

Service Facility located at 2351 West Atlantic Boulevard in Pompano Beach, Florida, in his honor.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. I just want to note that the lead sponsor of this resolution to name this post office after Elijah Pat Larkins is our friend and great Congressman from Florida, Mr. HASTINGS. I just want to recognize his leadership in bringing this to the floor. I thank him for his energy and his leadership.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1271.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SUPPORTING NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 382) supporting the goals and ideals of National Charter Schools Week, to be held May 3 through May 9, 2009.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 382

Whereas charter schools deliver high-quality education and challenge our students to reach their potential;

Whereas charter schools provide thousands of families with diverse and innovative educational options for their children;

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public entity that are responding to the needs of our communities, families, and students and promoting the principles of quality, choice, and innovation;

Whereas in exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other operations;

Whereas 40 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam have passed laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas approximately 4,700 charter schools are now serving approximately 1,400,000 children;

Whereas over the last 15 years, Congress has provided substantial support to the charter school movement through startup financing assistance and grants for planning, implementation, and dissemination;

Whereas over 365,000 children are on charter school waiting lists nationally;

Whereas charter schools improve their students' achievement and can stimulate improvement in traditional public schools;

Whereas charter schools must meet the student achievement accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in the same manner as traditional public schools, and often set higher and additional individual goals to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas charter schools must continually demonstrate their ongoing success to par-

ents, policymakers, and their communities, some charter schools routinely measure parental satisfaction levels, and all give parents new freedom to choose their public school;

Whereas charter schools nationwide serve a higher percentage of low-income and minority students than the traditional public system;

Whereas charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the United States; and

Whereas the 10th annual National Charter Schools Week, to be held May 3 through May 9, 2009, is an event sponsored by charter schools and grassroots charter school organizations across the United States to recognize the significant impacts, achievements, and innovations of charter schools: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of the 10th annual National Charter Schools Week;

(2) acknowledges and commends charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education and improving and strengthening our public school system; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to demonstrate support for charter schools during this weeklong celebration in communities throughout the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 382 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the designation of May 3–May 9, 2009, as “National Charter Schools Week,” and to recognize the growing charter school movement in our Nation.

The charter school movement is grounded in the concepts of community empowerment and parental involvement. The core idea behind charter schools is simple, yet powerful; seeking to serve the unique needs of all children, local communities, parents and educators come together to design, create, and manage schools that provide a high quality education through innovation, flexibility, autonomy, and a focus on results.

Sometimes people ask me, what is a charter school? A charter school is simply a governance model. It is site-based government, where the decisions of who runs the school and the curriculum are left up to the folks most directly involved with the outcome.

Charter schools date back to 1991, when Minnesota enacted the first char-

ter school legislation. California followed suit in 1992. My home State of Colorado soon joined the growing movement in 1993.

Since their inception, charter schools have grown by leaps and bounds to address the various needs of our Nation's public school students. Diverse charter schools across the country offer innovative instruction. With site-based control and flexibility, charter schools can make timely decisions about how to structure the school day, which curriculum best suits the needs of their students, and what type of staff and staff development will enrich their school community. Additionally, charter schools form important community partnerships with parents and businesses.

This week, charter schools across the country will celebrate the 10th annual National Charter Schools Week. This year's theme, “Promoting Innovation and Excellence,” was inspired by President Obama. It celebrates and encourages charter schools to continue to share their successes as part of the effort to reform public education in our country.

As a former chairman of the Colorado State Board of Education and the founder and superintendent of a system of charter schools that empower new immigrants and English language learners to succeed and live the American Dream, I have seen firsthand how innovation in the education system can achieve remarkable results. I also cofounded a charter school serving youths who are homeless or in unstable living conditions, the Academy of Urban Learning.

I know how the power of educational opportunity can transform lives and serve the most at-risk youth. All of the entrepreneurial creativity around charter schools has been an important part of serving all Americans across our country.

Today, there are almost 4,700 charter schools operating in 40 States that have charter school legislation, as well as the District of Columbia. Their combined force serves over 1.4 million students, and 61 percent of charter schools report waiting lists. These waiting lists of nearly 365,000 students nationally are enough to fill over 1,100 new charter schools. To answer this growing need, between 300 and 400 new public charter schools open each year, and nearly 150,000 new students enroll in charter schools annually.

The growing charter school movement is providing opportunities for many historically underserved communities. Nationally, charter schools disproportionately serve minority and low-income students. In fact, 58 percent of charter school students are minorities and 52 percent qualify for free and reduced lunch. Many charter schools are able to achieve impressive academic results.

In the charter school that I ran, 85 percent of the students are English language learners. In Colorado, 78 percent

of our charters made Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, last year, and 55 percent of charters were rated excellent or high.

In the Second Congressional District of Colorado that I represent, over 14,000 students attend one of our 26 charter schools, and almost 8 out of 10 made Adequate Yearly Progress.

