

color-free society, where the content of one's character is far more important and significant than the color of one's skin.

I urge support for Resolution 668 and yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of school desegregation in Arkansas and celebrate nine brave young people and the families that supported them, it is a day of bittersweet reflection because the dreams they sought to fulfill for generations of African Americans remain still not fully realized.

Today, as in 1957, we believe that education will help African Americans to get better jobs and to gain influence in American society. But, 50 years later, the struggle is not over. While in 1957, African American students struggled to get into high schools, today they struggle to stay in school. In describing the current state of education for African Americans, an author stated "burdened with a history that includes the denial of education, separate and unequal education, and religion to unsafe, substandard inner-city schools, the quest for quality education remains an elusive dream for the African American community." The current drop out rate among African American males is estimated at 40 percent, 72 percent are jobless, and the likelihood of being incarcerated is 60 percent. Fifty years later, the playing field is not leveled.

H. Res. 668, not only recognizes the 50th anniversary of that momentous occasion on September 25, 1957, but it also calls for all to commit to continuing the legacy of Brown v. Board of Education and the Little Rock Nine by protecting and advancing equal educational opportunity for all. This would be a great way to honor and continue to pay tribute to heroic actions of the Little Rock Nine. Little Rock Nine opened the door for education but we must continue to close the gap in providing quality education for all.

I urge all of my colleagues to join us in honoring the people who made history on that day, and to also join them and us in working toward the day when there will truly be equal opportunity in education in every part of our Nation.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, on September 25th, our State—and our Nation—will recognize nine brave men and women who, when they were teenagers, came forward to claim their Constitutional right to an equal education despite protests, threats of violence and even the Arkansas National Guard.

I strongly support this legislation which honors not only a red-letter date in our State's history, but a seminal event in the movement to unite our country as truly one people, indivisible.

Fifty years ago, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls, climbed the steps of Central High School. Few other moments in our history can compare to the ascent made by the Little Rock Nine. It was an ascent to a new plateau in the relations of Americans to their fellow citizens and a new plateau on the path to the American we now know.

On September 25, 1957, when the Nine made it to the top of those Central High School steps, they stood in a place where, up till that point, others said they could not go.

Then, they did what was, in fact, the most important thing that day: They went inside to learn.

While Central High School will always be the event at the forefront of our memories when it comes to the history of desegregation, it is my hope that, as we remember the Nine, we can also remember the other schools in our State which preceded them, including Fayetteville, Hoxie, and the community of Charleston—who first broke down the barrier in Arkansas on August 23, 1954.

I would also like to remember the names of Joe Ferguson, Jessie Ferguson, Mary Ferguson, Barbara Williams, Robert Williams, Etholia Williams, Time Freeman, Betty Freeman, Myrdle Freeman, Leroy Jones, Raymond Webb, Duty Webb, and Henry Web, who joined their fellow residents of Charleston to bring about peaceful change.

As we spend this day reflecting on our past, we should remember all the brave children, families, and educators across the state who—by their courage—set in motion a chain of events which created the Arkansas of the present and will resonate in the Arkansas of the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 668.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CONYERS. 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.

DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN ACT OF 2007

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1199) to extend the grant program for drug-endangered children.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1199

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Drug Endangered Children Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. DRUG-ENDANGERED CHILDREN GRANT PROGRAM EXTENDED.

Section 755(c) of the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 3797cc-2(c)) is amended by striking "fiscal years 2006 and 2007" and inserting "fiscal years 2008 and 2009".

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 1199 was introduced on February 27 of this year by the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA). Currently, the legislation enjoys the support of 15 additional bipartisan cosponsors.

The measure, on its face, is quite simple and straightforward. It simply extends funding for the Drug Endangered Children Grant Program through fiscal year 2009. The current authorization for the program is set to expire this year.

The Drug Endangered program was first authorized as title VII of the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005, which authorizes up to \$20 million a year for grants to address this problem.

