

the professional and nurturing approach of the many fine sisters, priests and lay teachers whom I remember so fondly, and in fact still count among my friends and advisors to this day.

Despite the coarsening of our popular culture, what I call the 'poverty of affluence', it is heartening to know that total Catholic school enrollment for the 1999–2000 school year was over 2.6 million students at more than 8,100 schools. In my home state of Ohio, there are over 193,000 students attending 528 Catholic schools. In these quality institutions, joined by many fine public schools, character and commonly cherished values are instilled into generation after generation. Honesty, integrity, love of family and country, self-respect and self-discipline are just a few of the hallmark results of Catholic-based education.

Catholic schools are one of the cornerstones of our educational system providing faith based educational opportunities to those families who desire their children to have a Catholic faith based education. Catholic schools accept young people from every walk of life, from all economic and ethnic backgrounds. These schools have played an historic role in welcoming and teaching the sons and daughters of immigrants, whether they be Irish, Polish, Hungarian or Russian, whether they are African-American, or Chinese or Latino, just to name a few. In the heart of our Nation's biggest cities and most humble rural towns, Catholic schools continue this missionary endeavor.

It is my pleasure to honor the contributions of Catholic schools, both the men and women who lead and teach and care so deeply for our young people. Those students have made, and continue to make, a difference in the life of their families, communities and world.

Our system of education is most appropriately conducted on the local level. Therefore, it is both our right and responsibility to support our schools, our teachers, parents, support staff, administrators, our sisters and priests, and our children, whom we know will one day inherit and take responsibility for all of our work and world.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our nation's Catholic schools and the record of excellence they hold in our children's education.

I believe our most profound responsibility is to ensure that every child has a first-class education, that no child is left behind and that all students share in the pride and promise of educational opportunity—Catholic education provides that opportunity.

As a former student at the University of Notre Dame and a former teacher at Mount Saint Michael's Academy in the Bronx, NY, I know the benefits Catholic schools and universities provide to students in America.

Our children deserve the best schools in the world; they deserve schools that will help them meet the challenges of tomorrow. That is why I'm pleased with the bipartisan support H. Res. 28, "Honoring our Catholic Schools," is receiving from my colleagues in the House today.

America's student drop-out rate is increasing at an alarming pace. But our nation's Catholic schools have given a diverse group of students the inspiration, environment and counsel they need to stay in school. A tribute to the strength and quality of a Catholic school education is the 95 percent graduation rate among Catholic high school seniors.

America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for providing small classrooms where each student can have the attention they need to achieve their future goals. America's Catholic schools also graduate a record 83 percent of students who go on to college.

I believe that while we call for higher standards in our nation's schools, we must also recognize those schools that are providing the education America's students need to succeed. I am pleased to join with my colleagues in honoring the contributions of Catholic schools. After all our children are our country's most precious resource.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Catholic schools across America and back home in Illinois. All Catholic schools, their teachers, administrators, parents and students should be congratulated for their vital role in promoting and ensuring a bright future for this country.

It is amazing that Catholic Schools graduate 95 percent of their students and that 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college. I know that the education and, more importantly, the values, that were imbedded in me at St. Patrick's high school in Chicago proved themselves invaluable in college and in my professional career.

In my hometown of Chicago, the Catholic Archdiocese has an unparalleled record of educating students of all racial and economic backgrounds. Chicago has one of the largest Catholic school systems in the nation, and the best and the brightest in Chicago are often alumni of their Catholic schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for scheduling this vote honoring the contributions of Catholic Schools. It is my hope that they will continue to flourish and prosper for the benefit of millions of school children around the country.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools. As a Catholic school graduate, I know the value of a Catholic education. I know first hand that Catholic schools teach students discipline, pride and respect for learning. I am so grateful to the priests, nuns and lay persons who taught me at St. Peter's Elementary, Holy Name Elementary, Parmadale, St. Aloysius Elementary, St. Colman Elementary and St. John Cantius High School for their love and guidance through my formative years.

