

SUPPORTING EFFORTS PROMOTING GREATER PUBLIC AWARENESS OF EFFECTIVE RUNAWAY YOUTH PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1009) supporting efforts to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for homeless youth and youth in other high-risk situations.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 1009

Whereas preventing young people from running away and supporting homeless youth and youth in other high-risk situations is a family, community, and national concern;

Whereas the prevalence of runaway and homeless youth in the Nation is staggering, with studies suggesting that between 1,600,000 and 2,800,000 young people live on the streets of the United States each year;

Whereas running away from home is widespread, with 1 out of every 7 children in the United States running away before the age of 18;

Whereas youth that end up on the streets or in emergency shelters are often those who have been thrown out of their homes by their families; who have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused at home; who have been discharged by State custodial systems without adequate transition plans; who have lost their parents through death or divorce; and who are too poor to secure their own basic needs;

Whereas the commemoration of National Runaway Prevention Month will encourage all sectors of society to develop community-based solutions to prevent runaway and homeless episodes among the Nation's youth;

Whereas effective programs that support runaway and homeless youth and assist young people in remaining at home succeed because of partnerships created among families, community-based human service agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and businesses;

Whereas the future well-being of the Nation is dependent on the value placed on young people and the opportunities provided for youth to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop into safe, healthy, and productive adults;

Whereas Congress supports an array of community-based support services that address the critical needs of runaway and homeless youth, including family strengthening, street outreach, emergency shelter, and transitional living programs;

Whereas Congress supports programs that provide crisis intervention and referrals to reconnect runaway and homeless youth to their families and to link young people to local resources that provide positive alternatives to running away; and

Whereas the purpose of National Runaway Prevention Month in November 2006 is to increase public awareness of the life circumstances of youth in high-risk situations and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for youth, their families, and their communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives supports efforts to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for homeless youth and youth in other high-risk situations.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 1009.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H. Res. 1009, which seeks to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for youth in high-risk situations. I would like to thank the leadership for allowing this resolution to come to the House floor, as it highlights a very tragic and important issue.

Runaway episodes among our Nation's youth are serious and widespread, with one of every seven children and youth in the United States running away or being turned out of the home before the age of 18. That constitutes roughly 15 to 17 percent of our young people. A recent study by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention estimates that nearly 1.7 million youth experienced a runaway or thrown-away episode in a single year. The prevalence of runaway and homeless youth in the Nation is astounding, with studies suggesting that between 1.6 million and 2.8 million young people live on the streets of the United States each year.

The primary factors of running away or being turned out of a home are severe family conflict, abuse and neglect, and parental abuse of alcohol and drugs.

And parenthetically I might add, Mr. Speaker, that I coached some young men, one of whom I remember very vividly who was turned out of his home at age 11 because the boyfriend who was living with that young man's mother and the young guy couldn't get along; so the young guy went and spent 2 or 3 years living on the streets. And that certainly left an impression and scarring on that young man that I do not think he ever completely overcame.

Many of the conditions that lead young people to leave or be turned out of their homes are preventable through interventions that can strengthen families and support youth in high-risk situations. Successful interventions are grounded in partnerships among families, community-based human service agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and even businesses.

The National Network for Youth and the National Runaway Switchboard

have collaborated since 2002 in cosponsoring the National Runaway Prevention Month during the month of November. National Runaway Prevention Month is a public education initiative aimed at increasing the awareness of issues facing runaways as well as making the public aware of the role they play in preventing youth from running away. As a result of this collaboration, communities across the country have undertaken a range of activities to commemorate National Runaway Prevention Month.

Preventing young people from running away and supporting youth in high-risk situations is a family, community, and national concern. Please join us in encouraging all Americans to play a role in supporting the millions of young people who have run away and who are at risk of doing so each year. H. Res. 1009 supports efforts to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for youth in high-risk situations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support 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 am pleased to join with my colleague from Nebraska, one of the most effective, if I might say, advocates for young people that I know anywhere in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague Mr. OSBORNE for bringing H. Res. 1009 to the floor today, and I join him in support of this resolution that promotes the need for greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the increasing need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for youth in high-risk situations.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution points to an issue that is of great concern to me: young people who have been pushed aside and thrown away, oftentimes by their parents and sometimes by all of society.

