

the classroom to the public at large through literally hundreds of annual art contests and exhibitions of art work at State fairs, wildlife refuges, museums and educational conferences. From the southern bayous of Louisiana to the prairie potholes of North Dakota to the tidal marshes along the Pacific Coast such public exposure has attracted and informed thousands of people annually who might otherwise remain unenlightened about the need to protect and conserve the wildlife and wetlands we enjoy today.

Mr. Speaker, I do commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) for his introduction of this legislation. I especially appreciate his support and again the support of our chairman the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) in working with us to expand the eligibility of this program to now include the insular areas as well as the District of Columbia.

This is a noncontroversial bill that deserves the support of this House, and I do strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Before I yield back the balance of my time I would like to just make note that our good friend is back in the reader's chair. Mr. Paul Hayes is back with us today for the first time, and I know that all of my colleagues will want to join with me saying how pleased we are to have him back and that he has recovered from a little bump that he had awhile back, and we are delighted that he is with us today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ), the sponsor and the author of this legislation.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), my good friend the chairman of the subcommittee, and the ranking member of the committee for their leadership, for being able to pass this in the subcommittee, bringing it to the full committee and onto the floor, and today I rise in support of H.R. 2496, the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act. This is a noncontroversial program that increases the capacity for schools, States and other institutions to conduct wildlife conservation and education programs.

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I had the honor of sponsoring the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act back in the 103rd Congress when I was a subcommittee chairman of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. The purpose of the program, then and now, is to provide elementary and secondary school students with educational opportunities in the conservation and management of migratory birds. The program supplements our schools by

offering an educational component to conduct conservation programs.

As economic and population growth continues and increasingly affects our environment and natural resources, we have to work harder to find ways to preserve both our world and our standard of living.

Solutions to this challenge, like any challenge, begin with knowledge and understanding, and that begins with education. This is why so many people have embraced educational methods, such as the Junior Duck Stamp Program. This program teaches grade school students appreciation for environmental science and habitat conservation, while rewarding their hard work and effort with support for continuing education.

This is a great tool to help educate students who have not had the opportunity many of us have had to spend time with nature and to develop appreciation of our resources and their management.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to tell my friends that over 400,000 students are involved in this program; and, again, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member, and I ask my friends to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take one moment to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) for his great effort in bringing this bill to the floor and for making it possible for us to reauthorize this program. It is certainly, as I said before, a very worthwhile program, and I congratulate the gentleman from Texas for his forethought in bringing it to us.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2496, 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.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### RONGELAP RESETTLEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2970) to prescribe certain terms for the resettlement of the people of Rongelap Atoll due to conditions cre-

ated at Rongelap during United States administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2970

*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 "Rongelap Resettlement Act of 1999".

#### SEC. 2. RONGELAP RESETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

The "Agreement Regarding United States Assistance in the Resettlement of Rongelap Concluded Between the United States Department of the Interior and Rongelap Atoll Local Government", accepted by the Secretary of the Interior on behalf of the President on September 19, 1996, as amended, shall continue in effect: *Provided*, That the authority to make disbursements pursuant to section 3 of such Agreement is extended for a period of 10 years after the existing authority terminates and that all such disbursements are—

(1) subject to the percentum limitation set forth in the Agreement;

(2) used by the Rongelap Atoll local government to manage and support community reunification, recovery, and mobilization for resettlement, and other activities associated with and in support of resettlement for the dislocated populations at Majuro, Ebeye, Mejjatto, and elsewhere in the Marshall Islands; and

(3) subject to the disapproval of the Secretary based upon a determination that a particular use of funds does not effectively contribute to resettlement or address conditions of dislocation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2970.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Rongelap Atoll is one of four atolls which were contaminated by high-level radiation from nuclear testing during the time the islands were administered as a trust territory by the United States. The people of Rongelap were first forced to leave their home in 1954. Since that time, they have returned to reside in Rongelap based on incorrect assurances that the islands were safe.

Now, after independent, scientific studies confirmed by the Department of Energy and the National Academy of Science, a federally funded resettlement plan is being implemented with the full involvement and consent of the Rongelap community. In 1996, Congress provided trust funds for the implementation of this plan for the resettlement