I especially wish to recognize the delegation of students, teachers and parents that make the National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools a special day. Their commitment to ensuring an exceptional education and maintaining quality Catholic schools ensures that Catholic students in the future will continue to benefit from outstanding educational opportunities. An overwhelming percentage of Catholic high school graduates attend college, which is a sign of the excellent work of our Catholic School system.

I would also like to recognize the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) for their efforts to promote educational and catechetical goals. By sponsoring programs like the Seton Awards, which recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Catholic education, the NCEA works diligently to insure better education across America.

Providing quality educational opportunities for all children is one of the most important goals of our society. I am encouraged by the

ongoing involvement of the students, teacher and parents who are observing the National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in celebrating Catholic Schools.

As a student at St. Mary's elementary school in St. Croix from kindergarten through eighth grade, a graduate of St. Joseph's Mountain School in St. Joseph's, New York, and St. Mary's College, Notre Dame Indiana, I personally owe a debt of gratitude to Catholic schools for what I have been able to achieve.

Catholic schools across the country have contributed greatly to the communities in which they exist and the nation at large. Numerous studies show that parents place their children in Catholic schools for the superior academic achievement of Catholic school students. They 1996 tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) sponsored by the U.S. government demonstrated that students in Catholic schools score higher than those in public schools. As a result, Catholic school education is becoming a popular choice among parents. Catholic preschool enrollment has increased by nearly 223% since 1987–88.

As I pay tribute to the 8144 Catholic schools in this country, I want to pay tribute to those schools that have nurtured and educated me, those that I have already mentioned, and St. Pius V in Jamaica, New York.

I also would also like to make special mention of the Catholic Schools in my district—St. Mary's, St. Joseph and St. Patrick's in St. Croix, and Saints. Peter and Paul in St. Thomas. The people of the Virgin Islands and I appreciate them for all they do and have done for the children of our islands.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the sponsors of the H. Res. 28 in honoring the success of Catholic Schools in providing a quality education to millions of children around the country. However, I am concerned that this resolution also contains language that violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the establishment clause of the first amendment, thus insulting the millions of religious Americans who are struggling to educate their children free from federal control and endangering religious liberty.

The success of Catholic schools has been remarkable. Catholic schools operating in the inner-city have been able to provide an excellent education to students written off by the educational establishment as "unteachable." Contrary to the claims of its critics, Catholic schools do not turn away large numbers of children in order to limit their enrollment to the "best and the brightest." In fact, a few years ago the Archdiocese of New York offered to enroll all students who had been expelled from New York's public schools! Mr. Speaker, I have introduced legislation, the Family Education Freedom Act (H.R. 368) which would help more parents afford to send their children to Catholic, or other religious schools, by providing them with a \$3,000 tax credit for K–12 education expenses.

While I join with the sponsors of this legislation in praising Catholic schools, I am disturbed by the language explicitly endorsing the goals of the United States Catholic Conference. The Catholic Conference is an organization devoted to spreading and advancing Catholicism. While the Conference may advance other social goods through its work,

those purposes are secondary to its primary function of advancing the Catholic faith. This is especially true in the case of Catholic schools which were founded and are operated with the explicit purpose of intergrating Catholic doctrine into K–12 education.

Therefore, even though Congress intends to honor the ways Catholic schools help fulfill a secular goal, the fact is Congress cannot honor Catholic schools without endorsing efforts to promulgate the Catholic faith. By singling out one sect over another, Congress is playing favors among religions. While this does not compare to the type of religious persecution experienced by many of the founders of this country, it is still an example of the type of federal favoritism among religions that the first amendment forbids.

What is the superintendent of a Baptist private school or a Pentecostal home schooler going to think when reading this resolution? That Congress does not think they provide children with an excellent education or that Congress does not deem their religious goals worthy of federal endorsement? In a free republic, the legislature should not be in the business of favoring one religion over another. I would also like to point out the irony of considering government favoritism of religion in the context of praising the Catholic schools, when early in this century Catholic schools were singled out for government-sanctioned discrimination because they were upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Allowing Congress to single out certain religions for honors not only insults those citizens whose faith is not recognized by Congress, it also threatens the religious liberty of those honored by Congress. This is because when the federal government begins evaluating religious institutions, some religious institutions may be tempted to modify certain of their teachings in order to curry favor with political leaders. I will concede that religious institutions may not water down their faith in order to secure passage of "Sense of Congress resolutions," however, the belief that it is proper to judge religious institutions by how effectively they fulfill secular objectives is at the root of the proposals to entangle the federal government with state-approved religions by providing taxpayer dollars to religious organizations in order to preform various social services. Providing taxpayer money to churches creates the very real risk that a church may, for example, feel the need to downplay its teaching against abortion or euthanasia in order to maintain favor with a future pro-abortion administration and thus not lose its federal funding.