One of the most troubling aspects of drug use is its impact on children. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency, over 15,000 children were found at methamphetamine labs from 2000 to 2004. The problem, however, is not limited to meth abuse. A Health and Human Services study found that over 1.6 million children live in homes where a variety of illicit drugs are used. These drug-infested conditions stretch child welfare agencies beyond their capacities because of the increased violence and neglect.

On February 6, the Crime Subcommittee held a hearing on H.R. 545, the Native American Methamphetamine Enforcement and Treatment Act of 2007, which has been reported by both the Crime Subcommittee and the full Judiciary Committee. A central provision of that bill extends eligibility for drug-endangered children grants to Native American tribes. However, unless the Congress passes H.R. 1199, the authorization for the drug-endangered children grants will expire this year, negating our recent efforts to help Native American children.

With this said, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this much-needed legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1199, the Drug Endangered Children Act of 2007, and commend my colleague from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for his leadership on this issue.

This legislation extends the existing authorization for grants to State and local governments and Indian tribes to protect and help drug-endangered children. It is a sad consequence of our Nation's drug problem that drug traffickers have such a devastating impact on innocent children who live and play

in areas used to facilitate the production and distribution of illegal drugs.

We owe it to our Nation's children to do all that we can to protect them and provide them the services needed to allow them to grow and develop in a healthy and loving home.

It is often said that you can judge the health of a society by the way in which it treats the innocent and vulnerable, our children. Too often we hear from law enforcement about children being used or abused by drug traffickers. The consequences to our children are devastating. We must do whatever we can to protect our children from the evils of drug dealing and provide them with a safe environment in which to live.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the sponsor of this bill, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA).

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague from Virginia who's been a tremendous supporter and assistance on this piece of legislation.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 1199, the Drug Endangered Children's Act. And let me also thank, as well as my colleague from Virginia, my colleague, Mr. CONYERS, who's the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who also assisted us in bringing this legislation to the floor. I appreciate both their efforts on behalf of our Nation's children.

Drug trafficking and abuse have a devastating impact on the children of this country and contribute to domestic violence, abuse and neglect. According to a recent study, Health and Human Services has said that over 1.6 million children live in a home where at least one parent abuses illicit drugs, including cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin or prescription drugs.

In my district in the central valley of California, I have seen the harmful effects of methamphetamine on children's lives. While visiting schools in my area, I've been told by teachers and administrators and, frankly, by the students themselves, that a significant portion of the students have a parent or relative who abuses methamphetamine. Sadly, I know that I'm not alone, as similar stories could be told in other parts of the country where illicit drugs are prevalent.

I'm particularly concerned about the impact of this drug epidemic and what it's having on our foster care system. According to the National Association of Counties, 40 percent of child welfare officials nationwide report an increase in child welfare cases caused by methamphetamine.

This issue strikes close to home for me. In my home county of Merced, California, between 67 and 75 percent of foster care cases are methamphetamine-related.

□ 1630

As a father of two adopted children, I have seen firsthand the damaging im-

pact of drug abuse on the foster care system.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must do more to help these children in need. Methamphetamine is an extremely dangerous drug for children not only because meth addicts are more likely to abuse and abandon their children but also because meth-addicted parents often set up meth labs in their homes. These labs are highly toxic and susceptible to fire and explosions and therefore place innocent children in physical danger. In my district, children have been found at labs with burns from spilled ingredients from the methamphetamine production process. In addition, there is a high risk of lasting health damage from toxic fume inhalation. Tragically, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA, children are found present at 20 percent of all meth labs that are seized.

H.R. 1199, the Drug Endangered Children Act, will address the challenges facing children abandoned, neglected, or abused by parents addicted to illicit drugs. The legislation would authorize the Department of Justice to make \$20 million in grants available for drug-endangered children for fiscal years 2008 and 2009. The grants are designed to improve coordination among law enforcement, prosecutors, children protection services, social service agencies, and health care providers to help transition drug-endangered children into safe residential environments.

