

They develop rehabilitation programs by conferring with clients, which also includes training to help clients develop job skills. Rehabilitation counselors also work toward increasing the client's capacity to live independently. These professionals work with individuals, professional organizations and advocacy groups to address the social barriers that create obstacles for people with disabilities. They are instrumental in building bridges between the often-isolated world of people with disabilities and their families, communities, and school and work environments. They empower individuals to make informed choices so that they can become productive members of society.

Rehabilitation counselors are employed in private practice, by community health organizations and hospitals, and in State and Federal Government positions. There are approximately 141,000 rehabilitation counselors in the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That number is expected to grow rapidly as medical advances help people survive serious injury or illness, including veterans returning from both the Afghanistan and Iraqi wars.

Rehabilitation counselors provide a great service to the millions of Americans with disabilities. They encourage people with disabilities to participate as active citizens within their communities. These highly trained professionals help many disabled Americans cope with their life-altering situations, and today we recognize them for their hard work and dedication.

I ask for my colleagues' support of this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) who we praised in our earlier comments for bringing this awareness of the value of our rehabilitation counselors to the attention of the House, and we applaud him for his efforts, and we recognize him for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. I thank the gentleman so much for yielding.

And, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join in supporting H. Res. 247, which would express support for recognizing March 22 as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day. I want to thank my friend, PHIL GINGREY, the gentleman from Georgia, for joining me in offering this resolution.

On March 22 in 1983, Martha Lentz Walker of Kent State University provided testimony to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives regarding the valuable services provided by qualified rehabilitation counselors. Due in large part to events of that day, rehabilitation counselors today are required to have proper certification in order to provide a higher level of service.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors are dedicated professionals. Their good

works assist disabled Americans across the country in living independent and productive lives. An honest day's work is a source of pride, but many individuals with disabilities who want to work just don't have the training, support, or tools they need to enter the workforce. Vocational rehabilitation counselors step in to provide the necessary services that succeed in bringing thousands of disabled Americans into the workforce every day.

Today, we have injured veterans seeking to gain, retain, or regain employment. Today, we have older workers staying in the workforce longer in these difficult economic times. Today, many other individuals want nothing more than to pursue a career. Rehabilitation counselors play an important role in helping them to reach their goals, and I believe the service is worthy of our recognition and our thanks.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, the resolution before the House is one of great worth, obviously recognizing the important role that rehabilitation counselors play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. They open doorways, they absolutely enhance the quality of life, and coax the professionalism from those who, amongst us, are in the ranks of the disabled with an awful lot of contribution to be made to society. The rehabilitation counselor is a partner in that effort.

So I ask that, again, we move forward and recognize this and support this resolution.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of House Resolution 247. This Resolution expresses support for the designation of March 22, 2009 as "National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day."

I am particularly pleased to be able to join my good friend, Chairman IKE SKELTON, on this important Resolution. Since my first days in the Congress, Chairman SKELTON has been a good friend and I have worked with him on a number of issues critical to our nation's defense. It is a particular honor to work with Chairman SKELTON in bringing this Resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 247 recognizes the hard and important work of our nation's rehabilitation counselors who day in and day out improve the lives of those who are in need of rehabilitation either from an injury or from a permanent disability. These counselors play an integral role in helping people re-establish control over their daily lives by managing the personal, social, and vocational effects of their disabilities.

Recognizing the importance of multiple sources of support, rehabilitation counselors work both with individuals and their families to plan and implement rehabilitation programs that fit their needs. Counselors often make arrangements for medical care, job training, and job placement services with the aim of achieving the best possible quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, physical disabilities do not discriminate and can affect anyone or any family. Many of us have family members or friends who suffer from disabilities that shape their ev-

eryday life. Chairman SKELTON himself is a testament to the positive effect of rehabilitation counseling.

In fact, I was pleased to join Chairman SKELTON a few years back in Warm Springs, Georgia—which at the time was part of the 11th Congressional District. We were there because in his youth, Chairman SKELTON himself benefited from rehabilitation and therapy for his own disability. I know this Resolution has particular and personal importance for him as he remembers those doctors and counselors who were so helpful to him.

Mr. Speaker, in this life, we often face challenges that we cannot overcome alone. Accordingly, we have an obligation to recognize and celebrate those individuals who spend their lives making other lives better. I call on my colleagues to support this Resolution in gratitude for our nation's rehabilitation counselors. I yield back.

Mr. TONKO. I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 247.

