

local levels to ensure that charter public schools are of high quality and are truly accountable to the public;

Whereas 7 of 10 charter schools report having a waiting list;

Whereas students in charter schools nationwide have similar demographic characteristics as students in all public schools;

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

Whereas charter schools are laboratories of reform and serve as models of how to educate children as effectively as possible: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—*

(1) acknowledges and commends the charter school movement for its contribution to improving our Nation's public school system;

(2) designates the week beginning on April 30, 2000, and ending on May 6, 2000, as "National Charter Schools Week"; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the week by conducting appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to demonstrate support for charter schools in communities throughout the Nation.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 109—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE ONGOING PERSECUTION OF 13 MEMBERS OF IRAN'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, and Mr. DODD) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 109

Whereas on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Passover 1999, 13 Jews, including community and religious leaders in the cities of Shiraz and Isfahan, were arrested by the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and accused of spying for the United States and Israel;

Whereas three of 13 defendants were tried in the first week in May 2000, in trials that were closed to all independent journalists, outside media, international observers, and family members;

Whereas no evidence was brought forth at these trials other than taped "confessions", and no formal charges have yet been filed;

Whereas Jews in Iran are prohibited from holding any positions that would give them access to state secrets;

Whereas the judge in the case also serves as prosecutor, chief investigator, and arbiter of punishment;

Whereas United States Secretary of State Albright has identified the case of the 13 Jews in Shiraz as "one of the barometers of United States-Iran relations";

Whereas countless nations and leading international human rights organizations have expressed their concern for the 13 Iranian Jews and especially their human rights under the rule of law;

Whereas President Mohammad Khatami was elected on a platform of moderation and reform;

Whereas the United States has recently made goodwill overtures toward Iran, including lifting restrictions on the import of Ira-

nian foodstuffs and crafts, promising steps toward the return of assets frozen since 1979, and easing travel restrictions, all in an attempt to improve relations between the two countries;

Whereas the World Bank is currently considering two Iranian projects, valued at more than \$130,000,000, which have been on hold since 1993; and

Whereas Iran must show signs of respecting fundamental human rights as a prerequisite for improving its relationship with the United States and becoming a member in good standing of the world community: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the President should—*

(1) condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the arrest of the 13 Iranian Jews and the unfair procedures employed against them leading up to, and during, their trials, and demand their immediate release; and

(2) make it clear that—

(A) Iran's treatment of the Jews on trial is a benchmark for determining the nature of current and future United States-Iran relations, and that concessions already made may be rescinded in light of Iran's conduct of these cases; and

(B) the outcome of these cases will help determine Iran's standing in the community of nations, and its eligibility for loans and other financial assistance from international financial institutions.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 110—CONGRATULATING THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REESTABLISHMENT OF ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM THE RULE OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HELMS, Mr. ROBB, and Mr. ABRAHAM) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 110

Whereas the United States had never recognized the forcible incorporation of the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the former Soviet Union;

Whereas the declaration on May 4, 1990, of the reestablishment of full sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Latvia furthered the disintegration of the former Soviet Union;

Whereas Latvia since then has successfully built democracy, passed legislation on human and minority rights that conform to European and international norms, ensured the rule of law, developed a free market economy, and consistently pursued a course of integration into the community of free and democratic nations by seeking membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and

Whereas Latvia, as a result of the progress of its political and economic reforms, has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution toward the maintenance of international peace and stability by, among other actions, its participation in NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress hereby—*

(1) congratulates Latvia on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the reestablishment

of its independence and the role it played in the disintegration of the former Soviet Union; and

(2) commends Latvia for its success in implementing political and economic reforms, which may further speed the process of that country's integration into European and Western institutions.

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today marks the 10th anniversary of the declaration of independence of Latvia from the domination of the Soviet Union. Latvia's resolution on May 4th, 1990 followed closely after Lithuania's declaration in March. These courageous Baltic countries led the way to throw off the yoke of Soviet Communist imperialism, resulting in the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The courage of the peaceful crowd that surrounded the parliament building in Riga to prevent a Soviet attack should be remembered and commended. The Latvians showed the power of peaceful resistance and risked their lives doing so.

Latvia has now become a vibrant democracy. It has established a free-market economy and the rule of law. Latvia wants to be fully integrated into Europe, and is seeking membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

This year we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of the refusal of the United States to recognize Soviet domination of the Baltic states. The logic then and the logic now is that the United States will only recognize free and independent Baltic states. What we celebrate this year is what we must help preserve next year and the year after that. We must carry on that principle today by being sure that Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are admitted into NATO as an unequivocal statement that we will never tolerate domination of the Baltic states again.

I support admitting the Baltic states into NATO and I hope my colleagues here in the Senate will support their entry also in the next round of NATO expansion.

That debate we will save for another day, but I am sure all my colleagues can agree on the importance of the Baltic states' contribution to the freedom and independence of the former Soviet Republics and will join me in congratulating Latvia in celebrating 10 years of that precious freedom and independence.●

SENATE RESOLUTION 303—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE TREATMENT BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION OF ANDREI BABITSKY, A RUSSIAN JOURNALIST WORKING FOR RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAMS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations: