to the floor soon. It was not particularly bipartisan in committee, and I hope we can rekindle the bipartisanship that we saw in the first part of the bill on title I, where an amendment that I offered on increasing the resources and the quality for title I kids, the poorest kids in America; and we were able to get a number of Republicans on to support that amendment and increase title I resources by $1.5 billion, $1.5 billion. When we can increase the quality of a program, we also might look at increasing the resources and quality of that program.

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Colorado for yielding me this time. I also would like to applaud the work of our colleague on the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER), on his strong support for the charter school movement.

I think what we are talking about today is we are talking about an aspect of the total package of public education; not pointing this out and saying this is the best version of public education, but recognizing that this is a reform in public education that ought to be highlighted, as well as reinforcing the solid public education that has gone on in this country day after day, year after year, for so many years. I want to make sure that our constituents recognize that this is an aspect of the total package of public education that is offered to our children around the country.

This resolution commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public education system. Charter schools have made tremendous progress in improving and reforming public education. Reports show that parental satisfaction is high, students are eager to learn, teachers and administrators are free from bureaucratic red tape, and more dollars are getting to the classroom. As these innovations and these improvements are highlighted through the charter school movement, we also see that a number of our other public schools are asking for the same kind of freedom and the same kind of relief from bureaucratic red tape, so that as we learn through the charter school movement about reforms and changes that can help public education, I am hopeful that the people who are administering the rest of public education or the legislators take a look at it and say, these things are helping our kids, let us take some of these reforms and let us move them into all of public education.

That is why charter schools in many cases are being seen as the force that is driving change in schools around the country. Parents are given new choice for their children, and other schools have responded by increasing emphasis on parental involvement and high academic standards. That has been going on. But I think also what has been happening is that the charter school movement has been accelerating this pace in certain of our schools. Charter schools have an unprecedented amount of accountability to parents, school board members, and State governments. A school can be closed if it does not do its job and if it does not improve student performance. This method of accountability is spreading to traditional public schools and to the Federal education program.

In the State of Michigan we have 173 charter schools, educating more than 50,000 students. More than 70 percent of these schools have waiting lists. This clearly indicates the success of charter schools in these communities and the desire on the part of parents to have more options in public education. Charter schools represent reform; they represent innovation in public education. I hope all of my colleagues will join me in honoring them and also recognizing the work of all public schools for their important contributions to educating our kids and that they will do that by supporting this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the important comments that my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), will now make.

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

I too wish to commend the gentleman from Indiana for his work on this resolution. It is an incredibly important advance that this Nation is observing in the entire area of educational improvement. I certainly am in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 310, which acknowledges and commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public school system and calls for National Charter Schools Week to be established.

As a former public school teacher at Drake Middle School in Colorado and as the Secretary of Education's regional representative in both the Reagan and Bush administration, I have firsthand experience in the trials and tribulations of teaching in the public school system in general. I also had the opportunity just recently, just over the break, to visit two charter schools in Colorado in my district; and it was a pleasure to be there and see how these schools are operating. One has been around since charter schools started in Colorado and Colorado was one of the first States in the Nation to have a charter school law on the books, and they are doing very well.

1630

They are doing very well.

I have also seen the results on the other side of inflicting the many unfunded mandates on our Nation's public schools and believe the charter

school movement is a direct result of the desire for parents to increase their involvement and control over their children's education.

New charter schools have swept the country to the point of including 35 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and represent a clear change in how education is disseminated across this great Nation. There are nearly 1,700 charter schools across the country serving almost 400,000 children.

Laboratories of learning are being established from coast to coast and the common denominator between them all is the staunch desire for local hands-on control by parents and teachers. From ''back to basic'' schools in Arizona to ''magnet programs'' in Colorado and even ''outcome-based education'' programs, they are all proving that there is not just one way to teach.

This resolution supporting National Charter Schools Week must be used as a means of celebrating true diversity. Diversity in education, diversity in learning, diversity in thought.

I would like to point out some of the results of Colorado's Charter School Program. In reading proficiency, the charter schools are at least 10 percentage points above the State average. In writing proficiency, they are significantly above the State average in both the fourth grade and seventh grade levels.

