

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL).

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I stand on this floor as a proud graduate of St. George's Elementary School and St. John the Baptist High School and Fordham University. Some might say I am an exception to the rule, since there are so many great graduates of parochial schools, and particularly we talk today about Catholic schools. The Catholic education I received provided me with the tools to not only forge success in life, but gave me an unending desire to serve my fellow man. That is where I learned this, besides, of course, from my home.

I stand before the Members as the father of three sons who also attended Catholic school. Not too long ago in our Nation's history, Roman Catholics were not welcomed in many parts of our society. That has changed. My Catholic education taught me that every American, no matter their religion, their creed, their color, had an equal right and should get an equal chance to the American dream.

When we celebrate the 28th annual Catholic Schools Week, I am proud to report that Catholic schools continue to be a vibrant patch of the American quilt. The 8,146 Catholic schools in this Nation serve more than 2.6 million students. That is a lot of students that would be in the public schools. We support the public schools, but we are here talking about a major portion of our society are in Catholic schools.

As a child and lifelong resident of my major city, Paterson, New Jersey, I am proud to report that 46 percent of the Catholic schools are in urban areas. Many of these schools educate our most vulnerable students.

Catholic schools continue to be as diverse as America. One in every four Catholic students, or students in a Catholic school, are minority. The results continue to be outstanding. Eighty-three percent of the Catholic high school students go on to higher education and only 3 percent drop out, a figure well below the national average.

For the three sons that I sent to Catholic school, I knew, along with learning the three Rs, their spirits would be nurtured. This is the same Catholic spirit I learned in school: a spirit of tolerance, of compassion, and service to our fellow man; a spirit that translates so easily to the secular world of public service this Chamber honors.

I am pleased to add my voice to the chorus of those celebrating the wonderful achievements of these wonderful American institutions.

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I thank our ranking member and everyone that is a part of this tribute to Catholic schools and the education, the superb education that they provide for students across our country.

This Congress is devoted to education and to improvement in our public education system. This is something that is a value of the American people; and they want it implemented in classrooms across the country, so I am proud to have been part of the effort to improve public education.

In our country, we also have other institutions of learning. Certainly, Catholic schools have given their best and produced students for the betterment of our Nation. I am a product of a Catholic education, and I am proud of that. I know that my teachers, along with my parents, helped shape me to be who and what I am today.

I am very proud of my children being graduates of Catholic schools. My daughter Karen today is the head of the middle school, St. Joseph's, in Atherton, California. Her husband, Jim, my wonderful son-in-law, is part of a high school faculty at Convent of the Sacred Heart.

So I want to pay tribute to all of the lay people that are part of Catholic education across our Nation, and to the great orders, the sisters. I am a product of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and my children, of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. To the brothers, to the priests, to the nuns that have made Catholic education what everyone in this country has come to believe it represents, our thanks. They have contributed mightily to the betterment of our Nation and have deepened our spirituality and shaped citizens for decade after decade after decade.

I am very proud that the House of Representatives has chosen for the third year in a row to make this a tradition in the House where we pay tribute to Catholic schools and all that they have done. I thank everyone that is part of this effort.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the sponsors of the H. Res. 335 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 their 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, these 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 integrating 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 favorites 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 perform 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. 335 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.

This week Catholic elementary and secondary schools nationwide celebrate the 28th annual Catholic Schools Week. Saint Philips High School and Saint Pius High School in my District will be celebrating this 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 them to have a Christian education.

Although public schools can prepare children for a secular life through a good education, they are Constitutionally bound to not extend their role as educators into the area of religious education. I encourage 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 Educational 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 students drop out of school and 83 percent go on to attend college.

Finally 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 and other religious schools across the nation for their dedication to excellence in the classroom as they prepare young people to achieve excellence in life.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 335, which celebrates the significant contributions that Catholic schools make each and every day throughout the nation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague Mr. SCHAFER for continuing in the tradition of recognizing the role of Catholic schools in our nation and around the globe.

My district of Guam is nearly half a world away from Washington, D.C. and is home to more than 100,000 Roman Catholics, who encompass an overwhelming majority of the resident population. Guam has a centuries-old

history and tradition of Roman Catholicism since the island was discovered by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Magellan, who was voyaging around the world, was the first European to land on Guam. He was accompanied by several of his chaplains when he stepped ashore in the southern village of Umatac. Centuries later, local residents continue to celebrate the history of the discovery of Guam with a re-enactment of Magellan's landing.