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. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING AND COMMENDING NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 336) supporting the goals and ideals of National Library Week.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 336

Whereas the Nation's school, academic, public, and special libraries make a difference in the lives of millions of people in the United States, today, more than ever;

Whereas librarians are trained professionals, helping people of all ages and backgrounds find and interpret the information they need to live, learn, and work in a challenging economy;

Whereas libraries are part of the American Dream, places for opportunity, education, self-help, and lifelong learning;

Whereas according to a December 2008 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, public library use increased to 1,400,000 visits nationwide during fiscal year 2006, among all types of library users, continuing a long term trend of increased library usage;

Whereas libraries play a vital role in supporting the quality of life in their communities;

Whereas libraries help people of all ages discover a world of knowledge, both in person and online, as well as provide personal service and assistance in finding needed information;

Whereas libraries are a key player in the national discourse on intellectual freedom and equity of access;

Whereas libraries are narrowing the “digital divide”, by providing no-fee public computer and Internet access to accommodate the growing need for access to digital and online information, including e-government, continuing education, and employment opportunities; and

Whereas libraries, librarians, library workers, and supporters across the United States celebrated National Library Week, April 12–18, 2009, with The Campaign for America’s Libraries: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Library Week; and

(2) encourages all residents to visit a library to take advantage of the wonderful library resources available, and to thank their librarians and library workers for making information accessible to all who walk through the library’s doors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials on House Resolution 336 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 336, which encourages all Americans to take advantage of the numerous resources libraries make available.

All across the country, libraries have developed communities by bringing people of all nationalities, ages and socioeconomic levels together to enjoy the pleasures of literature, media and new technology. Libraries foster national discourse on intellectual freedom and provide informational equity across our great Nation.

Not only do libraries provide free resources, but they preserve historical artifacts and information highlighting societal achievements. Today, we have over 123 libraries nationwide playing a vital role in creating vibrant, energized communities. For example, the Big Read is a national reading program designed to revitalize the role of reading in America, and 208 communities participate in the Big Read program nationwide. American libraries play a central role fostering community participation.

There is also the National Book Festival sponsored by our very own Library of Congress. Representatives from State libraries gather at the Nation’s Capital to promote reading and literacy in all of our 50 States. Last

September, the 8th annual National Book Festival was a huge success. Hundreds of people gathered to promote reading to children, including professional athletes, actors, and famous writers, authors and poets.

The Library of Congress is also a great resource for the public. As the largest library in the world, the Library of Congress holds more than 120 million items on approximately 530 miles of book shelves. The collections include more than 18 million books, 2.5 million recordings, 12 million photographs, 4.5 million maps and 54 million manuscripts. The massive resource provided by this library to this country is indeed a bit of invaluable information.

National Library Week continues to commend librarians who help the public to interpret the information they need to live, to learn, and to navigate their way in today’s challenging and complicated economy.

□ 1230

By providing free educational opportunities and a safe place for lifelong learning, libraries and librarians help people achieve the American Dream. With that said, ultimately libraries help people explore curiosities and make sense of this complex world.

I do want to thank Representative EHLERS for his leadership and bringing this important resolution forward.

Again, I want to extend my gratitude toward libraries for their important work in our communities. I ask my colleagues to support this important resolution.

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

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

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Congressman GRIJALVA, who is the principal majority party cosponsor of this resolution. He has a deep interest in libraries as well.

I also wanted to say that I am a great fan of libraries for a number of reasons. First of all, I have served on a city library board, on a county library board, on the board of the State Library of Michigan, and also, through my service on the House Administration Committee, I have been on the committee governing the Library of Congress. But the main reason is that, when I was a young child, I was quite ill and could not attend school. This gave me a lot of spare time, and I read between six and eight books a week. I was totally dependent on the library for those books, so twice a week I would trudge down to the library—which was only open 2 days a week—and haul out a pile of books which I could read. So I fully appreciate the importance of libraries. There is another factor as well. My daughter, Marla, is Assistant Director of the Grand Rapids Public Library in my hometown and keeps me fully informed about library affairs. And so I say all this in preface as to why I introduced the resolution and why it is so important that we recognize libraries.

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association and libraries across the States. This is done every year in April. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of our Nation’s libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support.

In the mid 1950s, research showed that Americans were spending less time on books and more on radio, television, and musical instruments. Concerned that Americans were reading less, a nonprofit citizens’ organization called the National Book Committee formed in 1954. The committee’s goals were ambitious and ranged from encouraging people to read in their increasing leisure time, to improving incomes and health and developing a strong and happy family life.

In 1957, the committee developed a plan for National Library Week based on the idea that once people were motivated to read, they would support and use libraries. With cooperation from various organizations, the first National Library Week was observed in 1958 with the theme, “Wake Up and Read!”

This year’s theme, “Worlds Connect at Your Library,” highlights how libraries are narrowing the digital divide by providing no-fee public computer and Internet access to meet the growing needs for access to digital and online information, including e-government, continuing education and employment opportunities.

I can vouch for the big changes in libraries. Last year, I visited my daughter’s library—perhaps, I should say the Grand Rapids Public Library—and I was just amazed at the number of computers available to the public, and every single computer was in use. I would say there were at least a dozen there, and people working heartily on them. This has become even more important with the unemployment situation because many workers don’t have their own computer and they have to go to the library to polish up their resume, look online for jobs, and so forth. So the library’s usefulness has continued to grow over the years.

Libraries truly play a vital role in supporting the quality of life in their communities. They help us discover a world of knowledge, both in person and online, and are a key player in the national discourse on intellectual freedom and the equity of access. In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, library use was up to 1.3 billion visits last year nationwide among all types of library users, continuing a long-term trend of increased library usage.