While performance is not yet what it should be in the charter schools, they have proven to produce a significant increase in proficiency, resulting in a minimum 10 percent advantage over the average of the entire State. These same results can be found all across the country when charter schools and schools of choice are made available as an option.

We will recall that 10 percent is the difference between two full letter grades in most schools. It takes students from average to above average and there is no better way to enhance self-esteem than to earn better grades.

Mr. Speaker, I have here an article on Colorado's charter schools which appeared in the April 4 edition of the Colorado Springs Gazette; an article on charter schools which appeared in the April 12 edition of The Hill; and a briefing paper entitled, ''How Washington Can Really Help Charter Schools,'' prepared by the Lexington Institute. I would like to submit all three of these into the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a list of States with laws supporting the implementation of charter schools and the strengths and weaknesses of each charter school program, and I will submit those for the RECORD as well.

Supporting National Charter Schools Week lends credence to the proclamation that not everyone thinks alike and not everyone learns alike. Combined with the Charter Schools Expansion Act from the 105th Congress, it acknowledges the success of thinking out of the box by supporting and commending those communities who have chosen to take control of their own destiny.

Mr. Speaker, I should also say there are attempts whenever we have something good happening in education, there is somebody out there that is going to try and stop it. And we have to make sure that the U.S. Department of Education and State departments of education throughout the Nation do not take advantage of the options they have in regulating State bureaucracies and State charter schools to try and stop it.

[From the Colorado Springs Gazette, Apr. 4, 2000]

COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS AREN'T PERFECT, BUT THEY GET THE JOB DONE

(By Robert Holland)

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Education documented the phenomenal growth of charter schools. But it took a state-level evaluation in Colorado to show how these largely autonomous public schools can work at their best.

The federal Department of Education reported that 421 charter schools opened in the 12 months before September 1999—a 40 percent jump, the sharpest increase yet. In all, more than 1,700 charter schools have come into existence since 1991, and they serve a quarter of a million students. Organizers receive exemption from many bureaucratic rules in exchange for a written pledge that they will deliver academic results.

In Colorado, charter schools clearly are living up to that promise. On average, charter students were scoring 10 to 16 percentage points above statewide averages, and three-fourths of charter schools also were out-performing their home districts and schools with comparable demographic profiles.

Colorado is a hotbed of activism for school choice. Were it not for the vigorous ongoing advocacy of private-school vouchers by business leaders like Steve Schuck and political leaders like Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo., it is doubtful that the public school establishment would be embracing charters nearly as ardently. Charters don't provide a full range of educational choice, but they are a start.

The Colorado Education Department evaluated 51 charter schools that had been in operation at least two years. These schools constituted 3.3 percent of Colorado's public schools and served 13,000 students (1.9 percent of total enrollment).

The Core Knowledge curriculum developed by University of Virginia English professor E.D. Hirsch Jr., a prominent critic of the school-of-education mentality, was by far the most popular model among Colorado charter organizers. Twenty-two of the 51 schools used Core Knowledge. And the study shows that their confidence was not misplaced: According to the study, 14 of them ''exceeded the expectations set for their performance,'' and the other eight ''generally met'' the expectations.

On the whole the evaluators found the charter schools ''enjoy striking (some times extraordinary) levels of parent involvement,'' a factor universally valued as an ingredient in school success. As for reasons, the evaluators said that being able to seek out the school best for their child gave parents ''a greater sense of commitment'' to the school. In addition, parents appreciated that their schools welcomed their involvement and created opportunities for their participation.

Here are comparisons of the proportions of students who scored ''proficient'' or higher on the Colorado Student Assessment Program:

Third-grade reading: 77 percent of charter students; state average, 67 percent.

Fourth-grade reading: 73 percent of charter students, state average, 59 percent.

Fourth-grade writing: 49 percent of charter students, state average, 34 percent.

Seventh-grade reading: 66 percent of charter students, state average, 56 percent.

Seventh-grade writing: 57 percent of charter students; state average, 41 percent.

The charters exhibited a kind of diversity that is sometimes overlooked: They ''were diverse in size, educational programs, educational philosophies, approach to governance, and assessment strategies. The diversity met the intent of the Colorado Charter Schools Act to offer new educational options to students and their parents.''

