

(January 21, 2009) House Unanimously Passes Lipinski Resolution Honoring Catholic Schools

Legislation Honors Catholic Schools Week and Celebrates the Contributions of Catholic Schools

[Washington, D.C.] In one of the first actions of the 111th Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously approved H.Res. 39, a resolution introduced by Representative Dan Lipinski (IL-03) that honors the contributions of Catholic Schools to America. Rep. Lipinski introduced the resolution to coincide with Catholic Schools Week, an annual event celebrating Catholic schools and all their teachers, administrators, students, and parents. This year, Catholic Schools Week will be held the week of January 25th through the 31st.

"Catholic schools provide a quality, well-rounded education that builds a strong moral, spiritual, and intellectual foundation for students all over the country" said Lipinski. "As a product of Catholic education in the Chicago Archdiocese, at St. Symphorosa and at St. Ignatius, I have first-hand knowledge of the essential role that Catholic schools play in America."

Catholic Schools Week was established in 1974 and celebrates Catholic schools and their efforts to provide students with a strong academic, moral, and service-oriented education. During this week, dioceses and schools work to build community awareness and encourage parents to take advantage of the benefits that Catholic education has to offer. This year's theme is "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service," highlighting Catholic schools' emphasis on community service.

"It is especially fitting that this year's theme focuses on service," stated Lipinski. "In yesterday's inaugural address, President Obama called for a renewed nationwide commitment to service and had previously urged middle and high school students to commit to 50 hours of community service each year."

"America relies on everyone pitching in to serve their neighbors, and America's Catholic schools have always taught the intrinsic value of service to others," continued Lipinski. "Nearly 95 percent of Catholic schools have a service program and the average student completes approximately 80 hours of public service. My strong desire to serve was fostered not only at home, but also in Catholic schools."

Throughout the Chicago area, more than 98,000 students are enrolled in the 256 Catholic elementary and high schools. In the 3rd District of Illinois alone, there are seven Catholic high schools and approximately 50 grammar schools. Catholic Schools save taxpayers an estimated \$1 billion every year in Chicagoland alone and nearly \$20 billion nationwide by lessening the burden on public schools. At the same time, nationwide Catholic high school graduation rates are exceptional at 99%, with 97% of graduates going on to college or technical schools in order to further their education and training.