WELCOMING THE INLAND EMPIRE MARIACHI YOUTH GROUP TO WASHINGTON

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate Cinco de Mayo. It is a time to celebrate the tremendous courage and the bravery of Mexican Americans throughout our history.

I wish to take this opportunity to invite many of the individuals today as we begin to celebrate Cinco de Mayo to a festivity that will be going on in this area. I currently have invited 28 students from the Inland Empire Mariachi Youth Education Foundation to perform Wednesday at the upper Senate park here in the Capitol. This is an opportunity to learn about cultural traditions and music and heritage. It is an opportunity for many of the individuals to see kids between the ages of 6 to 17 that will be performing here in Washington. For these kids, this is the first time that they have come to Washington, D.C., the first time that they have flown. It is an opportunity to share in part of that heritage, part of the culture, part of the tradition, part of the enrichment, part of that motivation.

I encourage my colleagues that are out there, Members who have an opportunity to attend, please come and watch these kids perform as we begin to celebrate Cinco de Mayo.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules but not before 6:00 p.m. today.

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING FEDERAL WORKFORCE FOR SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESSING YEAR 2000 COMPUTER CHALLENGE

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 300) recognizing and commending our Nation's Federal workforce for successfully preparing our Nation to withstand any catastrophic year 2000 computer problem disruptions.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 300

Whereas the Year 2000 computer problem (Y2K) created the potential of a catastrophic international problem, causing some computer systems and other electronic devices to erroneously misinterpret the ''00'' in the year as 1900, rather than 2000;

Whereas the American people expected and deserved reliable service from their Federal Government to ensure that critical Federal functions dependent on electronic systems would be performed accurately and in a timely manner;

Whereas, after the initial series of congressional Y2K hearings in the spring of 1996, it became clear that unless appropriate action was taken, the Y2K problem could cause severe consequences on the successful operation of Federal systems;

Whereas Federal agencies and their employees subsequently made significant progress in meeting the challenges posed by the Y2K computer problem;

Whereas minimizing the Y2K problem required a major technological and managerial effort and it was critical that the Federal workforce rise to address this challenge;

Whereas the continued uninterrupted operation of our Nation's Federal systems was due to the comprehensive efforts made by those dedicated, talented, and committed Federal workers who served ably in the front lines of this epic battle in vanquishing the millennium bug;

Whereas the Federal workforce identified and worked to resolve the Y2K problem, giving countless hours and their holidays to assure the American people that major Y2K breakdowns in key infrastructures were unlikely;

Whereas the level of Y2K effort was justified and the threat was very real, and the risks and consequences of inaction were too dire to justify a lesser Federal effort;

Whereas preparation for Y2K led to an unprecedented level of effort that not only improved system inventories and network reliability, but has also accelerated electronic business and international cooperation;

Whereas the efforts of the Federal workforce to solve the Y2K problem provided an important example of the Government's ability to respond to future difficult technological and management challenges; and

Whereas the level of Y2K success in the United States, which has over one-fourth of the world's computer assets and is the most technologically dependent nation in the world, was quite remarkable, and was led by our Federal efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress recognizes and commends the meritorious service of our Nation's Federal workforce, and all those who assisted in the efforts to successfully address the Year 2000 computer challenge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 300, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 300 recognizes and commends the meritorious service of our Nation's Federal workforce and all those who assisted in the effort to successfully address the Year 2000 computer challenge. Often called Y2K or the Millennium Bug, this was the greatest technological and management challenge confronting this Nation since the Second World War period.

The problem, which involved a programming decision made decades ago, was obviously predictable. Yet management at only one of the 24 largest Federal agencies had the foresight to begin an agency-wide program to prepare its computers to handle the date change in the late 1980s.

That agency, the Social Security Administration, was also the first to complete the work.

As is now well known, when designing computer programs in the 1960s and 1970s, the programmers began using two digits rather than four to indicate the year. In other words, instead of 1967, it was 67. This shortcut enabled programmers to conserve the valuable computer memory of those huge mainframe operations. With the approaching millennium, however, the concern was that these computer systems would misread the year 2000 as simply zero/zero and the computer would think 1900.

This confusion did, in fact, surface in anecdotal examples. In one State, new car buyers found themselves the proud owners of horseless carriages when State computers registered their vehicles as vintage 1900 rather than 2000. In another case, a 104-year-old woman was requested to register for kindergarten when a school district computer miscalculated the date of her birth by 100 years.

None of the problems were irreparable, thanks to an unprecedented nationwide effort to meet the challenge.

□ 1415

However, getting that effort started to take a great deal of work.

Four years ago, the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology, which I chair, surveyed the Cabinet Secretaries in a questionnaire by the ranking Democratic Member, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), and myself, and the heads of the 24 largest Federal departments and agencies. Some of these leaders had not even heard of the problem.

The subcommittee began a concerted effort to urge government agencies to begin fixing their computer systems through its ongoing hearings, 44 in all, and 10 report cards, which graded each department on its Year 2000 progress.

Recognizing the potentially devastating effect of this computer problem, Congress accelerated its oversight