In the wake of distressing outbreaks of violence at large schools, many educators are calling for a return to small schools. Colorado's charter schools fill the bill: Only 6 percent of the charters had more than 500 students, while 51 percent enrolled fewer than 200 pupils.

How much of a hand do parents have? Consider: Parents were represented on the governing boards of 90 percent of charter schools, and in 34 of the 47 charters reporting the composition of their boards, parents held a majority of seats.

[From The Hill, Apr. 12, 2000]

CHARTER SCHOOLS, SCHOOL CHOICE GAIN BIPARTISAN STEAM

(By Robert Holland and Don Soifer)

Creating charter schools as a way to foster family choice and competition within public education is an idea gaining a bipartisan head of steam on Capitol Hill.

But taking the next big step—tax credits or vouchers that could extend parental choice to private schools, as the G.I. Bill and Pell Grants do for college students—remains largely a Republican cause, with defections by ''moderate'' GOP lawmakers and threatened vetoes by President Clinton posing formidable obstacles.

Charter schools are a not-to-be-sneezed-at response, though, to education consumers' desire for more choices than a government monopoly typically will allow.

Their phenomenal growth from one school in Minnesota in 1991 to more than 1,700 nationwide today has been the hottest education story of the past decade. Entrepreneurs who organize charter schools get exemptions from stifling bureaucratic rules in exchange for a promise they will deliver academic results.

The biggest obstacle facing charter-school organizers is securing necessary financing for safe and functional facilities. With that concern eased, charters likely would pose even more of a competitive challenge to orthodox public schools. To address the facilities crunch, Rep. Heather Wilson (R-N.M.) in March introduced the Charter School Financing Act of 2000.

Through the Small Business Administration, the bill would distribute $600 million for FY2001 in federal loan guarantees to eligible charter schools. Congress likely will have no more important piece of charter-school legislation before it this year. (The charter section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] was reauthorized in 1998.)

The concept of providing tax advantages to parents who put money in Education Savings Accounts (ESA) to facilitate their totally free choice of schools has not yet gained nearly as much traction as charter schools.

On March 2, the Senate passed, 61–37, an ESA bill sponsored by Paul Coverdell (R–Ga.) and Robert Torricelli (D–N.J.). However, on the House side, a revolt in late March by 15

''moderate'' Republicans may have killed ESAs for this session.

Still alive, though facing an almost-certain Clinton veto, is the idea of letting federal aid follow needy children to a school of the family's choosing. ''Portability'' received a significant boost when the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions passed it as an amendment to the ESEA offered by Sen. Judd Gregg (R–N.H.).

His measure would permit up to 10 states and 20 school districts to disburse their Title I aid in the name of individual needy children, and the money would go with the child to whatever public school the parents or guardians chose. Eventually, the choice could be extended to private schools also.

Despite expenditures of more than $130 billion since Title I was passed 35 yeas ago in the heyday of President Johnson's War on Poverty, numerous federal evaluations have shown the massive has had little or no impact on closing the achievement gap for underprivileged children. Gregg voiced the hope that portability will create a competition to serve these children that will boost results.

Even in bilingual education, long a captive of special interests, elements of parental choice are catching on.

The Senate is about to take up House-passed reforms, proposed by House Education Committee Chairman Bill Goodling (R–Pa.) and Arizona Rep. Matt Salmon (R), that would require school districts to obtain informed parental consent before placing children in bilingual programs.

They also would eliminate the current rule mandating that at least 75 percent of federal bilingual dollars be spent to support instruction in students' non-English native languages, with the remainder reserved for ironically termed ''alternative'' programs—that is, classes teaching English, in English.

Republican Sens. Coverdell and Jon Kyl of Arizona are among those championing parental consent and notification provisions like those passed in the House.

Connecticut Democrat Joseph Lieberman also has a plan that would include sweeping bilingual education reforms, such as mandating that teachers of English learners be fluent in English and placing a three-year limit on federally funded bilingual programs.

Many parents new to this country have found that public schools have consigned their children to a kind of linguistic ghetto rather than teaching them promptly the language of jobs and citizenship. Bilingual reform can give the most humble parents the clout to change that.

