

wife, Karen, on her retirement from the Columbia Public School system. Karen began teaching in 1961 in a rural, one room school house called East Center School in Kirksville, Missouri. She had the tremendous responsibility for teaching all grades, first through twelve, at East Center School.

In 1967, Karen began teaching within the Columbia Public School District, and for the last twenty years she has taught second grade elementary school at Rock Bridge Elementary School in Columbia, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, as I learned of Karen's dedication to improve education in Missouri's Ninth District, I felt it befitting that I recognize her special efforts, and in doing so, I honor all of those like her who have dedicated their professional lives to help enhance the education of their students.

Not surprisingly, I do not stand alone in placing this honor. On May 22nd, the Missouri Teachers Association and more than 300 people—family, friends, colleagues and former students—will help celebrate Karen's educational efforts at Rock Bridge Elementary School during a reception to commemorate her retirement after twenty years of teaching in the Columbia Public School system.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close with Mr. Taylor's words about his wife. He wrote that the most important lesson Karen stressed to her students was the power of knowledge through reading. Every day she would read to her students. It was her goal throughout her thirty year teaching career to encourage every student to become believers in the importance of reading. Thank-you Karen, for your devotion to your students and for providing excellent education for many generations of children. I stand here today to honor you and all those who share your commitment towards excellence in education. May we all celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week with those who have given us the priceless gift of education.

HOME SCHOOLING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week. There have been a number of speeches on this floor. I have, in fact, come to this microphone before to extol the virtues of the teachers of America, the public school, the private school teachers who work so hard and contribute so much to the well-being of the children of this Nation.

Today, however, Mr. Speaker, I want to rise in recognition of a particular part of that educational establishment that is not often recognized. And it was brought to my attention again, although I have long been aware of its existence, but it was brought to my attention again by a card I received in the mail not too long ago.

Here it is, a little handwritten, hand-drawn and colored-in star here. It says, "thank you, thank you, thank you." It

goes all the way around, "thank you very much." It is from a young man named Jerrod Padinama. It says:

Dear Mr. Tancredo, thank you for giving us the privilege of home schooling. My home school co-op is studying the Constitution, and it is fun. I am 9 years old. I am in the third grade. I am praying for you.

Jerrod Padinama.

Well, Jerrod, thank you for your prayers. I sincerely appreciate them.

But I tell my colleagues, this is really a very touching little card I received, and I have been holding on to it because I wanted to reference it in a way. The neat part is that this young man would take the time to send me this little card and draw it in. But in a way it is a sad commentary because he has to tell me "thank you" for letting me be home schooled.

And he does know intuitively, I suppose, and certainly his parents are well aware of the fact that often there are attempts in this body and certainly in legislatures all over the country and States all over the Nation to actually restrict the ability of parents to actually teach their children at home. And they have to say "thank you" to us for letting them have a right that, frankly, is as natural as breathing, a right of a parent to teach their child at home.

This is as if this is a strange anomaly, this is something weird that we do in this country that they have to be allowed to do by the legislature. And that is the only kind of negative part of this thing I see. Because, otherwise, it is a very beautiful thing.

I just wanted to point out that home schooling certainly preceded any other kind of schooling we had in the United States of America; and it did very, very well, and it continues to do very, very well. And it is an expanding phenomena. Many, many people are participating in this. It is growing astronomically, almost beyond, really, ways to describe it.

I find in my own State of Colorado that there are thousands and thousands of parents who are taking on the responsibility of teaching their children at home.

Mr. Speaker, recently I received a copy of an article that was written by a gentleman by the name of Steven Archer, and he details a study that was just done by Larry Rudner, who is the leading statistician at the University of Maryland. He studied home schoolers, and what it comes down to is this.

He said,

Regarding the results of this research, Rudner said, the bottom line of the study is that the 20,000 home-school students I studied were doing extremely well in terms of their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

In fact, the median test scores for home-schooled children who participated in this study were in the 75th and 85th percentile range. This is exceptional compared to the national average which, by definition, is the 50th percentile based on the performance of

children in the public schools, which, Rudner explained, deviates little from that value. Home schoolers also did significantly better than their private school counterparts based on Catholic school norms where the median scaled scores were in the 65th to 75th percentile range.

According to Rudner, major findings in the study include the following:

Almost one-quarter of home-school students are enrolled one or more grades above their age-level peers in public and private schools.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, but I would just say that it verifies what we already know about home schooling and that is that it works, it works in an academic sense, it works in a social sense. And I want to take the opportunity here today to thank Jerrod for his card, to thank Jerrod's parents for giving him the opportunity to be home schooled, and to thank all those thousands and thousands, perhaps millions, of parents around the country who are doing the same for their children.

KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. JOHN SHADEGG) who has, I think, a good health care proposal and is one of our leaders in Congress on health care issues.

PATIENTS' HEALTH CARE CHOICE ACT

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I presume he is going to discuss with us a little bit later some issues about national defense, and I will await hearing his topic and hearing his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, today, on behalf of myself and 13 other colleagues, I have introduced the Patients' Health Care Choice Act, H.R. 1687. We are embroiled in a great debate about health care reform in this Nation, and it is appropriate that we should be embroiled in that debate, and there is a great deal of discussion about how we ensure that Americans get quality health care. But, as a part of that discussion, we have left out a big piece of the debate.

We have talked a lot on this floor about patient protection legislation. I want to make it very clear. I do think that we need HMO reform. I do believe that we need to do something to ensure that Americans get the health care that they purchase and that they pay for and that they deserve.

But I want to make it equally clear that the entire problem cannot be solved by a mega-regulatory piece of legislation which puts a Band-Aid on the current problems in health care, which addresses the short-term problems we have and ignores the long-term problems with our health care