

I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 793, supporting the goals and ideals of National Chemistry Week. I commend the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Reyes, for his continued support of this important celebration of chemistry.

This year marks the 22nd anniversary of National Chemistry Week, which is sponsored by the American Chemical Society. The event features outreach programs created by schools and businesses to educate communities and schoolchildren on the importance of chemistry in their everyday lives. The theme of this year's National Chemistry Week is "Chemistry--It's Elemental," which emphasizes the role that elements play in every aspect of our lives, from the air we breathe to the cars we drive to the food we eat.

I applaud the ACS for their commitment to chemistry education at the elementary and secondary level. To maintain our nation's role as a leader in innovation in an increasingly globalized world, our young people will need to excel in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Training a new generation of chemists will also be essential for solving the world's most pressing issues, from fighting global warming to discovering vaccines for emerging diseases. This is why I am pleased that this year's event includes a national chemistry competition, the distribution of 10,000 Merck Indexes to science educators, and a website with biographies of chemists and online activities to inspire students to choose a career path in chemistry.

As important as this resolution is though, we need to do more in Congress right now to improve STEM education. A recent National Assessment of Education Progress showed that, for the first time since 1980, 4th graders made no progress in math performance between 2007 and 2009. Study after study highlights the need to strengthen math and science education so that our nation's students do not continue to lag behind others in developing the skills critical for global competitiveness.

Again, I commend Mr. Reyes and the ACS for their commitment to promoting a greater understanding of chemistry, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important resolution.