[From the Lexington Institute, Issue Brief, Apr. 14, 2000]

HOW WASHINGTON CAN REALLY HELP CHARTER SCHOOLS

(By Don Soifer, Executive Vice President)

Charter schools' extraordinary growth—from one school in Minnesota in 1991 to over 1,700 nationwide today—may well be America's biggest education success story of the past decade. In Arizona one in six public schools is a charter school. In North Carolina, Michigan and elsewhere urban charter schools are bringing choice and accountability to families unaccustomed with either. ''When we look back on the 1990s,'' First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton proclaimed to the National Education Association's 1999 national convention, ''the charter school movement may well be one of the ways we have turned around the entire public education system.''

With the President's most recent call for a further dramatic increase in the number of charter schools, and with charters at or near the top of many education reform agendas, it seems that Washington expects to play an increasing role in this unfolding story. The critical task will be to foster the development of charter schools without interfering in their effectiveness.

These proposed federal remedies address many, though certainly not all, of the most formidable challenges facing the nation's charter school entrepreneurs. But they are just that, federal remedies, to advance a movement that is intrinsically local. Many charter school leaders argue that the best thing the federal government can do to cultivate their movement is to stay away while local education providers and state policymakers lay the essential groundwork. The threat of federal over-regulation looms large for charter schools, as revealed by recent intrusions by the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

So how can Washington really help charter schools? The following policy recommendations were written with the guidance of charter school experts and leaders from around the country.

Require states to provide charter schools with their per-pupil share of Title I and other federal funding streams within months of the school's startup. The current process often takes a full year to get these funds to charter schools and can require state officials to engage in shaky guesswork—all at the expense of our most at-risk children.

Increase availability of financing for facilities, frequently the greatest obstacle facing charter school entrepreneurs. Safe and functional housing for charter schools can be hardest to find in urban areas where their mission is most vital. Financing opportunities, low-cost or otherwise, are often just as scarce. Second-hand facilities, perhaps those which previously housed public schools, post offices, or downsized military bases, could provide excellent homes for charter schools if available. Representative Heather Wilson's proposed Charter School Financing Act addresses this crunch by distributing $600 million in federal loan guarantees to charter schools for facilities through the Small Business Administration.

Reallocate to the states the 5 percent of federal charter school funding currently set aside for the U.S. Department of Education to pursue ''national activities'' such as research and dissemination of information. Putting the money in states' hands would enable them to directly address financing or other practical issues.

Protect charter schools' flexibility from rigid teacher-certification requirements. The Clinton Administration boasts of its pro-charter agenda, claiming credit for the remarkable growth of charter schools during its tenure. But the rigid teacher-certification requirements in its current Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization proposal threaten one of charter schools' most vital characteristics—the ability to hire effective teachers with real-world experience outside of traditional teacher-preparation schools and union-embraced professional development. Such a mandate could render futile the autonomy crucial to charter schools' success.

Offer grants beyond the first 3 years of a charter school's existence. This is enough time for some charters to gain necessary traction, but not others. Grants of 5–6 years would also provide successful charter schools with the boost to expand to meet an even greater need.

Ensure that only states with charter school laws on the books receive federal charter school funding. States that produce more charter schools deserve more federal charter school dollars. It is essential that charter school policy decisions should made at the state level. Sending federal funds to non-charter school states does more than just lessen their impact—it provides Washington bureaucrats with a vehicle to circumvent state laws.

Encourage startup grants which foster for-profit organization partnering with local groups. Arizona, which hosts the nation's most mature charter school movement, has a wide range of innovative private-sector funding sources and approaches. Officials there are quick to acknowledge that many of the state's best charter schools are run by, or through partnerships with, for-profit entities. In much the same spirit as enterprise zones that helped reinvigorate inner cities during the 1980s and 90s, private-sector leadership for the charter school movement can bring critical education growth to the urban settings where the need is most urgent.

With so much momentum on the side of America's charter schools, many in Washington, D.C. understandably want to get involved. Some, like Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, have called for making every public school in America a charter school. But as the charter school movement grows rapidly beyond its infancy, Washington must maintain the right middle ground between neglect and smothering. It will be a difficult balancing act.

