

In 1998, 42,337 students participated in this nationwide art contest. The first place national winner received a \$2,500 scholarship, and his winning design appeared in the Federal Junior Duck Stamp for that year. This legislation does not make any major changes to the underlying law. It simply extends the authorization of appropriations, which is \$250,000 for an additional 5 years. By doing so the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to license and market junior duck stamps and use stamp proceeds to support conservation, education and hopefully to expand the junior duck stamp design competition to hundreds of additional students.

At our full committee markup the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) offered an amendment to expand the coverage of this program to include American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. I strongly support his amendment and hope that thousands of additional students from places like Tom's River to Pago Pago will have an opportunity to win this art contest in the future.

I urge an aye vote.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased that this legislation has now been brought before the floor for consideration, and I certainly want to commend my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans, for his leadership and for bringing this legislation for the Members' consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the Junior Duck Stamp Program has matured over a relatively short period of time into a valued conservation and education program that is enjoyed by thousands of schoolchildren nationwide. Merging conservation education with the arts has proven to be an effective strategy to increase knowledge and appreciation of migratory bird and their habitat within our schools. The Junior Duck Stamp Program has enhanced public awareness of the critical need to protect and preserve our Nation's diverse waterfowl and their essential wetland habitats. Moreover, this innovative program has helped promote a conservation ethic among America's young people which will be absolutely critical to ensure healthy wildlife and a healthy environment in the future.

Mr. Speaker, an added benefit to the Junior Duck Stamp Program has been that it has also extended appreciation for wildlife and wetlands far beyond the classroom to the public at large through literally hundreds of annual art contests and exhibitions of art

work at State fairs, wildlife refuges, museums and educational conferences. From the southern bayous of Louisiana to the prairie potholes of North Dakota to the tidal marshes along the Pacific Coast such public exposure has attracted and informed thousands of people annually who might otherwise remain unenlightened about the need to protect and conserve the wildlife and wetlands we enjoy today.

Mr. Speaker, I do commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) for his introduction of this legislation. I especially appreciate his support and again the support of our chairman the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) in working with us to expand the eligibility of this program to now include the insular areas as well as the District of Columbia.

This is a noncontroversial bill that deserves the support of this House, and I do strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Before I yield back the balance of my time I would like to just make note that our good friend is back in the reader's chair. Mr. Paul Hayes is back with us today for the first time, and I know that all of my colleagues will want to join with me saying how pleased we are to have him back and that he has recovered from a little bump that he had awhile back, and we are delighted that he is with us today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ), the sponsor and the author of this legislation.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), my good friend the chairman of the subcommittee, and the ranking member of the committee for their leadership, for being able to pass this in the subcommittee, bringing it to the full committee and onto the floor, and today I rise in support of H.R. 2496, the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act. This is a noncontroversial program that increases the capacity for schools, States and other institutions to conduct wildlife conservation and education programs.

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I had the honor of sponsoring the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act back in the 103rd Congress when I was a subcommittee chairman of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. The purpose of the program, then and now, is to provide elementary and secondary school students with educational opportunities in the conservation and management of migratory birds. The program supplements our schools by

offering an educational component to conduct conservation programs.

As economic and population growth continues and increasingly affects our environment and natural resources, we have to work harder to find ways to preserve both our world and our standard of living.

Solutions to this challenge, like any challenge, begin with knowledge and understanding, and that begins with education. This is why so many people have embraced educational methods, such as the Junior Duck Stamp Program. This program teaches grade school students appreciation for environmental science and habitat conservation, while rewarding their hard work and effort with support for continuing education.

This is a great tool to help educate students who have not had the opportunity many of us have had to spend time with nature and to develop appreciation of our resources and their management.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to tell my friends that over 400,000 students are involved in this program; and, again, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member, and I ask my friends to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take one moment to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) for his great effort in bringing this bill to the floor and for making it possible for us to reauthorize this program. It is certainly, as I said before, a very worthwhile program, and I congratulate the gentleman from Texas for his forethought in bringing it to us.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2496, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

RONGELAP RESETTLEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill