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House of Representatives

National Nurses Week

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Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the 2.9 million nurses across the country whose vital contributions to our healthcare system are rightfully honored this week during "National Nurses Week."

The theme of National Nurses Week (NWW) 2006 is "Nurses: Strength, Commitment, Compassion." These are three qualities that nurses show on a daily basis in caring for patients during times of disaster and crisis, at the bedside, and through continuing education.

In my own healthcare and that provided to my family and friends, I am continually impressed by the knowledge, professionalism, and kindness that nurses demonstrate in their patient care. They are literally at the front lines of our healthcare system, and their important role deserves to be recognized. That is why I am pleased to support House Resolution 245, supporting the goals and ideals of National Nurses Week.

There are immediate challenges facing the profession of nursing, and there are concrete steps that Congress should take in order to ensure that patients can benefit from their care now and in the future. Most notably, we must take steps to address the growing shortage of nurses and the aging of the nursing workforce.

Recruitment and retention of nurses is important, as is ensuring that schools of nursing have the faculty and resources they need to teach and train students. That is why I introduced H.R. 2184, the Nursing School Capacity Act, which would authorize an Institute of Medicine (IOM) study to identify constraints encountered by schools of nursing in admitting an adequate number of nurses for our healthcare system, and develop recommendations to alleviate the constraints.