[From the Center for Education Reform, Apr. 28, 2000]

MAKING SCHOOLS WORK BETTER FOR ALL CHILDREN

CHARTER SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS AND STATISTICS

There are 37 charter school laws in the United States, Nearly 1,700 charter schools opened this fall in 31 states and the District of Columbia, serving over 400,000 students.

New Charter School States (Currently Unranked): Oklahoma (1999), Oregon (1999)

Charter School States That Have Strong to Medium Strength Laws (23): Arizona (1994), California (1992), Colorado (1993), Connecticut (1996), Delaware (1995), District of Columbia (1996), Florida (1996), Illinois (1996), Louisiana (1995), Massachusetts (1993), Michigan (1993), Minnesota (1991), Missouri (1998), New Hampshire (1995), New Jersey (1996), New York (1998), North Carolina (1996), Ohio (1997), Pennsylvania (1997), South Carolina (1996), Texas (1995), Utah (1998), Wisconsin (1993).

Charter School States That Have Weak Laws (12): Alaska (1995), Arkansas (1995), Georgia (1993), Hawaii (1994), Idaho (1998), Kansas (1994), Mississippi (1997), Nevada (1997), New Mexico (1993), Rhode Island (1995), Virginia (1998), Wyoming (1995).

CHARTER SCHOOLS IN OPERATION, 1999–2000 SCHOOL YEAR

State (year law passed)	*Total opened*
Alaska ('95)	17
Arizona ('94)	352
Arkansas ('95)	0
California ('92)	239
Colorado ('93)	65
Connecticut ('96)	16
Delaware ('95)	5
District of Columbia ('96)	31
Florida ('96)	111
Georgia ('93)	32
Hawaii ('94)	2
Idaho ('98)	8
Illinois ('94)	19
Kansas ('95)	15
Louisiana ('95)	17
Massachusetts ('93)	39
Michigan ('93)	173
Minnesota ('91)	59
Mississippi ('97)	1
Missouri ('98)	18
Nevada ('97)	5
New Hampshire ('95)	0
New Jersey ('96)	46

	Total opened
New Mexico ('93)	3
New York ('98)	7
North Carolina ('96)	75
Ohio ('97)	49
Oklahoma ('99)	0
Oregon ('99)	4
Pennsylvania ('97)	47
Rhode Island ('95)	2
South Carolina ('96)	8
Texas ('95)	167
Utah ('98)	3
Virginia ('98)	0
Wisconsin ('93)	55
Wyoming ('95)	0
Nationwide total	1689

This information has been compiled through state departments of education and charter school resource centers. In some instances, however, there may be slight discrepancies.

For more information, see CER's overview of current *charter school laws,* including state-by-state *rankings of charter school laws* and 32-point *legislative profiles* of each state's charter provisions.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), the honorable chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker I ask unanimous consent to reclaim 2 minutes of the time that I yielded back in order that I may also yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), so that the chairman of the committee would have more than 2 minutes to speak.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all of the brave parents and pioneering educators who have taken part in the charter school movement over the last 9 years, and I certainly want to congratulate those who are here today promoting this legislation. There is no question that their commitment to educating our Nation's youth has made all the difference in the world to thousands of children.

About 7 month ago, I had the privilege of seeing a successful charter school in action when I visited Edison Friendship Public Charter School here in D.C. I will tell my colleagues, it was a privilege. It was a privilege because, number one, the school had just celebrated its first anniversary and during that year, student test scores had doubled. And number two, the parents of the students were actively engaged.

Mr. Speaker, these students have to get to that school on their own. There is no transportation provided. The parents must, of course, sign in relationship to discipline, and must sign in relationship to checking homework to make sure that as a matter of fact the homework is being done. The parents of the students were very actively engaged.

In fact, children are learning in charter schools in some 32 States all across the country. They are learning because, by their very nature, charter schools are free from burdensome rules and regulations and because charter schools increase parental involvement by promoting choice in public education. In exchange for this freedom, charter schools are held accountable. If they do not do the job, they cease to exist.