The youth who come to these programs represent what some call a lost generation, a generation that holds so much promise and yet sees so few opportunities. When a young person comes to these programs, they often do so out of a need for security, shelter, and comfort that they cannot find at home. And these programs provide that comfort. They provide basic life skills training, job preparation and placement, health referrals and services.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, each year the need for these programs grows. The basic housing needs of our Nation's most vulnerable youth, those experiencing homelessness, are not being met. And continued shortfalls in funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act have increased this need.

Nearly 150,000 young people are served at basic centers and through

transitional living programs. Yet as this resolution points out, many more runaways and homeless youth find themselves without these critical community services. It is appropriate that today we take time out to promote greater public awareness of the needs of these young people and the services that are available to them in the community.

In particular, I want to applaud the hard work of the front line workers who are on the ground working with runaway and homeless youth every day. For many young people, these workers represent the only responsible and caring adults they will have contact with during their time on the streets. Many of these workers are volunteers who make themselves available 24 hours a day. They venture into dangerous situations, providing a lifeline to these young people, and they should be acknowledged for their efforts.

I am mindful of one organization in my neighborhood, the Night Ministry, that has developed probably one of the most effective programs of this type in the country, where not only have they provided a program with adequate shelter, but they have what I call state-of-the-art housing. You can see them at night during the cold winter, driving along the streets, getting out, often-times interceding and picking up young people, questioning them about why they are there. And those who know Chicago know that it gets awfully cold during the winter months. So I applaud the Night Ministry.

I thank Mr. PORTER for introducing this resolution, and certainly I commend Mr. OSBORNE for his tremendous work on behalf of young people.

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST).

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to thank Mr. PORTER for the legislation; Mr. OSBORNE, Mr. DAVIS, and the staff for bringing this to the floor and for bringing it to the attention of the Members; and, Mr. Speaker, to the general public at large.

The community service for youth across this great Nation is, I think, for the most part, doing one of the best jobs it can for the youth of America who are homeless, who each day, instead of a bright, sunlit opportunity, they find despair, and they do not know what hope is. They do not know what joy is. But they probably know what a prison cell looks like at a very young age.

What this legislation does, and what we all should continue to pursue, is dedicate our words to the front line of service that Mr. DAVIS was talking about and Mr. OSBORNE has mentioned, those people who are mostly volunteers that provide the shelter, provide the hope, provide the work for these people who are homeless.

And what we hope this resolution will do, and what we should continue to work towards, is to create a better framework for homeless youth, that more people will get involved. The community service, the front line service, can be expanded to an immense pool of people that will spend just a very small amount of their time on a weekly or monthly basis if they go out into their community and find out where a homeless shelter is and then visit that homeless shelter and talk to those youth and give them hope and give them opportunity and let them know that someone cares about them. Create a Boy Scout troop for juvenile delinquents. Create a Boy Scout troop or a Girl Scout troop for people who are homeless, who are living in homeless shelters.

Almost 40 years ago, my brothers and a couple other people who had not gone to college, we all got out of the service. We had just gotten out of Vietnam, and we got involved with a minister and a lawyer that created a Boy Scout troop for people who committed felonies. We created a Boy Scout troop for juvenile delinquents. And the way to get in that Boy Scout troop was that you had to have committed a felony or you had to be homeless or one of those categories. And it transformed their lives.

This Sunday in my district, we are going to have a picnic for 30 homeless children and, if they come, their parents. And what we are going to do is we are going to walk through the woods, we are going to feel the cool shade of the forest, and we are going to identify trees and we are going to talk about nature's design. Then we are going to take them on a short canoe ride and walk them on the beaches of the Sasfras River. But we are going to show them that in their dreary, hopeless life, there are magnificent opportunities.

The people on the front line need help. There is a massive amount of opportunity out there for people to see something that they don't see every day, to find out where a homeless shelter is in your community, and then go and talk to the people who service those homeless shelters, talk to the people who fund those homeless shelters, and talk to the people who are in those homeless shelters and provide them with dignity, respect, hope, and opportunity. It is a matter of initiative, ingenuity, courage, and compassion. And it can all be done.

And I want to thank Mr. OSBORNE, Mr. DAVIS, and Mr. PORTER and his staff for this great resolution.

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Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, what an honor to be able to join my colleagues this evening and to again thank the distinguished gentleman from Illinois for using the terminology: There are no throwaways.

