

the academic achievement of Native American students.

The Native American Language Preservation Act would contribute to an already existing Native language grant program within the Department of Health and Human Services by allocating grants for language immersion programs which would not only help keep the language alive, but also help ensure that Native languages are accessible for the next seven generations to come.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4766. Let's preserve and honor Native American heritage and save our Native languages.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 (H.R. 4766). I would like to congratulate my colleague from New Mexico, Mrs. WILSON, for bringing this issue forward.

This is important legislation to preserve the culture and increase fluency in Native American society. Sadly, all across America, Native American languages are in rapid decline; estimates are that there may be only 20 Native American languages remaining by the year 2050. These languages are unique to our country and unique to our history. If we do not preserve them, they will disappear forever.

This bill will establish a series of grants to help preserve the language and culture of our Native American people. This will help create programs that will teach our young people of the importance of learning the language of their ancestors and continuing to preserve the history and culture of their people.

Finally, the language programs created in this bill are locally based educational programs that will help both children learn and preserve languages in households all across America.

My constituent Dr. Christine Sims, a professor of language at the University of New Mexico, and Pueblo of Acoma tribal member says, "The future of America's first languages, those that are indigenous to this country hang in the balance of what we do as a Nation to help tribal communities preserve them. Much has been given up by countless generations of Native people in the wake of this country's expansion and growth into the great nation that it is today. It is only right and just that Congress consider the tremendous price that America's first people paid in terms of losing so much throughout the course of this nation's history, including the loss of native languages. Among America's Native language communities remaining today, the hopes and the dreams that Native elders, parents and tribes hold for their children are those which include the maintenance and revitalization of tribal heritage languages. We can do no less in this country, therefore, than to ensure that tribal communities have the opportunity and the funding resources that will help make these hopes and dreams for their children a reality.

"Today's education for the American Indian student must open the doors for youngsters to have more opportunities to learn their own languages as provided in the provisions of H.R. 4766. This bill, so aptly named for one of New Mexico's tribal elders, Mrs. Esther Martinez from San Juan Pueblo (who tragically died in a car accident this past week), would not only honor the memory of this renowned Native language advocate and leader, but as well, demonstrate the commitment that Congress is

willing to make in support of the intent and purpose of the Native Languages Preservation Act."

Again, I want to thank my New Mexico colleague, Mrs. WILSON, for bringing this bill forward, her hard work and dedication are a credit to her and she is a credit to our State.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, throughout the country, Native American languages are experiencing a rapid decline. Of the nearly 300 native languages of the United States, only 210 are still spoken, and all too often these languages are spoken only among the elderly. This is a particularly troubling development, given the importance of Native American languages to tribal identity and culture. As such, I was pleased that Congresswoman HEATHER WILSON introduced H.R. 4766, the Native American Languages Preservation Act, which would provide federal support for programs that provide language training for young children and their families. I would also like to recognize Chairman BUCK MCKEON for the expedited manner in which he has moved this legislation.

On August 31st, I had the opportunity to travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to participate in a hearing held by the Education and the Workforce Committee on the "Recovery and Preservation of Native American Languages". We heard from representatives of several tribes regarding their experiences with this problem and ways in which they have attempted to preserve their native languages. Fortunately, efforts are underway to save these languages and to encourage a new generation of Native Americans to keep their languages alive as an integral part of Native American culture and identity.

I was particularly pleased that a representative from the Oneida Nation of my home state of Wisconsin was able to testify at this hearing. The Oneida have made language preservation a priority by pairing Elder native speakers with younger English-speakers to train a new generation to appreciate and preserve the traditional language. Since 1996, the Oneida have developed a Language Revitalization Program to connect their fluent Elders with trainees in a semi-immersion process that would produce speakers, and most importantly, teachers of the Oneida language.

Although tribes like the Oneida have already begun to develop programs to preserve their own languages, Congress can help other tribes create programs of their own. H.R. 4766 will provide more options for revitalization programs and take advantage of existing grants within the Administration for Native Americans Office. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bill and for the revitalization of native languages.