I firmly believe that it is this do-or-die mentality that empowers students, parents, and teachers alike to perform at a high level. It is this do-or-die mentality this has made the charter school movement so successful, and it is this do-or-die mentality in the name of education that I applaud here today.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my fellow colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 310, ''Supporting a National Charter Schools Week,'' which commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public school system. And improve it we must, because at the present time, we are losing probably 50 percent of our students each year who will never have an opportunity to get a piece of the American dream because they will not be prepared to do it.

We will be voting in the near future again to increase the number who come in from other countries to do our high-tech work. We need to prepare our own to do that.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of "National Charter Schools Week," May 1–5, and in support of H. Con. Res. 310, I rise to acknowledge and congratulate the phenomenal growth and success of charter schools in the United States and the remarkable success they have achieved. Colorado charter schools, I am particularly pleased to report, are among the nation's leaders when it comes to academic performance, parental satisfaction and accountability.

According to a recent study by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), charter school students significantly outperformed state and local district averages in reading and writing. Other indicators, including parent satisfaction and participation, were also very positive. As the proud parent of three children attending Liberty Common School, a charter school in Fort Collins, Colorado in the Poudre School District, and one of the 51 Colorado charter schools participating in the CDE study, I can attest to the fact that charter schools work, are a catalyst for improvement in our nation's schools, and are in great demand across the country.

On this celebration of charter schools, I hereby submit a letter by Dr. Kathryn Knox, headmaster of Liberty Common School, on her experience testifying before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation of the Committee on Education on the success and challenges facing charter schools. Mr. Speaker, it clearly and persuasively addressed the opportunities and challenges facing charter schools today.

NOTES FROM DR. KNOX: WASHINGTON, D.C. TESTIMONY

The question was asked, ''Where were you the two days prior to Spring Break?'' Though it would have been fun to say, ''I was in Hawaii,'' actually, something else more important happened. I had the wonderful opportunity to be part of a bipartisan hearing on charter schools in Washington, D.C. for the Congressional subcommittee on Education and the Workforce. Four of us from different parts of the nation were invited. My colleagues on the panel were Ms. Sumida from Fenton Charter School in California (a district school that had become a charter school by choice, and one in which all continuing teachers resigned from the union in order to form a charter); Ms. Salcido from the Cesar Chavez Charter High School in Washington, D.C. (high population of at-risk students), and Mr. Schroeder from the Charter Friends Network in Minnesota. The chair of the committee was Representative Peter Hoekstra, and the bipartisan representatives were Congressman Bob Schaffer and Congressman Tim Roemer. I was honored to be able to present, with this panel, information about charter successes and challenges and respond to what the federal government was doing to help or hinder charter schools. In addition to the presentation at the Rayburn House, our testimony was taped by CSPAN and broadcast to about 9 million people, so we had the benefit of high visibility for Liberty across the nation. I thought Liberty parents would like to hear a bit about this experience. There were several questions from the members for which I will summarize a response.

Ms. Salcido noted some characteristics of charter schools which we all agreed on including freedom of choice, accountability for results, high standards for all involved in the school, doing away with bureaucracy, supporting innovation and a team-building spirit. Our common goal is to retain our autonomy and clear responsibility to the students, while obtaining fair funding and support of equal capital financing opportunities for the children's sake. Equal capital funding continues to be a challenge for most charter schools. At Liberty, for example, though we officially have 95% of per pupil operating revenue, if the building costs, maintenance, grounds, custodial costs, etc., are subtracted, and into the equation are added the lack of access to other revenue sources including capital reserve funds, mill levy funds, public bond monies, and even vehicle licensing fees, Liberty is operating on about 73% of each dollar given to other public schools.

The Department of Education will have a budget exceeding $120 BILLION, and though we all want equality in funding, and want accountability for results, we don't want strings attached that allow subtle and increasing federal direction and control of local schools. The momentum for charter schools comes locally, and culture is positively different in a good charter school because of the local control. For one example of this: In our case, we received a substantial grant last year from the federal government. Later, we were told that because we had received and accepted federal monies, we had to eliminate our first-come/first-served waiting list and replace it with a lottery. Our charter states that we would hold slots for at-risk students to increase our socioeconomic diversity, but a lottery precludes this desire to reach a more diverse population.