Let me thank the manager Member, Mr. OSBORNE, for his leadership; Mr.

GILCHREST, delighted to have a good Speaker in the Chair from Texas.

I rise today because I believe that this is an important statement that is being made today on the floor of the House. I do want to capture those words again that our young people are not throw, there are no throwaways. I say it very often as I go to schools or interact with young people that we meet in our congressional districts and really around the Nation.

I spent some time with Covenant House and spent some time on the streets as they invited me in one of their night outs to be able to interact with homeless youth, to hear their stories, to hear their feeling about, in essence, being thrown away or thrown out.

I do not think most Americans dwell on the fact that there are some 1.6 million to 2.8 million homeless young people. That means that they have barely a place to be more than one night. And there are these good Samaritans, these people who hold vigils on the streets of America, trying to protect our young people.

It was a shocking experience as I stood on a cold night in Houston, Texas, gets a little cold there sometimes in the wintertime, as we gathered under a streetlight. The word had gone out that Covenant House was out and about, that you could come and hear a little music, get a little food and talk, to hear some of the stories of these young people who had either been sexually abused or who had been emotionally abused or had been physically abused, to hear them tell stories of guardians or parents who themselves were addicted and other problems that were associated with the household, and there was no comfort.

So I find that this resolution should do a number of things. As my colleagues have said, it should reemphasize and thank those who are out with our young people, the various ministries, the Boys and Girls Club, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, but, as well, the agencies that go out during the night to find these young people.

But, again, it should say that we are not doing enough. And we should also say that there are role models, that there is something to live for, and that we should not be ashamed of trying to enhance the funding to provide transitional pathways for young people to transition into adulthood, provide them with interim housing as they move from 17, 18, 19, which causes them to be homeless.

Because one of the major problems is what we call "aging out" in foster care, where you have gotten to a certain age at 18, 17, 18 in some States. And many of us who have young people in our homes, we raised our children, they are in their 20s, and you are taking care of them. So you age out in a foster care system, and you have no place to go, and you have been in foster care for 10, 15 years, or 10 years or 5 years.

We see this as a prevalent situation that leads to disaster. This may be indirect, but I want young people to understand that they are important.

I raise this picture of this beautiful young lady on the front page of the Washington Post today by the name of Emily J.T. Perez. The headline reads, West Point Mourns a Font of Energy, Laid to Rest By War.

The story is about a young woman who, unfortunately, lost her life on the front lines of Iraq. But the story describes an outstanding, energetic, committed patriot and the first African American woman sergeant at West Point. She was a young person. She lost her life. But she certainly represents the best of our youth.

In the midst of homeless youth, there are those who are the best. And this resolution, I think, focuses our attention on providing more resources so that we can ensure that the young people, homeless that they may be, will not have despair but will have a future and will be affirmed by this Nation that they can contribute.

I rise in support of this legislation, but I ask my colleagues as this session wanes down, let us commit ourselves, if we are fortunate enough to be reelected by our constituents, to come back and fund opportunities for providing for homeless youth, to give them a future.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas for her statement and for the energy that she puts into everything that she does.

I also want to again commend Mr. PORTER for introducing this resolution and thank Mr. OSBORNE and say that, when he is not here, I am going to miss him tremendously, because he is a real advocate for young people, and I have never seen anyone do it more effectively or do it better.

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

Mr. OSBORNE. I thank the gentleman. We share a strong interest in young people, and we are often together on bills. And I would like to thank Mr. DAVIS for all that he does. I would also like to thank Mr. PORTER for authoring this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1009, a bill supporting efforts to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources, and support for homeless youth and youth in other high-risk situations.

As the Chairwoman of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am integrally involved in the efforts of Congress to help protect and look after the children of this Nation, and to ensure that they have an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to achieve, and most importantly, to dream.

Youth that end up on the streets or in emergency shelters are often those who have been thrown out of their homes by their families. These youth are also, tragically, more likely to

have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused at home. It is also common for these youth to have been discharged by State custodial systems without adequate transition plans. Many have lost their parents through death or divorce, and many are too poor to secure their own basic needs. It is clear that this situation is a family, community, and national concern.