Peak-to-Peak Charter School in Lafayette was named by Newsweek the 40th best high school in the Nation, out of 27,000 public high schools—quite a distinction. It is the only school in Colorado to rank in the top 100. This follows Peak to Peak High School's recognition by U.S. News and World Report as a 2008 Gold Medal School, ranking 47th in the Nation, and one of only two Colorado schools to rank in the top 100.

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Mr. Speaker, once again, I express my heartfelt support for National Charter Schools Week and encourage all social entrepreneurs and activists across the country to include charter schools in their efforts to improve the quality of education for young people and recognize the charter school's movement, a 17-year history of providing a quality public education option based on innovation, flexibility, and community partnerships.

I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 382, congratulating charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education.

This week has been designated as the 10th Annual Charter Schools Week. And it is entirely appropriate that we take a few minutes to recognize the contributions charter schools make every day in the lives of millions of children.

Charter schools are innovative public schools with a simple interest in providing a quality education to children in their community. They explore new educational approaches, such as longer school days or an extended school year, and are free from most rules and regulations governing conventional public schools.

Every day, however, charter schools face the unarguable facts of free market pressures. Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools must demonstrate the success of their students' academic achievements to parents, policymakers, and their communities or face closure. From the time the first charter school opened its door, they have risen to the challenge. For example, charter schools made an important contribution to rebuilding and strengthening Louisiana after Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, particularly in New Orleans.

More often than not, charter schools meet the student achievement and accountability requirements under No Child Left Behind and in the same manner as traditional public schools, but often set higher individual goals to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public. Yet, despite these innovative approaches and promising reports of parental satisfaction, charter schools across the country have struggled through a myriad of obstacles to create such successful schools.

One such obstacle is State caps that limit growth. Twenty-six States and the District of Columbia have some type of limit or cap on charter school growth. Most caps restrict the number of charter schools allowed, while others restrict the number of students that a single school can serve. Caps on charter schools are often the consequence of political tradeoffs and not the result of agreement on sound education policy.

I am pleased that Congress has continued to support the public charter school programs authorized under No Child Left Behind. These programs provide support at key points in the development of charter schools, helping cover the extraordinary costs of launching successful charters, disseminating their successful innovations to other public schools, and providing financial incentives to State governments and private lenders that help enable schools to build and renovate facilities.

These programs have been a tremendous success, helping to create public charter schools all across the country that work to improve academic achievement for low-income students. It is my hope that the charter community will continue to build on its 16-year history of providing a high-quality option in public education that is based on innovation, freedom from red tape, and partnership between parents and educators, an option that is giving new hope to disadvantaged and minority families across the country.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I would like to thank Congressman BISHOP, the sponsor of the legislation who is not able to be here today, for his sponsorship.

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

Mr. POLIS. We need to call upon all the innovation of the American people to help meet the learning needs of all children. Charter schools provide one important avenue to do that. And it is with great pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting National Charter School Week.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today in support of H. Res. 382, "Supporting the goals and ideals of National Charter Schools Week, to be held May 3 through May 9, 2009". I would like to begin by thanking my colleague Representative BISHOP for introducing this resolution in the House, as quality education should be at the top of our priorities list. I urge my colleagues

to support and acknowledge charter schools and their students, parents, teachers, and administrators across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education and improving and strengthening our public school system.

Charter schools deliver high-quality education, challenge our students to reach their potential throughout the United States, and provide thousands of families with diverse and innovative educational options for their children. Charter schools improve their students' achievement and can stimulate improvement in traditional public schools as well. These unique, public schools are authorized by a designated public entity that are responding to the needs of our communities, families, and students and promoting the principles of quality, choice, and innovation.

Charter schools take a revolutionary approach in educating our nation's students. Today, roughly 4,700 charter schools are now serving approximately 1,400,000 children in 40 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico this year. Charter schools continually demonstrate their ongoing success to parents, policymakers, and their communities. Some charter schools even routinely measure parental satisfaction levels while all give parents new freedom to choose their public school.

Charter schools nationwide serve a higher percentage of low-income and minority students than the traditional public system and deliver higher quality education. Chartering is a radical educational innovation that is moving states beyond reforming existing schools to creating something entirely new. Chartering is at the center of a growing movement to challenge traditional notions of what public education means.

Charter schools have demonstrated their commitment to high academic standards, small class sizes, innovative approaches and educational philosophies. Many parents choose charter schools for their small size and associated safety as charter schools serve an average of 250 students.

I am pleased that over the last 15 years, Congress has provided substantial support to the charter school movement through startup financing assistance and grants for planning, implementation, and dissemination. In addition, these schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the United States.

The intention of most charter school legislation is to: increase opportunities for learning and access to quality education for all students, create choice for parents and students within the public school system, provide a system of accountability for results in public education, encourage innovative teaching practices, create new professional opportunities for teachers, encourage community and parent involvement in public education, and leverage improved public education broadly. I believe Charter Schools and the Nations Public Schools can work side by side to educate the Nations Children!