Mr. MCKEON. 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 California (Mr. MCKEON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4766, 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.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to provide for the revitalization of Native

American languages through Native American language immersion programs; and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING SECRETARY OF EDUCATION WAIVER AUTHORITY

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6106) to extend the waiver authority for the Secretary of Education under title IV, section 105, of Public Law 109-148.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 6106

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.

Section 105 of title IV of division B of Public Law 109-148 (119 Stat. 2797) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by inserting "and, at the discretion of the Secretary, for fiscal year 2007" after "2006"; and

(2) in subsection (c)(2)—

(A) by inserting "or 2007" after "fiscal year 2006"; and

(B) by striking "fiscal year 2007" and inserting "for the respective succeeding fiscal year".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 6106.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this important legislation. It is in response to the devastating hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the impact they had on the schools of Louisiana.

More than 1,100 public and private schools were forced to close in the wake of those hurricanes. Approximately 158,000 students were displaced as a direct result of the hurricanes. Restoration efforts are under way, but there is still much work that needs to be done.

As a result of the storms and the flooding, the local tax base in several gulf coast communities was decimated. The loss of business and government infrastructure, jobs and housing deprived school districts of local property taxes that normally fund school operations.

In Louisiana, Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes were the most severely impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Currently, approximately 23,000 students are enrolled in the Orleans Parish School System and Recovery School

District. That is compared to an original enrollment of 62,000 students prior to the hurricanes.

In St. Bernard Parish, only 3,300 students have returned out of a total of 8,400 before the hurricane.

The Hurricane Education Recovery Act, included in the Defense Appropriations Act of 2006, granted the U.S. Secretary of Education the authority to waive, in many of the programs falling under her jurisdiction, select provisions having to do with the State or school district's financial commitment.

Under ordinary times, these provisions require States and local districts to contribute sufficient local and State funding to receive Federal aid. However, when communities have decimated and local funding is unavailable, these provisions can place much-needed Federal aid in jeopardy.

The Secretary's authority to grant this waiver was critical to ease the burdens on State and local educational agencies in the gulf coast region. Through this language, the Secretary granted waivers for fiscal year 2006 that provided Louisiana school districts the flexibility they needed to begin the recovery process.

These waivers have proven critical to the recovery of our schools in several parishes and counties in the impacted areas. Unfortunately, the waiver authority is set to expire on September 30 of this year, even though families continue to return to the area and there are schools in need of rebuilding.

This bill will extend this critical waiver authority for one more year through fiscal year 2007. By extending this authority, it will provide districts the flexibility they need to continue moving students and teachers back into classrooms.

Under the Hurricane Education Recovery Act, the Orleans Parish schools received \$132 million in restart funding, and St. Bernard Parish has received \$21 million. Without this waiver, the schools would not have the flexibility they need to use these funds.

These districts are facing the tremendous challenge of rebuilding a school district while continuing to operate at the same time, akin to changing a tire on your car while driving it. Without this waiver authority, these districts will not receive the resources to replace textbooks, library books, computers, instructional materials, and other supplies lost during the storm.

I urge swift passage of this legislation to grant an additional year of flexibility and the use of Federal dollars to rebuild schools for Louisiana and gulf coast children.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6106.

As the gentleman from Louisiana just mentioned, over a year ago our

Nation experienced one of the worst natural disasters in our history when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated southeast Louisiana and parts of Mississippi. He mentioned that public and private schools were forced to close, and over 150,000 students were displaced as a direct result of those hurricanes.

Last year, the Hurricane Education Recovery Act was enacted. It authorized the U.S. Secretary of Education to waive selected portions of general education law having to do with State or school district use of Federal funds.

Unfortunately, the waiver is set to expire on September 30, even though the families continue to return to the area and their schools are in need of rebuilding. The waiver is critical because it allows school systems the flexibility to use available Federal funds for the most critical needs. Without the waiver, they would have funding for just about everything they need except those critical immediate needs required to reopen the schools. Without the waiver, they won't be able to spend the money for those critical needs. This waiver has worked well and just needs to be extended.

On September 19, just a few days ago, H.R. 6106 to extend the waiver authority for the Secretary of Education was introduced by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL). This legislation is a straightforward extension of the Secretary of Education's waiver authority for an additional fiscal year through 2007.