The prevalence of runaway and homeless youth in the Nation is an epidemic. Studies suggest that between 1,600,000 and 2,800,000 young people live on the streets of the United States each year. Running away from home occurs across the country. A staggering 1 out of every 7 children in the United States running away before the age of 18.

The future well-being of the Nation is dependent upon how we value our young people. The opportunities we provide for our youth to attain the ability and the knowledge needed to develop into safe, healthy, and productive adults.

When it comes to our young people—all of our young people—including our runaway, throwaway and homeless youth—we must always be willing to stand up, to speak up, and to never give up.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1009, a resolution to promote greater awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs. This legislation, introduced by my friend from Nevada, Mr. PORTER, is a step in the right direction towards reducing the number of our youth that separate from their families in times of distress and discouragement. Raising awareness of concerns of the disadvantaged in our communities and bringing issues to the attention of lawmakers and the general public is often the catalyst for action.

The number of young people who currently live on the streets is alarming. Without any family or community support, these youth fall through the cracks of society. It is critical for our young people, who are the future of our country, to be afforded the best possible opportunities in order to succeed and become balanced, well-informed citizens.

On Guam, there are a number of community-based youth organizations that provide structured counseling for at-risk youth and their loved ones. One such program under the Department of Youth Affairs (DYA), Jumpstart, works to strengthen family ties with the goal of integrating troubled teens back into their homes. Sanctuary is another longstanding and effective nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing Guam's at-risk youth. In addition to counseling, these organizations work preventatively, targeting and providing education about drug-use, physical and mental abuse, and violence. Another program, the Youth At-Risk Life Skills Training Program, is affiliated with the 4-H Club and the University of Guam's College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS). This program focuses on education paired with life skills such as peer mentorship and environmental sciences.

I take this opportunity today to commend the efforts of organizations such as these that take action in their communities, often working from the grassroots. The success of these organizations depends on the dedication of the people who run the programs and, as a result of their conviction and hard work, troubled teens and their families have a network of support and hope for a better future.

These are the individuals and organizations for which H. Res. 1009 seeks to bring recognition upon, and it is their work this resolution seeks to support. I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 1009.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of runaway youth prevention programs.

Children are our greatest resource, and positive investment in our children is essential for America's future.

We are facing a potential crisis in America. There are nearly 20 million American teenagers that are at serious risk of not achieving a positive adulthood.

For our Nation's homeless youth, this path towards positive adulthood is even more challenging.

It is estimated that each year there are 1.5 million runaway and homeless youth in the United States. Last year, in Dallas County we saw about 9 thousand children ran away from home.

We cannot simply forget these children. They need a life-line, a place to stay, and the tools to have a bright future.

The Promise House Emergency Shelter and Street Outreach Programs are exceptional programs that are vital to Dallas.

Promise House offers invaluable services for runaway and homeless youth.

I have seen first-hand the outstanding contributions Promise House has made to the Dallas Community.

Promise House not only gives these young people a safe place to stay, but it gives them a life-line, and a chance to change their outlook and situation.

I would like to commend the staff of Promise House, Dr. Harriet Boorhem, and the many volunteers for the extraordinary service they provide to the Dallas community.

I would also like to thank Mr. PORTER for offering this Resolution.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1009 which seeks to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources and supports for youth in high-risk situations. I would like to thank the leadership for allowing this resolution to come to the House floor as it highlights a very tragic and important issue.

Runaway episodes among our Nation's youth are serious and widespread, with one out of every seven children and youth in the United States running away or being turned out of the home before the age of 18. A recent study by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention estimates that nearly 1.7 million youth experienced a runaway or thrown away episode in a single year. The prevalence of runaway and homeless youth in the Nation is astounding; with studies suggesting that between 1.6 million and 2.8 million young people live on the streets of the United States each year. The primary factors of running away or being turned out of a home are severe family conflict, abuse and neglect, and parental abuse of alcohol and drugs.

In the district that I represent in southern Nevada, the statistics are similar. In the year 2003, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department reported 4,527 runaways. There were approximately 3,500 children who required emergency shelter. Eighteen hundred of these children were placed in foster care. In

addition to that, the Clark County School District estimates that 3,500 of our students were homeless. These astonishing statistics highlight the need for our support of those important programs that seek to prevent these types of incidents.