The Drug Endangered Children program would build on the successful Federal, State, and local partnerships of the COPS program and the Edward Byrne Memorial Grant program. By funding coordination across jurisdictions and among several different types of government agencies, the Drug Endangered Children program would foster cooperative efforts to address the needs of children affected by drug abuse. These grants would leverage the Federal Government's investment by offering an incentive for local government to invest their own money in confronting this important problem.

It's time to pass this vital piece of legislation. The 1.6 million children across this country impacted by parental drug abuse need our help. Let us help these children by passing the Drug Endangered Children Act and rid ourselves of the scourge of drug abuse.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 1199.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to pass this important piece of legislation, and I thank the gentleman from California for his leadership in introducing the bill.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Drug Endangered Children Act.

Over the last 6 years, 7,500 drug-related child abuse cases were reported in Iowa. In 2004, over 1,700 of Iowa's children tested positive for illegal drugs. Two-thirds of them

were under the age of 6. Nearly one-quarter were less than a year old.

These statistics are staggering but they have a very real face. They represent Iowa's most vulnerable population—a population that demands not only our attention but our action.

The Iowa Drug Endangered Children Program was established in 2004 to assist local communities in their efforts to protect the health and safety of children exposed to illegal, toxic drugs in their homes. In my district, Linn and Wapello counties have created community-based Drug Endangered Children programs in order to coordinate services and provide immediate intervention, long-term assistance, and follow-up care for children found in homes where illegal drugs are used, manufactured, or trafficked.

Since 2001, 4,000 methamphetamine labs have been dismantled in Iowa. Roughly 30 percent of these labs were based in homes with children. State and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and child welfare organizations are dedicated to the protection of children found to be living in homes where dangerous and illicit drugs are present, but they cannot carry out this enormous and vitally urgent task on their own.

This bill authorizes \$20 million annually for the Drug Endangered Children grant program for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009. These grants will assist in the coordination of State and local agencies and will help to assure the swift and safe transition of children from dangerous homes to safe residences.

We cannot sit by while almost 2 million children nationwide continue to live in homes where illegal drugs are present. This bill is an essential step toward assuring the health and safety of our Nation's children, and I strongly urge its passage.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1199, the Drug Endangered Children Act. The Drug Endangered Children program is critically important to my congressional district and others that have been plagued by the meth scourge. Thanks to the outstanding leadership of Susan Webber-Brown, Butte County, California, was one of the first jurisdictions in the country to create a Drug Endangered Children team to focus on the safety and protection of children during law enforcement operations. However, due in part to a lack of federal support, the state of California terminated DEC grant funding in 2003. Since then, Butte and other counties have struggled to keep their programs up and running.

As a former chairman of the House subcommittee dealing with child welfare and foster care issues, I have heard countless heart-breaking stories of children trapped in some of the most awful living conditions imaginable as a result of their parents' or guardians' involvement with illegal drugs. The Drug Endangered Children program helps rescue children from these dangerous environments, provide for their immediate physical and psychological needs, and give them hope for a better life. I hope my colleagues will join me in voting to reauthorize this vitally needed program.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1199.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. 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.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING A VOICE FOR VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES INVOLVED IN MISSING PERSONS AND UNIDENTIFIED HUMAN REMAINS CASES

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 340) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives of the importance of providing a voice for the many victims (and families of victims) involved in missing persons cases and unidentified human remains cases.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 340

Whereas there are more than 100,000 active missing person cases on any given day;

Whereas every year tens of thousands of people vanish under suspicious circumstances;

Whereas there are more than 40,000 sets of human remains held in the property rooms of medical examiners, coroners, and police departments across the country that cannot be identified by conventional means;

Whereas of such 40,000 sets of human remains, only six thousand sets of human remains have been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and fewer have been entered into other Federal databases such as the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCap) or the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS), or the National Missing Persons DNA Database;

Whereas many cities and counties continue to bury or cremate unidentified human remains without any attempt to collect DNA and many laboratories are unable to perform timely DNA analysis of human remains, especially when they are old or are degraded;