By recognizing National Library Week, we show our appreciation to libraries, librarians, library workers, and supporters across America. I also should mention that we should at this point recognize and mention the support that Andrew Carnegie gave to libraries initially. When he began giving

away his fortune, much of it went to libraries across the country, and you will find Carnegie libraries throughout our Nation, including in my hometown.

I am honored to support this resolution. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the great contributions of libraries and librarians.

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

Mr. TONKO. I again want to thank Mr. EHLERS for the inspiration to pay tribute to the libraries across this country. They are, indeed, very valuable components of the education infrastructure in this country. They obviously provide tremendous opportunity to individuals throughout this country without any sort of prejudice.

I am reminded of the powerful library in my hometown of Amsterdam, New York, and the wonderful countywide system that is part of Schenectady County, with several sites within their library structure.

And so it is, indeed, very appropriate that we recognize the contribution that libraries, and more specifically, librarians, make to our society and the development of the intellectual capacity and character of our society.

With that, I encourage passage of the resolution.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute to the all-American public library upon completion of National Library Week. It was a week filled with activities and celebration designed to highlight the important role libraries and librarians play in our lives.

Based on a theme of "Worlds connect @ your library," libraries across the nation hosted contests and presentations to educate and entertain readers of all ages. Since 1958, National Library Week has been part of the American Library Association's goal of "encouraging people to read in their increasing leisure time." It was and has been an impressive goal and today we see libraries full of readers, taking on new challenges and expanding the education of their communities. This week was an opportunity to bring in new library patrons and to encourage reading as part of everyday life.

Former First Lady, Laura Bush, herself a librarian by profession, once said this of our libraries: "Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open."

Mr. Speaker, I speak today to honor the work libraries and librarians provide not only children but all in their communities. They are more than buildings that house books and people that help us find resources. They are places to discover and imagine with neighbors gladly serving their fellow citizens in an expanding and challenging world.

Mr. TONKO. 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 New York (Mr. TONKO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 336.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

### BEST BUDDIES EMPOWERMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ACT OF 2009

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1824) to provide assistance to Best Buddies to support the expansion and development of mentoring programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1824

*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 "Best Buddies Empowerment for People with Intellectual Disabilities Act of 2009".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Best Buddies operates the first national social and recreational program in the United States for people with intellectual disabilities.

(2) Best Buddies is dedicated to helping people with intellectual disabilities become part of mainstream society.

(3) Best Buddies is determined to end social isolation for people with intellectual disabilities by promoting meaningful friendships between them and their non-disabled peers in order to help increase the self-esteem, confidence, and abilities of people with and without intellectual disabilities.

(4) Since 1989, Best Buddies has enhanced the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for 1-to-1 friendships and integrated employment.

(5) Best Buddies is an international organization spanning 1,300 middle school, high school, and college campuses.

(6) Best Buddies implements programs that will positively impact more than 400,000 individuals in 2009 and expects to impact 500,000 people by 2010.

(7) The Best Buddies Middle Schools program matches middle school students with intellectual disabilities with other middle school students and supports 1-to-1 friendships between them.

(8) The Best Buddies High Schools program matches high school students with intellectual disabilities with other high school students and supports 1-to-1 friendships between them.

(9) The Best Buddies Colleges program matches adults with intellectual disabilities with college students and creates 1-to-1 friendships between them.

(10) The Best Buddies e-Buddies program supports e-mail friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities.

(11) The Best Buddies Citizens program pairs adults with intellectual disabilities in 1-to-1 friendships with other individuals in the corporate and civic communities.

(12) The Best Buddies Jobs program promotes the integration of people with intellectual disabilities into the community through supported employment.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purposes of this Act are to—

(1) provide support to Best Buddies to increase participation in and public awareness about Best Buddies programs that serve people with intellectual disabilities;

(2) dispel negative stereotypes about people with intellectual disabilities; and

(3) promote the extraordinary contributions of people with intellectual disabilities.

#### SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE FOR BEST BUDDIES.

(a) EDUCATION ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of Education may award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, Best Buddies to carry out activities to promote the expansion of Best Buddies, including activities to increase the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in social relationships and other aspects of community life, including education and employment, within the United States.

(b) LIMITATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts appropriated to carry out this Act may not be used for direct treatment of diseases, medical conditions, or mental health conditions.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES.—Not more than 5 percent of amounts appropriated to carry out this Act for a fiscal year may be used for administrative activities.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the use of non-Federal funds by Best Buddies.

#### SEC. 4. APPLICATION AND ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible for a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under section 3(a), Best Buddies shall submit an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary of Education may require.

(2) CONTENT.—At a minimum, an application under this subsection shall contain the following:

(A) A description of activities to be carried out under the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement.

(B) Information on specific measurable goals and objectives to be achieved through activities carried out under the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As a condition of receipt of any funds under section 3(a), Best Buddies shall agree to submit an annual report at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary of Education may require.

(2) CONTENT.—At a minimum, each annual report under this subsection shall describe the degree to which progress has been made toward meeting the specific measurable goals and objectives described in the applications submitted under subsection (a).

#### SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Education for grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements under section 3(a), \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2010, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on H.R. 1824 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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