Competition from charter schools has been shown to increase composite test scores in traditional district schools. Furthermore, twice as many registered voters favor charter schools as oppose I, them. The more people learn about charter schools, the more they like

them. Congress must lend its support to these schools and their goals, especially since on average, the funding gap between charter schools and traditional schools is 22 percent, or \$1,800 per pupil. The average charter school ends up with a total funding shortfall of nearly half a million dollars. Yet, twelve studies find that overall gains in charter schools are larger than other public schools; four find charter schools' gains higher in certain significant categories of schools and six find comparable gains to traditional schools. I ask my colleagues for their continued support of Charter schools and urge them to support this resolution.

Mr. POLIS. 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 Colorado (Mr. POLIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 382.

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.

#### SUPPORTING NATIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 338) supporting the goals and ideals of National Community College Month.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

##### H. RES. 338

Whereas there are more than 1,100 community colleges in the United States;

Whereas there are more than 11,000,000 students enrolled in for-credit and not-for-credit programs at community colleges nationwide;

Whereas in 2009, community colleges in the United States will award more than 500,000 associate's degrees and 270,000 associate's certificates;

Whereas community colleges have educated more than 100,000,000 people in the United States since the first community college was founded in 1901;

Whereas community college students are a more diverse group in terms of age, income, race, and ethnicity than students attending traditional colleges and universities, making community colleges essential to providing access to postsecondary education;

Whereas community colleges enrich and enhance communities across the country, socially, culturally, and politically;

Whereas community colleges are affordable and close to home for most people in the United States;

Whereas community colleges allow many older students to take courses part-time while working full-time, creating opportunities that otherwise would not be available;

Whereas community colleges provide job training for workers who have lost their jobs or are hoping to find better jobs, helping millions of people in the United States support themselves and their families;

Whereas community colleges contribute more than \$31,000,000,000 annually to the Nation's economic growth and, by helping to provide a skilled workforce, are critical to

our Nation's continued success and prosperity in the global economy of the 21st century; and

Whereas the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, and more than 1,100 community colleges nationwide recognize April as National Community College Month: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Community College Month; and

(2) congratulates the Nation's community colleges, and their students, governing boards, faculty, and staff, for their contributions to education and workforce development, and for their vital role in ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 338 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 338, which supports the goals and ideals of National Community College Month. This resolution recognizes community colleges all across the country for their enormous contribution to educational outcomes and to workforce development.

Since the first community college, Joliet Junior College in Joliet, Illinois, was founded in 1901, community colleges have educated more than 100 million students in the United States. Community colleges provide a variety of roles for students. It is a place to receive an associate's degree, to begin a bachelor's degree, or for workplace training.

With more than 1,100 community colleges in the United States and over 11 million students currently enrolled in these schools, community colleges provide a high-quality education and resources to students coming from widely diverse backgrounds.

Community colleges enroll a diverse student body. In 2000, the United States Department of Education reported that 31 percent of community college students were minorities, and 61 percent of community college students received Pell Grants and met the income thresholds to qualify.

Community colleges offer a number of advantages for students. The schools maintain affordable tuition at a time of increasing tuition costs. And for a majority of Americans, community colleges are located conveniently close to their homes. The close proximity allows working students to take courses part-time while keeping their employ-

ment. One community college in my district, Colorado Mountain College, has five campuses spread across the mountain areas to help ensure that they have presence close to the places of work and where people live.

More students are enrolled part-time in community colleges than full-time. Additionally, community colleges provide excellent job training to millions of Americans who have lost their jobs or who desire more lucrative opportunities. This is particularly critical in these tough economic times. It costs almost \$2,500 per year to attend a community college, while it costs over \$6,500 a year to attend a 4-year in-state college, on average.

It is vital that community colleges remain affordable to the millions of students who attend every year. Furthermore, community colleges are at the forefront of innovation. With more than \$100 billion included in the economic stimulus package for green job opportunities, community colleges are prepared to provide the type of training necessary to implement our new green investment and help make sure that the renewable energy sector is a strong growing sector with a workforce that is ready to take on the positions.

This year, community colleges in our country will award more than 500,000 associate degrees and 270 associate certificates. Countless other students in community colleges will continue their education and transfer to 4-year colleges and universities.

Community colleges help spur the economy and provide a skilled workforce to contribute more than \$31 billion to the Nation's economy each year. In Colorado's Second Congressional District that I have the honor to represent, Front Range Community College and the Colorado Mountain College are effectively addressing the needs of both students and families and employers, and represent an essential component for ongoing economic development as well as our community pride.

The American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of Community College Trustees, and community colleges across the country support this bill and this month. I urge my colleagues to support the bill as well and would like to thank Representative LATHAM for bringing this resolution forward, for community colleges are instrumental to our Nation's economy.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 338, supporting the goals and ideals of National Community College Month, and congratulating the community colleges for their role in educating the Nation.

As a co-chairman of the Congressional Community College Caucus and a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, I have witnessed the