Whereas such victims and their families have been without a voice for far too long: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) is committed to giving victims involved in missing persons cases and unidentified human remains cases a voice;

(2) supports that such voice should be heard by—

(A) continuing Federal funding for DNA testing and the Combined DNA Index System;

(B) supporting greater cooperation between local, State, and Federal law enforcement;

(C) providing more comprehensive training and education for the more than 17,000 law enforcement agencies involved in missing persons cases and unidentified human remains cases;

(D) providing medical examiners and coroners with greater accessibility into Federal

databases to upload and compare evidence so that such victims ultimately may be located and identified and returned to their loved ones where they belong; and

(E) working to raise awareness among victim service providers and the general public about the use of DNA and the Combined DNA Index System to identify the unidentified dead; and

(3) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the Office for Victims of Crime and the National Institute for Justice in the Department of Justice.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of House Resolution 340 to express the commitment of the House of Representatives in giving victims involved in missing persons and unidentified human remains cases a voice through advancing DNA technology.

The grief of loss of a loved one, particularly a parent's loss of a child, can only be surpassed by the endless torment of not knowing. When a loved one is missing, there is no finality, no way to begin the grieving process so that closure may eventually come and family and friends can begin healing. Going on, often hoping against hope, knowing the news they fear the most may come at any moment is a tormenting experience.

But with today's DNA technology, much of this burden can be removed. Over 6,000 samples of DNA evidence have been used to identify remains of missing persons; and with continued and increased funding, we can bring more justice to victims and peace to the families and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I further support the continued funding of DNA initiatives because of the incredible part DNA evidence has played both in determining guilt and protecting the innocent. Since 2002, over 200 wrongly convicted persons have been exonerated through DNA evidence, including death row inmates. In fact, just this weekend two incredible stories arose in the Baltimore area. On Saturday, September 22, prosecutors dropped all charges against a Baltimore man who had been held in a rape and assault of a 59-year-old woman just last month. This morning the Baltimore Sun newspaper reports that Baltimore County has solved their

18th DNA-evidence case, a rape investigation open since 1978. After 29 years, a victim will finally see justice.

Mr. Speaker, we can and must continue to fund advancing DNA technology because, although there has been much success, there remains much to do. Over 40,000 samples of biological evidence related to missing persons are in laboratories around the country ready for entry into DNA databases with the potential of identifying almost 40 percent of our missing persons. And although DNA backlog reduction grants have cleared more than 60,000 criminal cases, exonerating the innocent and identifying the guilty, the backlog level remains almost unchanged. Police departments and prosecutors recognizing the benefits of DNA evidence have been trained in its collection and are using the technology more than ever before, which adds samples at the rate that the backlog is being cleared.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support continued DNA-evidence backlog reduction grants in identifying missing persons and to exonerate the innocent and to identify the guilty. We have seen what the technology can do, and we have the wherewithal to fund those activities. Justice demands that we view continued funding as a major responsibility.

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

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

I, first of all, would like to thank the gentleman from Virginia for his leadership on this very important issue. I know Mr. SCOTT has been one of those who has cared greatly about those families that have suffered the trauma of a lost person within their family. So I want to thank Mr. SCOTT on this. And I think this is another issue in which we have seen bipartisanship in this House. Sometimes you don't see a lot of instances of that, but I think this is one where we can work together in a bipartisan fashion, and I want to thank Mr. SCOTT for his leadership on this.

Given that tomorrow is the first annual day of remembrance for murder victims, it is only fitting that we recognize and respond to a segment of the victim population that too often goes unrecognized: those victims who are missing and whose remains have yet to be identified. Unfortunately, it is far more common than one would think, just how many families are searching for some clue as to the location of the remains of their missing family members, and too often families are alone in their effort to locate their loved one.

On any given day, there are more than 100,000 active missing-person cases in this country. Just think of that: over 100,000 active cases in this Nation. Every year tens of thousands of people vanish under suspicious circumstances. Equally disturbing is the knowledge that the skeletal remains of more than 40,000 individuals are being stored with coroners, medical examiners, and police departments around