Of course, the idea that politicians should bestow favors on religions based on how well they fulfill the aims of the politicians is one that should be insulting to all believers no matter their faith. After all, despite what a few of my colleagues seem to think, Mr. Speaker, we in Congress are neither omnipotent nor divine.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I join the sponsors of H. Res. 28 in their admiration for the work of Catholic schools. However, I also have reservations about the language singling out the religious goals of one faith for praise.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker I rise in support of this measure to recognize the role Catholic Schools have played in the education of America's Children.

Last week over 8,200 Catholic elementary and secondary schools nationwide celebrated

their 27th annual Catholics Schools Week. This event was established to increase support for private Catholic schools and to recognize their accomplishments and contributions to the country.

"Catholic Schools Week" celebrates education that goes beyond preparation for a secular life; it is an education that prepares students for a Christian life. Parents who chose to send their children to Catholic Schools do so because they not only want their children to have an excellent education in reading, writing and arithmetic, they also want to them to have a Christian education.

Although public schools can prepare children for a secular life through a good education, they are constitutionally bound not to extent their role as educators into the area of religious education. I strongly urge parents who would like the benefits of public education and the rewards of faith based education to make a commitment to work with those religious communities that share their beliefs in the development of after school and weekend parochial programs.

This bill states that Congress supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and the U.S. Catholic Conference, and congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers for their contributions to education.

Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students, 24 percent of whom are minorities. Moreover, only three percent of Catholic high school drop out of school and 83 percent go on to attend college.

Finally, the resolution states that, by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in moral guidance, Catholic schools produce students and, ultimately, citizens who are strongly dedicated to their faith and communities.

I offer my heart felt thanks to the Catholic Schools across the nation for their dedication to excellence in the classroom as they prepare young people to achieve excellence in life. In closing I would like to extend a special thanks to the Catholic Schools in Houston like Saint Philips High School, and Saint Pius High School.

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this resolution on Catholic education, and to share with my colleagues some of the rich history and achievements of Catholic schools in New Mexico.

The Catholic Church has had a presence in the American Southwest for over 400 years. Before public education was established in New Mexico, Catholic friars began teaching at local Indian pueblos. In the early 1800s, the Spanish government, cooperating with the Catholic Church, established schools in the territory of New Mexico.

Today New Mexico has 29 Catholic elementary schools and 4 secondary schools. Over 8,000 New Mexico children are enrolled in Catholic schools and the ethnic composition of the student body reflects the rich diversity of New Mexico (Hispanic 43%, Anglo 31%, American Indian 11%). I am very proud of New Mexico's Catholic schools and their students. Last year 324 students graduated from Catholic high schools in New Mexico. This is a 99% graduation rate and, of those, 99% went on to post-secondary education.

It's the dawn of a new century: It is a century in which knowledge is a commodity chil-

dren must have to succeed. Catholic schools across America are giving our children this opportunity.

Catholic schools have given New Mexico's children the wings they need to achieve their dreams. As Catholic schools nationwide celebrate Catholic school week, we thank them.

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

Mr. TIBERI. 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 Ohio (Mr. TIBERI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 28.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. TIBERI. 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.

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 3 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6 p.m.

□ 1800

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 6 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 motions to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today.

Votes will be taken in the following order: House Joint Resolution 7, by the yeas and nays, and House Resolution 28, by the yeas and nays.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first such vote in this series.

RECOGNIZING 90TH BIRTHDAY OF RONALD REAGAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the joint resolution, House Joint Resolution 7.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by