Many of the conditions that lead young people to leave or be turned out of their homes are preventable through interventions that can strengthen families and support youth in high-risk situations. Successful interventions are grounded in partnerships among families, community-based human service agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools, faith-based organizations and businesses.

The National Network for Youth and the National Runaway Switchboard have collaborated since 2002 in cosponsoring National Runaway Prevention Month during the month of November. National Runaway Prevention Month is a public education initiative aimed at increasing the awareness of issues facing runaways as well as making the public aware of the role they play in preventing youth from running away. As a result of this collaboration, communities across the country have undertaken a range of activities to commemorate National Runaway Prevention Month.

Preventing young people from running away and supporting youth in high-risk situations is a family, community and national concern. Please join us in encouraging all Americans to play a role in supporting the millions of young people who have run away and who are at risk of doing so each year. H. Res. 1009 supports efforts to promote greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs and the need for safe and productive alternatives, resources and supports for youth in high-risk situations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1009, a resolution to support greater public awareness of effective runaway youth prevention programs. I would like to thank the gentleman from Nevada, Mr. PORTER, for bringing this forward. I am proud to be a cosponsor.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month.

I am proud that this body, in a bipartisan manner, comes together each year to commemorate this month and to urge our communities to get involved in runaway prevention activities.

Runaway Prevention Month is a public education campaign spearheaded by the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) and the National Network for Youth (NNY) to increase the awareness of the issues facing runaways, and educate the public about the solutions and the role they can play in preventing youth from running away.

It is a national tragedy that an estimated 1.6 to 2.8 million young people live on the street each year. One out of seven children in the United States runs away from home before the age of 18. The dangers these young people face on the streets cannot be overstated.

In my home State of Texas, our runaway and youth crisis hotlines offer crisis intervention, telephone counseling, and referrals to troubled youth and families. A volunteer workforce of about 60 people answer the phones.

Many callers face a variety of problems including family conflict, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect issues.

The program increases public awareness through television, radio, billboards and other media efforts. Hotline telephone counselors respond to about 40,000 calls annually.

These people are true heroes because they save lives.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act represents our national commitment to protecting and improving the lives of our most at risk youth. Sadly, funding for these programs has been eroded with the across-the-board cuts we have been seeing in our appropriations bills over the past few years.

I hope that this year, this Congress will commemorate Runaway Prevention Month by increasing the resources available to keep our young people safe, healthy, and off the streets.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1009.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF "LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL!"

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 478) supporting the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 478

Whereas high-quality after-school programs provide safe, challenging, engaging, and fun learning experiences to help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic skills;

Whereas high-quality after-school programs support working families by ensuring that their children are safe and productive after the regular school day ends;

Whereas high-quality after-school programs build stronger communities by involving the Nation's students, parents, business leaders, and adult volunteers in the lives of the Nation's young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among children, youth, families, and adults;

Whereas high-quality after-school programs engage families, schools, and diverse community partners in advancing the well-being of the Nation's children;

Whereas "Lights On Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs on October 12, 2006, promotes the critical importance of high-quality after-school programs in the lives of children, their families, and their communities;

Whereas more than 28,000,000 children in the United States have parents who work outside the home, and 14,300,000 children have no place to go after school; and

Whereas many after-school programs across the Nation are struggling to keep

their doors open and their lights on: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress supports the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool!", a national celebration of after-school programs.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 478.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 478, offered by my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY). This resolution seeks to support the goals and the ideals of Lights on Afterschool!, a national celebration of after-school programs. This year's Lights on Afterschool! rally, which takes place on October 12, 2006, is expected to include more than 7,000 events in the United States and at military bases around the world. This event is aimed at bringing attention to the need for high-quality after-school programs that keep kids safe, help working families, and improve academic achievement.

I support this resolution because after-school programs are an important part of many American's student lives. High-quality after-school programs provide safe, challenging and fun learning experiences that help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural and academic skills.

I am pleased that we are able to bring attention to the critical importance of after-school programs. I commend the communities across the Nation that engage in innovative after-school programs and activities and ensure that the doors stay open and the lights stay on for all children after school.

This resolution is simple and straight forward. It supports the goals and ideals of Lights on Afterschool!, a nationwide celebration of after-school programs.

I commend my colleague, Mrs. LOWEY, for her leadership in authoring H. Con. Res. 478. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), who is the sponsor of this resolution.

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