The year 1662 ushered the first of multiple arrivals of Spanish missionaries to the island. Over time, various types of Catholic teachings have provided Guam's children with educational skills. The first missionaries began the tradition of "Eskuelan Pale," or Catholicism classes, which taught basic reading and comprehension skills and religious doctrines. Today Guam's Catholic schools strive for academic excellence and continue to instill moral values in their students.

Several religious orders and countless cadres of lay teachers have provided educational guidance and have broadened opportunities for Guam's school children since the end of World War II, when a formal Catholic school system was established. The School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Mercy, Dominican Sisters, the religious orders of Capuchin, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Marists have all served to educate Guam's school children.

Three institutions offer a Catholic high school education in Guam. These include: Notre Dame High School in Talofofo, which is Guam's only co-ed Catholic High School; the Academy of Our Lady of Guam in Hagatna; and Father Duenas Memorial School in Mangilao, which together serve an enrollment of approximately 1,100 students. There are seven elementary and middle schools, including: Bishop Baumgartner Memorial School in Sinajana; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in Agat; Saint Anthony School in Tamuning; Saint Francis School in Yona; San Vicente School in Barrigada; Santa Barbara School in Dededo and Dominican School in Yigo, which together serve an enrollment of 2,300 students. Finally, four Catholic nursery schools in Guam bridge the continuum of education from infancy to elementary. These include: the Dominican Child Care Center in Ordot; the Infant of Prague in Mangilao; Maria Artero in Agana Heights; and Mercy Heights in Tamuning.

As a former educator who was raised in the Catholic faith, I certainly appreciate the education provided by Catholic schools. Three of my five children have attended Catholic schools in Guam and in Virginia and 10 of my 16 staffers in both my District and D.C. offices are products of the Catholic school system in Guam and the Philippines. Additionally, my aunt, Mary Underwood, was instrumental in the establishment of the Catholic school system after World War II. She was also the first native of Guam to commit her life as a nun to the devotion and service of the Catholic church.

Catholic schools continue to provide a broad, value-added education and to shape the life-long development of moral, intellectual, physical and social values of students. This week marks National Catholic Schools Week, which is the culmination of an annual celebration of the significant educational role of Catholic schools across the nation and around the globe.

At this time, I would like to commend the contributions of all Catholic schools, students,

parents, teachers and administrators in Guam and across the nation. I would also like to recognize the important contributions of the Archdiocese of Hagatna, which oversees the administration of all of Guam's Catholic schools, and, particularly, to applaud the service of Archbishop Anthony Apuron, for continuing in the tradition of fostering excellence in the education and moral well-being of the children of Guam.

I stand in support of this resolution and urge my colleagues to join in support of the passage of H. Res. 335.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for H. Res. 335, a resolution recognizing the valuable contributions of Catholic Schools.

This week marks the 28th Anniversary of National Catholic Schools Week, a week dedicated to honor the achievements and successes of Catholic Schools throughout the U.S. More than 2.6 million children are enrolled in the 8,146 Catholic Schools in our country.

A Catholic education challenges students through a combination of high standards, strong motivation, effective discipline, and an atmosphere of caring. These characteristics foster excellence in students. In a society where academic and moral standards are constantly being debased and watered down, Catholic schools consistently deliver a level of student performance that is well supported by the evidence. Too often these days, our kids are bombarded with mushy, well-meaning rhetoric that says that everybody can score "above average." Too many school systems have adopted the false notion that filling our children with a bogus sense of self-esteem is more important than actually ensuring that they master their subject material. President Bush rightfully denounces "the soft bigotry of low expectations." Fortunately, Catholic schools are part of the solution of the problem of low expectations.

Catholic school student test performance in the three grade levels of the National Assessment of Educational Progress exceeds public school test results by an average of 4.5 percent in math, 4.8 percent in science, and 12.5 percent in reading. Only 3 percent of Catholic school students drop out of school, compared to a 14 percent dropout rate of students in public schools. In addition, 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college, as compared to 52 percent of public high school graduates. While there are a variety of factors that can partially account for these differences, sociologists and education theorists cannot explain all of these differences away without acknowledging that challenging our students and expecting more from them inspires students to work harder and take more pride in their academic work.

Catholic schools recognize parents and family as primary educators, while fostering a shared vision among the two. As the father of four children who have attended Catholic schools, I know they strive to create a special bond between families and the school.

As Pope John Paul II said, ". . . and so the purpose of Catholic Education is to communicate Christ to you, so that your attitude toward others will be that of Christ."

Obviously, children do not from their core moral values because of what schools teach them. Respect for life, and for the rights of others, does not start at school. It starts at