

this resolution before us today and commend all of the cosponsors, Mr. DAVIS and others.

Mr. Speaker, some people might think this is an insignificant resolution. I think there is probably very little that we could talk about today that would be more important than fatherhood and the important role it plays in the life of this Nation. This was brought home to me most vividly in January 1981 when I became judge of the criminal court in Knox County, Tennessee, trying felony criminal cases, the murders, rapes, armed robberies, the most serious cases. I was told that first day by Gary Tullock, the chief probation counselor for east Tennessee, 16 counties in east Tennessee, that 98 percent of the defendants in felony cases came from father-absent households. I'm not sure that it is quite that high, but I know it's well over 90 percent. It's the entire crime problem.

I hasten to say that I know many good people have come from father-absent households, but I also know that children cannot raise themselves. And because 96 or 97 percent of the people plead guilty in criminal cases and then apply for probation, I went through over 10,000 cases in the 7½ years that I served as judge. I cannot tell you how many times I read over and over and over and over again: "Defendant's father left home to get pack of cigarettes and never came back." "Defendant's father left home when defendant was 2 and never returned."

And so I can say this, that father-absent households not only are the root of our crime problem, all the things like drugs and alcohol and all of that come secondary. I know there are exceptions to everything that you say, but we need to get into the minds of our young people and teach them how important it is that fathers don't desert their children as so many millions of fathers have unfortunately over the years and have gone out of the lives of their children much to the detriment of those young people and to the detriment of this Nation.

I support this resolution and I commend all of those who have brought this to the floor today.

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Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE).

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in strong support of H. Res. 474, recognizing the immeasurable contributions of fathers in the healthy development of children, supporting responsible fatherhood, and encouraging greater involvement of fathers in the lives of our children, especially on this coming Father's Day.

I want to thank Chairman GEORGE MILLER, Ranking Member MCKEON, and all of the members on the Education and Labor Committee. And I would like to thank Mr. HARE for supporting this

resolution and helping to bring it to the floor this week. I also want to thank the staff of the National Fatherhood Initiative for their assistance with this resolution and their tireless efforts on a year-around basis to promote responsible fatherhood across this great Nation.

Father's Day was first conceived in 1909 by Sonora Dodd in Spokane, Washington. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson issued a Presidential proclamation designating the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. And in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a public law making that public designation permanent.

Here in Congress I am grateful we have an opportunity to have a task force on fatherhood promotion that also works on a year-round basis with the National Fatherhood Initiative and with many Members of Congress on a bipartisan basis to support the positive initiatives of involving fathers in their children's lives and honoring those fathers on a national basis who have been upheld for making a difference in children's lives everywhere.

This is a task force that Congressman JOE PITTS and I started 11 years ago when we first came to Congress, and I am thrilled that over the last decade and past year that it has gone well, and we have an opportunity each year to come to the floor with a resolution such as this one.

This Sunday, June 17, Americans will celebrate Father's Day once again. We use this day to honor the contributions made by the estimated 64.3 million fathers in the United States. We also use this day to encourage all fathers to reflect on the responsibility fathering a child requires and the importance of their involvement in the lives of their children.

With two sons of my own, Joshua and Stephen, who have been here often on this floor, I know firsthand the rewards and responsibilities of being a father; and I am grateful, indeed, to my own father, Dr. Douglas McIntyre, back home in Lumberton, North Carolina, for his impact upon my life.

It is only appropriate that Father's Day be a tribute, that we here in the U.S. House of Representatives pass this resolution in recognition of the contributions of fathers everywhere. I strongly encourage all of my colleagues to support this.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, in honor of my own father, Lawrence Davis, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to briefly close by saying something about my own father.

As the gentleman from Tennessee was talking about his dad, I have three sisters, and I can remember my dad having to work three jobs to make ends meet for our family. I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for him. I miss him terribly. He has been gone a number of years, but today, as we honor fathers, I remember him and thank him.

One thing my dad did every night when we had dinner, when he could make it, was to tell a joke to my three sisters and myself. He said this world is such a serious place to live in, every now and then you need to laugh and smile. I remember that each and every day. I hope my father gave me sense of humor that sometimes people find a little annoying.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 474. As we approach Father's Day weekend, it is appropriate for us to recognize the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. Children who live with their fathers do better in school, are less likely to use drugs or engage in other criminal behavior, and are less likely to experience health, emotional, or behavioral problems. In so many ways, involved fathers provide needed support for their children and serve as role models as they develop.

Unfortunately, too many children today do not live with or even frequently see their fathers. This has forced millions of young mothers across the Nation to single-handedly raise their children, struggling to provide them with the love and support needed to succeed in today's world. It is a sad reality that for millions of children, their mother has to play the role of both mom and dad, a task that is not only difficult for the mother but which despite her efforts far too often results in that child living in poverty, among other challenges.

To help address this situation, the 1996 welfare reform law included promoting marriage and family formation and the maintenance of two-parent families as key purposes of welfare programs.

Under the direction of the Ways and Means Committee on which I serve, legislation reauthorizing the 1996 welfare reform law in the last Congress included specific funding for healthy marriage and fatherhood grant programs to improve the well-being of children. These fatherhood grants were designed to promote responsible fatherhood by funding projects developed by public, private, and often faith-based groups to help fathers establish positive relationships with their children and the children's mothers, improve job skills, increase child support payments, and promote marriage among parents. Activities can include counseling, mentoring, providing information about the benefits of marriage and two-parent involvement for children and the prevention of domestic violence and child abuse, financial planning seminars, and education on good parenting practices.

Last October, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced \$119 million in awards to 225 grantees for promotion of healthy marriages and responsible fatherhood. These grants are designed to make a difference in the lives of children, fathers, and families by supporting groups already at work trying to help men become better fathers.

As we honor our own fathers this week, we should also thank those who are working every day to help more men become better fathers. The last Congress took concrete steps to support them. In the congressional district I represent, a recent fatherhood event took place that is described in the June 11 Catholic News Service article, provided below. As efforts such as this and those supported by the recent Federal grants take hold, we will be watching for evidence that more children are