This bill would not have been possible without the hard work of not only the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) but his Louisiana colleagues, Mr. MELANCON and Mr. JEFFERSON on this side, and I am sure there are others he might want to mention.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to help Louisiana continue their recovery effort by supporting the passage of H.R. 6106.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) not only for his support of our legislation but for taking the time personally to visit my State after it was devastated by these storms, to visit personally with our teachers, principals and students and see for himself the needs of our State, and for his continuing hard work to try to address those needs through our committee. I appreciate his commitment to helping my State recover and our students return to school.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. SCOTT is correct. There are several Members from Louisiana, indeed the entire delegation, that supports this legislation. I especially want to mention in addition, to Mr. MELANCON and Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. BOUSTANY, who has several schools in his district that were also impacted by Hurricane Rita in particular. I urge swift passage of this bill.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to urge Congress to pass H.R. 6106. This waiver authority has been a key component in the success of rebuilding schools in the areas devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and it is critical that we act immediately to extend the duration of this authority in order to allow these schools to continue their rebuilding efforts.

A real success story born from this waiver is the St. Bernard Unified School Group. Led by the efforts of Superintendent Doris Voitier and others committed in St. Bernard, this combined school was able to quickly start back up to provide a place for children whose parents were committed to coming home and rebuilding.

St. Bernard Parish was one of the most devastated regions affected by Hurricane Katrina. Without local revenue, the schools had to look elsewhere to meet the 10 percent match required by FEMA.

This waiver has allowed the school district to use State funds for the 10 percent match and use federal restart funds to pay teacher's salaries and benefits. By allowing this flexibility, Superintendent Voitier was able to secure teacher's employment and open up the St. Bernard Unified School 11 weeks after the storm.

Today, there is no longer need for the St. Bernard Unified School. Chalmert High is back up and running full capacity with 1700 students to date; Andrew Jackson Elementary, with 1800 students, has also opened its doors, and Tryst Elementary is next in line.

However, we can't stop here. There are many more schools that are still being rebuilt and we need this legislation to ensure that these schools continue to reopen.

This waiver has proven critical to the recovery of schools in the Gulf Coast region, and has enabled them to access much needed reconstruction funds. Without this extension, these school systems will not have the financial resources to operate nor rebuild.

This waiver authority has already been authorized by Congress in the Hurricane Education Recovery Act. Unfortunately it is set to expire this Saturday. It is imperative that we reauthorize this waiver. Hurricane recovery has reached a critical stage, and it needs our continued support in the Gulf Coast.

Families are continuing every day to return home to these areas and there are still schools that are in need of rebuilding and repair. Therefore, I urge the members of Congress to support this bi-partisan legislation and give these schools the flexibility that Superintendent Voitier and others need to continue their dedicated efforts in rebuilding and to make sure that students and teachers can return to the classroom.

Brief Summary of what waiver does:

FEMA requires that each local community put up a 10 percent match in order to get 90 percent reimbursed for replacing all items lost in the storm.

Two Problems; (1) 10 percent of the total damage is tens of millions of dollars and (2) St. Bernard schools can't raise this money from the local community because their sales and property tax base has been decimated.

So, they initially wanted to use federal restart monies to put up the 10 percent match. However this is prohibited in the Stafford Act because you can't use federal restart monies to supplant money from FEMA.

Then they wanted to use State money to put up the 10 percent match, but this was also prohibited. However, in the Hurricane Education Recovery Act, the waiver authority needed to waive this requirement was granted to Secretary Spellings.

She waived this requirement and St. Bernard schools were able to put up state money for the 10 percent matching requirement and then use federal restart monies to pay teacher's salaries and benefits (i.e. what state money would have been used for).

