

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF LIGHTS ON AFTER-SCHOOL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 280 which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A resolution (S. Res. 280) supporting "Lights on Afterschool," a national celebration of after school programs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 280) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 280

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 the children in such families 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 youth, 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 held on October 20, 2005, 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 in the United States have no place to go after school; and

Whereas many after school programs across the United States are struggling to keep their doors open and their lights on: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved That the Senate supports the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool!" a national celebration of after school programs.

HONORING AND THANKING JAMES PATRICK ROHAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 281 which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A resolution (S. Res. 281) honoring and thanking James Patrick Rohan.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 281) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

Whereas Assistant Chief of Police James Patrick Rohan, a native of the State of Maryland, has served the United States Capitol Police for thirty (30) years with distinction, having been appointed as a Private on December 8, 1975;

Whereas Assistant Chief Rohan, having risen through the ranks to his current position over his longstanding career, has been instrumental in a variety of initiatives designed to enhance the security of the Congress;

Whereas Assistant Chief Rohan, who holds a Master of Science Degree in Justice/Law Enforcement from the American University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Law Enforcement from the University of Maryland, as well as numerous specialized law enforcement and security training accomplishments and honors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate hereby honors and thanks James Patrick Rohan and his wife, Cecilia, and children, Ben, Natalie, Eric and David, and his entire family, for a lifelong professional commitment of service to the United States Capitol Police and the United States Congress.

FAIR ACCESS FOSTER CARE ACT OF 2005

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1894 introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1894) to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to provide for the making of foster care maintenance payments to private for-profit agencies.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Fair Access Foster Care Act of 2005.

Therapeutic foster care is foster care for children with special medical, psychological, emotional, and social needs. These children need comprehensive support and attention, requiring a great deal of commitment and sacrifice from foster care parents.

Prior to the placement of a child, a potential therapeutic foster care parent must complete a certification process that involves a background check, a training program, and at least two home studies.

At Choices for Life Foster Care, Inc., a for-profit provider in Oklahoma City, counselors are in the home a minimum

of 2 hours every other week once a child has been placed.

Generally therapeutic foster care children are not permitted to attend daycare and require "line of sight" supervision. That is, therapeutic foster care children must be in view of the foster parents at all times, except when attending school and other approved activities.

Recruiting parents to provide therapeutic foster care is a never-ending job. There are always children waiting for a match to be found. Therapeutic foster care children stay in crisis shelters for the transition period, adding a great deal of stress to their lives.

Each State has a different standard for determining whether children need therapeutic foster care. Once a child is identified, most State governments contract with private agencies to place the child in a home.

In my State of Oklahoma, fifteen agencies contract with the State government to provide therapeutic foster care services. Of those 15 agencies, 5 operate under a for-profit status, 10 operate under a nonprofit status. The bottom line is that 62 percent of therapeutic foster care children are managed by for-profit agencies, and we must maintain the availability of care for these children.

Therapeutic foster care agencies receive funding from Medicaid and Title IV-E maintenance payments from the United States Department of Health and Human Service, HHS. The 1996 Welfare Reauthorization Act attempted to correct a discrepancy between treatment of children managed by for-profit agencies and by nonprofit agencies via removing the word "non-profit" from title 42 of the United States Social Security Code. Unfortunately, the deletion was only made in one of the three sections addressing this issue, thus causing therapeutic foster care agencies to remain subjected to arbitrary regulation.

Only recently was it brought to the attention of Oklahoma's Department of Human Services that additional legal changes were needed. Most State governments face the same problem.

My bill amends the United States Code to allow all therapeutic foster care agencies to receive maintenance payments from the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The Congressional Budget Office has indicated that any costs associated with this legislation would be insignificant.

There are over 500,000 children in foster care today. A large number of these children require therapeutic care. The business model of for-profit agencies should not prohibit Title IV-E maintenance cost reimbursement. Now is not the time to prevent highly qualified agencies from placing these children in safe homes.

I have long been dedicated to quality care for my constituents in Oklahoma and across America. My bill to help alleviate the flu vaccine shortage, my