

The serious challenges posed to global stability by poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, immorality and lack of access to clean water and health care.

The recourse to oppression, cruelty and violence as the principle instruments for resolving disputes.

The ecological crisis in which the world finds itself, with grave consequences for present and future generations.

Declare: That the promotion of the values of Tolerance, Truth, Justice and Love must be the aim of any religious teaching.

That extremism, terrorism and other forms of violence in the name of religion have nothing to do with genuine understanding of religion, but are a threat to human life and hence should be rejected.

That the diversity of religious beliefs and practices should not lead to mutual suspicion, discrimination and humiliation but to a mutual acceptance and harmony demonstrating distinctive characteristics of each religion and culture

That religions must aspire towards greater co-operation, recognizing tolerance and mutual acceptance as essential instruments in the peaceful co-existence of all peoples.

That educational programs and the means of social communication should be essential instruments for promotion of positive attitudes towards religions and cultures.

That inter-religious dialogue is one of the key means for social development and the promotion of the well-being of all peoples, fostering tolerance, mutual understanding and harmony among different cultures and religions, and operating to bring an end to conflicts and violence.

That the entire human family must be encouraged to overcome hatred, enmity, intolerance and xenophobia.

We shall strengthen co-operation in promoting spiritual values and the culture of dialogue with the aim of ensuring peace in the new millennium.

We are ready to strain every effort not to allow the use of religious differences as an instrument of hatred and discord, in order to save mankind from a global conflict of religions and cultures.

We look forward to joint actions to ensure peace and progress for humanity and to foster the stability of societies as the basis for a harmonious world for the future.

We thank the Republic of Kazakhstan and his Excellency President Nursultan Nazarbayev for initiating and hosting this Congress.

May our commitments be blessed and all the peoples of the world be granted justice, peace and prosperity.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

The participants of the First Congress of World and National Religions, held from 23 to 24 September 2003 in Astana, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Taking into consideration the fruitful exchange of views on the role of religions in promoting peace and harmony in the world.

Expressing common understanding on the need to continue constructive dialogue among representatives of the world's religions.

HAVE RESOLVED: To convene the Congress at least once every three years; To approve the following title of the Congress—"the Congress of World and Traditional Religions"; To request the Republic of Kazakhstan, as the initiator of the Congress, to elaborate all aspects related to the establishment of the Secretariat; To convene the Second Congress in Astana, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAIRNESS TO LOCAL CONTRACTORS ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to ensure that out-of-state Federal contractors doing business in the various States fully comply with local State laws.

For years, my home State of Hawaii has struggled to force out-of-state Federal contractors to pay local taxes. This issue became so serious in the mid-1990s that the State of Hawaii sued out-of-state Federal contractors for failing to pay State taxes, penalties, and interest ranging from \$191,000 to \$324,000. Non-compliance with State laws has become such an acute problem that the Hawaii Department of Taxation has joined with other State departments and members of the Hawai'i congressional delegation to devise ways to make Federal contractors comply with State tax laws.

The bill I introduce today will solve this problem by requiring the Federal government to withhold from any Federal contractor doing business in any State the amount necessary to pay the State tax liability due under its contract, with the amount withheld paid directly to the State where the work is performed. The bill would also direct the Federal government to require a contractor to be licensed in the State in which a construction contract is to be performed.

Besides assuring prompt and full payment of State taxes, these requirements will also help ensure that out-of-state contractors follow the same set of rules and compete on equal footing for Federal contracts with local contractors. Ignoring State laws gives out-of-state contractors an unfair and illegal advantage over local contractors, who routinely face much stricter scrutiny to comply with their local laws and much stricter penalties for failing to do so.

This bill is modeled after legislation introduced by my predecessor, the late Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink, who understood that out-of-state contractors must fulfill their legal responsibilities wherever they conduct their business. By reintroducing an expanded and refined version of her earlier bill, I will continue her fight to help State governments police unethical contractors. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

NATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in recognition of the National Education Week that was celebrated during the week of November 17th through November 22, 2003. The theme was "Great Public Schools for Every Child—America's Promise." Although we triumphantly celebrated American education during that time, we must acknowledge that we have failed to fulfill the promise of ensuring a quality education for every student, regardless of their socio-economic background. Mr. Speaker, there is an underlying problem with the nu-

cleus of our public school system, and we cannot continue to band-aid these educational atrocities.

Mr. Speaker, over the past quarter of a century, the percentage of student dropout rates has stayed relatively unchanged. In fact, there are over 519,000 dropouts in America every year. Essentially, Mr. Speaker, America's dropout rates are the "unintended consequences" of our failure to invest the appropriate resources and programs in public school infrastructures.

When students drop out of school, there is a simultaneous spiral effect that leads to a host of troubling issues, such as teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquencies, and even criminal activities. It is well-known that teenage girls who drop out of school are approximately 50 percent more likely to have a teenage pregnancy than girls who complete their high school education. Mr. Speaker, it is not a mystery to me, where the problem lies, when an estimated eight out of 10 prisoners are high school dropouts. These obvious correlations are not a matter of happenstance.

I believe we have a responsibility to remedy these issues through effective comprehensive programs in public education.

Mr. Speaker, this is the reason I am introducing the Vocational Opportunities and Instruction through Cooperative Education Act, also known as the VOICE Act of 2003. This bill would require the Secretary of Education to conduct a pilot study that would examine effective cooperative education programs in high schools across the nation.

The goal of my legislation is to promote alternative learning environments through school-to-work programs that have been proven to be a successful strategy in preventing high school dropouts. We know that cooperative education is an effective approach in reducing dropout rates. Mr. Speaker, School-to-Work programs, not only prevent dropout rates, but research also demonstrates that linking academic course work to career-related curriculum in the workplace, consistently increases student achievement.

My legislation would also create paid partnerships for students who participate in the program. This is an important piece of my legislation because when these students are paid, it reinforces our commitment to excellence through education while rewarding the efforts of the students. My bill, the VOICE Act of 2003, provides a win-win program for schools, community businesses and organizations, and most importantly the students. Students will benefit from this program because it creates an avenue for both high academic achievement and financial incentives. And the partnership between community businesses and organizations and the schools will assure highly skilled, motivated and experienced high school graduates, which is an investment for the future workforce.

Mr. Speaker, if America is serious about keeping our promise of providing great public schools for every child, then we must do everything in our power to integrate cooperative education programs into every public school classroom across this nation. It is my hope that all my colleagues will join me in the struggle to improve the quality of public education, by cosponsoring this much needed legislation.