

**Endorsement of NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK**  
**By Senator Chris Dodd before the Senate**  
**October 19, 2009**

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 314, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.  
The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 314) designating the week beginning October 18, 2009, as ``National Character Counts Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today Senator **Grassley** and I have submitted a resolution designating the third week of October as National Character Counts Week. In the past, my good friend Senator Domenici and I worked together on the issue of character education, and I am pleased to be joined by my colleague Senator **Grassley** in continuing to designate a special week to this cause. I hope that with this resolution we may highlight the importance of character building activities in schools not only this week but all year long.

Since 1994, when the Partnerships in Character Education Pilot Project was first established, I have worked to commemorate National Character Counts Week. Character Counts was founded on a simple notion: our core ethical values aren't just important to us as individuals--they form the very foundation of democratic society. We know that in order to face our challenges as communities and as a Nation, we need our children to be both well-educated and trained--and that begins with instilling character in our children.

Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship--these are the six pillars of character. Character education provides students a context within which to learn those values and integrate them into our daily lives. Indeed, if we view education simply as the imparting of knowledge to our children, then we not only miss an opportunity, but as also jeopardize our future. Children want direction--to be taught right from wrong. Young people yearn for consistent adult involvement, and when they get it, we know they are less inclined to use illegal drugs, to vandalize or commit suicide. The American public wants character education in our schools, too. Studies show that approximately 90 percent of Americans support schools teaching character education.

Character education programs work. Currently, there are character education programs across all 50 States in rural, urban and suburban areas at every grade level. Schools across the country

that have adopted strong character education programs report better student performance, fewer discipline problems, and increased student involvement within the community.

This renewed focus on character sends a wonderful message to Americans and will help reinvigorate our efforts to get communities and schools involved. With this resolution, it is my hope that even more communities will make character education a part of every child's life. I hope that my colleagues will support this important effort.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the **Record**.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 314) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. Res. 314

Whereas the well-being of the United States requires that the young people of this Nation become an involved, caring citizenry of good character;

Whereas the character education of children has become more urgent, as violence by and against youth increasingly threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character and the positive effects that good character can have in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and that, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by institutions and individuals that influence youth to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play an important role in fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the importance of character education in preparing young people to play a role in determining the future of the United States;

Whereas effective character education is based on core ethical values, which form the foundation of democratic society;

Whereas examples of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and honesty;

Whereas elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society, and, therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character;

Whereas Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those that have an interest in the education and training of the young people of the United States, to adopt the elements of character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society;

Whereas many schools in the United States recognize the need, and have taken steps, to integrate the values of their communities into their teaching activities; and

Whereas the establishment of ``National Character Counts Week'', during which individuals, families, schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, civic groups, and other organizations focus on character education, is of great benefit to the United States: Now, therefore, be it **Resolved**, that the Senate--

1. designates the week beginning October 18, 2009, as ``National Character Counts Week''; and
2. calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups--
  - a. to embrace the elements of character identified by local schools and communities, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and
  - b. to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.