This waiver allows schools to:

Waive the requirement (found in the Hurricane Education Recovery Act, Section 105 of Public Law 109-148) that federal funds must be used to supplement and not supplant non-federal funds and thus allows schools to:

Use state money for the 10 percent match required by FEMA for the 90 percent reimbursement and

Use Restart money to pay for things the State money would have been used for:

For example: teacher's salaries, benefits etc.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6106.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPTEMBER AS CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY MONTH

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 295) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives supporting the establishment of September as Campus Fire Safety Month, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 295

Whereas recent student housing fires in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Maryland have tragically cut short the lives of some of the youth of our Nation;

Whereas since January 2000, at least 75 people, including students, parents, and children have died in student housing fires;

Whereas over three-fourths of these deaths have occurred in off-campus occupancies;

Whereas a majority of the students across the Nation live in off-campus occupancies;

Whereas a number of fatal fires have occurred in buildings where the fire safety systems have been compromised or disabled by the occupants;

Whereas it is recognized that automatic fire alarm systems provide the necessary early warning to occupants and the fire department of a fire so that appropriate action can be taken;

Whereas it is recognized that automatic fire sprinkler systems are a highly effective method of controlling or extinguishing a fire in its early stages, protecting the lives of the building's occupants;

Whereas many students are living in off-campus occupancies, Greek housing, and res-

idence halls that are not adequately protected with automatic fire sprinkler systems and automatic fire alarm systems;

Whereas it is recognized that fire safety education is an effective method of reducing the occurrence of fires and reducing the resulting loss of life and property damage;

Whereas students are not routinely receiving effective fire safety education throughout their entire college career;

Whereas it is vital to educate the future generation of our Nation about the importance of fire safety behavior so that these behaviors can help to ensure their safety during their college years and beyond; and

Whereas by developing a generation of fire-safe adults, future loss of life from fires can be significantly reduced: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the establishment of September as Campus Fire Safety Month;

(2) encourages administrators and municipalities across the country to provide educational programs to all students during September and throughout the school year; and

(3) encourages administrators and municipalities to evaluate the level of fire safety being provided in both on- and off-campus student housing and take the necessary steps to ensure fire-safe living environments through fire safety education, installation of fire suppression and detection systems and the development and enforcement of applicable codes relating to fire safety.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 295.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 295, a measure to support establishment of September as Campus Fire Safety Month. So often in this Chamber we consider legislation to expand access to college and strengthen our Federal higher education programs. Today, we have an opportunity to discuss the need to bolster safety on college campuses, specifically fire safety; and we are right to do so. Our Nation's college students should be able to live on campus with the confidence that they will be safe in their dorms, apartments or other housing. This measure will take a key step toward ensuring greater awareness of this issue.

I thank my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), for taking the lead and offering this legislation.

This is not the first time this year that campus fire safety has been a priority for the House. In March, when we

passed the College Access and Opportunity Act, we also endorsed an effort to ask colleges and universities to report annually on fire safety efforts. The report would include such information as a list of all student housing facilities and whether or not they were equipped with a sprinkler system or other fire safety program, as well as statistics on occurrences of fires, false alarms, information on various fire safety rules and regulations, and other measures as well.

Mr. Speaker, although that measure has not advanced with our friends on the other side of the Capitol, today we have the opportunity to demonstrate our continued commitment to the safety of college students.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, and I thank the primary authors of this resolution.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 295, a bill to establish September as Campus Fire Safety Month.

As students get back into the full swing of the school year, we all know that the need to be prepared for campus fire is the last thing perhaps on their mind.

Since January of 2000, the Center for Campus Fire Safety has identified 89 fire fatalities in student housing. Almost 80 percent of these deaths have occurred in off-campus housing such as rented houses and apartments.

Last year, a number of States across the Nation issued proclamations for September, and many schools held events on campus to educate their students about fire safety. This summer, the Center for Campus Safety convened a summer conference of college administrators, fire organizations and legislators to further the work and progress of many of the stakeholders. We hope through education and attention to the dangers on and off campus we can reduce the numbers of fires.

H. Res. 295 is the first step in recognizing September as Campus Fire Safety Month on a national level, which is being done in conjunction with many States and colleges and universities across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), the sponsor of this legislation, and I ask unanimous consent that she be permitted to manage the remainder of our time on this side for H. Res. 295.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my colleagues for support of H. Res. 295. I rise in support of this bipartisan resolution introduced to establish