

CONGRATULATING NATIONAL
ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 222) congratulating the National Assessment Governing Board on its 20th Anniversary in measuring student academic achievement.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution. The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 222

Whereas the National Assessment Governing Board (the Governing Board) is an independent, bipartisan board created by Congress in 1988 to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as “The Nation’s Report Card”;

Whereas the Governing Board is made up of 26 members, including Governors, State legislators, local and State school officials, educators, researchers, business representatives, and members of the general public;

Whereas when Congress established the Governing Board to oversee The Nation’s Report Card, it ensured that the NAEP would be conducted independently and free from inappropriate influences and special interests;

Whereas in overseeing The Nation’s Report Card, the Governing Board identifies subjects to be assessed, determines the content and achievement levels for each assessment, and approves all assessment questions;

Whereas The Nation’s Report Card is conducted as a representative sample and currently includes National NAEP assessments (which assess the performance of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in reading, mathematics, writing, science, U.S. history, geography, and other subjects), State-by-

State assessments (which are administered to students in grades 4 and 8 to assess performance in reading, mathematics, writing, and science), Trial Urban District assessments (which report on the achievement of 4th and 8th grade students in 18 urban school districts that participate in reading, mathematics, writing and science assessments), and long-term trend assessments (which are administered nationally every 4 years to students ages 9, 13, and 17 to assess performance in reading and mathematics);

Whereas State participation in NAEP assessments is voluntary with the exception of reading and mathematics assessments, which States are required to administer to public school students in grades 4 and 8 every 2 years in an effort to measure student performance in reading and mathematics;

Whereas all students who participate in NAEP do so on a voluntary basis and NAEP is forbidden by law to maintain or report information on individual students or schools;

Whereas the Governing Board works to inform the public about The Nation’s Report Card by communicating its results to a wide range of Americans, including educators, the media, and elected officials and policymakers at the National, State, and local levels; and

Whereas the Governing Board has served an important role in evaluating the condition and progress of American education for 20 years:

Now, therefore, be it *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the National Assessment Governing Board on its 20th anniversary in measuring student academic achievement; and

(2) recognizes past and present members of

the National Assessment Governing Board for their service to the Nation in improving elementary and secondary education.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 222, which recognizes the 20th anniversary of the National Assessment Governing Board. The National Assessment Governing Board is a bipartisan, independent Federal board that sets policy for the National Assessment of Education Progress, or NAEP. NAEP assessments are often referred to as the Nation's report card because these tests are the principal source of data on student achievement nationwide.

NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics. The governing board created by Congress in 1988 is made up of governors, State legislators, State and school officials, educators and researchers, all of whom oversee NAEP, identify subjects to be tested and govern reporting of test results. When Congress established the governing board, we instructed that it be bipartisan and that it be independent, and it has lived up to these expectations and the original vision. The NAEP assessment has been invaluable in providing information on the achievements of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in reading, mathematics, writing, science, U.S. history, geography

and other subjects.

The NAEP State-by-State assessments, which are administered to students in grades 4 and 8 in reading, mathematics, writing and science, have also been helpful in charting what our students know and providing information for a path forward based on real results.

This year, Mr. Speaker, the governing board commemorates 20 years of learning and assessment. To mark this anniversary, the governing board plans to examine the impact of NAEP over the past two decades and look ahead to see how the assessment can continue to play a vital role in measuring student achievement in the future.

In order to highlight these priorities, the board will host a conference to discuss the achievement gap in college and work preparedness with education and policy experts. The governing board has served an important role in evaluating the condition and progress of American education for 20 years. I thank the governing board for its outstanding service to the Nation in improving elementary and secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, once again I express my support for the National Assessment Governing Board, and I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing their 20th anniversary. I also want to thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for bringing this bill to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support

of House Resolution 222, which congratulates the National Assessment Governing Board on its 20th anniversary in measuring student academic achievement. Over the last two decades, the governing board, better known as NAGB, has served an important role in evaluating the condition and progress of the American public education system.

The National Assessment Governing Board was created by Congress in 1988 to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, which is commonly known as the Nation's report card. It was established as an independent, bipartisan board so that the Nation's assessment system will be conducted independently and free from inappropriate influences and special interests.

The governing board is currently made up of 26 members, including governors, State legislators, local and State school officials, educators, researchers, business representatives and members of the general public. In overseeing the Nation's report card, the governing board identifies subjects to be assessed, determines the content and achievement levels for each assessment, and approves all the assessment questions.

It also works to inform the public about the Nation's report card by communicating results to a wide range of Americans, including elected officials and policymakers at the national, State and local levels, educators and the media.

Because of this important work, the Nation's report card is one of the most widely respected assessment tools in the country. Federal, State and local officials rely on NAGB and NAEP to

get an accurate picture of the academic achievement levels of the Nation's students.

In 2002, Congress passed the Education Sciences Reform Act, which reauthorized the activities of the governing board and largely maintained its independent and bipartisan nature.

While requiring States to take part every 2 years in its reading and mathematics assessments in grades 4 and 8 in an effort to measure student performance, the bill continues the long-standing practice that State participation in NAEP assessments are voluntary.

All student who participate in NAEP do so on a voluntary basis, and NAEP is forbidden by law to maintain a report or report information on individual students or schools. House Resolution 222 congratulates the National Assessment Governing Board on its 20th anniversary in measuring student academic achievement and recognizes the past and present members of the governing board for their service to the Nation in improving elementary and secondary education.

I want to thank my colleague from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for introducing this resolution. Mr. CASTLE served on the governing board when he was Governor of "The First State," and I want to thank him for his service and for his strong support for ensuring that students have access to a high-quality education in this country. I am pleased to rise in support of this important resolution and ask all of my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to

the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

Mr. CASTLE. I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for yielding, and I would like to thank both of the speakers, Ms. WOOLSEY and the gentleman from Kentucky, for rationally explaining a program not many people understand. Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity and the pleasure of serving on NAGB, the National Assessment Governing Board, for several years when I was Governor of Delaware, and it was not easy work, by the way. I would call it a pleasure, but it involves a lot of difficult meetings, discussion of testing or whatever it may be. But the bottom line is that they do put together the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the NAEP tests, which are given universally as far as the States are concerned, in our country, and are as good a measuring device as we have to the progress of education from year to year. Some of this is quite voluntary, but all States participate in it in grades 4, 8 through 12, particularly in the reading and the math areas, and we can determine that we have done somewhat better, perhaps a lot better from year to year, as we look at these tests.

I can tell you that those 26 people, who change from time to time and come from a variety of different backgrounds, are all very dedicated to the concept of making this very apolitical, of making it so that it's a fair standard in tests for all those who are going to take it, and making sure that all the reporting requirements are met in a proper way. This goes through the Secretary

of Education and is reported by them, and I think they would do a wonderful job with this. This is, to me, a very important measuring stick. While congratulatory resolutions may not be the most important thing we do in the Congress of the United States, I think recognizing an entity such as this, which is independent of us and independent of the White House, for all that matters, and deals with preparing this kind of reporting, this kind of background for the testing, is a very significant thing to do to make sure that they are being honored for an achievement which I think has been very helpful in terms of dealing with education.

All of us deal with education policy on a regular basis. We know how important it is to understand that what we are doing is perhaps a step, a small step or a large step in the right direction, and I think that the NAEP tests do that. For that reason I would hope that we could all support this resolution.

Again, I thank those who spoke on the floor for their very thorough and excellent explanations of what NAGB does and what NAEP is all about.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I reserve my time for closing remarks.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 222, recognizing the 20th anniversary of the National Assessment Governing Board, and I yield back the remainder of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 222.