The question about whether teachers feel professional or not in charter schools is responded to by considering the current reality of government-monopoly schooling. Under union contracts, all teachers are treated the

same and paid the same, and after a few years, are allowed to remain whether they are doing an excellent job or not. Prior to the three-year tenure period, teachers are often fired or simply laid off after a year in a school, depending on factors including current financing or the number of tenured teachers at a certain level of salary. In good charter schools, some teachers rise to the top as in any enterprise and should be paid more for their extra work, training, and professional responsibility. Teamwork, trustworthiness and collegiality are required for the development of a good school culture in which all teachers are involved in promoting the entire vision and mission of the school. The current paradigm of separation and isolation must be changed, and negative influences must be able to be removed from the enterprise so that student achievement and collegial teamwork is not hindered. Charter schools allow excellent teachers to develop skills and talents for the good of the students and the school. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well for the good of students at Liberty and the whole school. Parent concerns and ideas are also valued here, and parents should always feel welcome to participate actively in the school.

The question about accountability and whether the state should have the ability to shut down a charter school if the school were not performing well, was expanded by Congressman Schaffer, who noted that the few charter schools that have closed may not have responded well to their client's needs and charter expectations, and that is a good thing, but that interestingly, other public schools that are not performing well are not similarly challenged to keep their doors open, but rather often receive MORE financing and help.

Overall, the hearing was fruitful and an opportunity included sharing information about Liberty's successes and challenges, in written form with 125 people, while responding to questions publicly. I am very grateful for this greater visibility for our wonderful school, and very grateful for each of your ideas, time, commitment and care.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 310, the resolution that honors National Charter Schools Week and commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public school system.

Charter schools have been instrumental in demonstrating that accountability and innovation work together to improve our Nation's schools. This is because of the special agreement that these schools make with their state agency or local school board. The agreement is simple: the school is allowed to determine the best way to provide a quality education and, in exchange, it must produce results.

Charter schools have demonstrated that achievements can be made when local school districts are given the flexibility to shape their education programs in ways that work best for their teachers and students. Of course, in allowing flexibility, charter schools must produce real, accountable results.

And that is the bottom line—results.

In fact, an overwhelming majority of the initial reports on charter schools have demonstrated that charter schools are achieving their academic goals. But not only are academic results promising. Reports show that parental satisfaction is high, students are eager to learn, teachers are enjoying teaching again, administrators are set-free from administrative red-tape, and more dollars are getting to the classroom.

I am not here today to only tout the successes of individual charter schools. The Public Charter Schools Program has a purpose greater than just creating new schools. The larger purpose of this program is to create a dynamic for change and improvement in our public school system. In the eight years since the first charter school opened its doors, we have seen the benefit that charter schools have had for the education system as a whole. Reports have found that wherever large numbers of charter schools are clustered, system-wide academic improvement has been accelerated.

Let us take a lesson from the charter schools experience that local flexibility and accountability are essential elements in the formula of successful schools.

The federal government has invested over $120 billion in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. We have spent all of that money and can't say definitively that it has led to an increase in academic achievement. We must do something to ensure that the hard-earned money of the American people is spent wisely. Charter schools provide evidence that we should emphasize local flexibility and accountability in our federal education reforms.

The bottom line is that charter schools work because they are freed from burdensome regulations and held accountable for academic results. I commend these schools for their innovation in achieving academic results and for the contribution they have made to our nation's public school system. As we move forward in reforming our federal education programs, let us not forget the lessons learned from the charter schools experience.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 310.

The question was taken.

Mr. ROEMER. 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 motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 310.

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

There was no objection.

PERODIC REPORT ON NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SIGNIFICANT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS CENTERED IN COLOMBIA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 106–232)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 2, 2000.*

COMMUNICATION FROM CHIEF OF STAFF OF HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR., MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from Paul P. Marcone, Chief of Staff for the Honorable James A. Traficant, Jr., Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 13, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House that I have received a subpoena for testimony before the grand jury issued by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Sincerely,

PAUL P. MARCONE.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6 p.m.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6 p.m.

1803

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS) at 6 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will now put the question on each of the first two motions to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today in the order in which that motion was entertained.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Con. Res. 300, by the yeas and nays;