

[Roll No. 30]
AYES—223

Abercrombie Green, Gene
 Ackerman Grijalva
 Allen Gutierrez
 Altmire Hall (NY)
 Andrews Hare
 Arcuri Harman
 Baca Hastings (FL)
 Baird Herseth
 Baldwin Higgins
 Barrow Hill
 Bean Hinchey
 Becerra Hinojosa
 Berkley Hirono
 Berman Hodes
 Berry Holden
 Bishop (GA) Holt
 Bishop (NY) Honda
 Blumenauer Hoooley
 Boswell Inslee
 Boucher Israel
 Boyd (FL) Jackson (IL)
 Boyda (KS) Jackson-Lee
 Brady (PA) (TX)
 Carney Jefferson
 Carson Johnson (GA)
 Castor Johnson, E. B.
 Chandler Jones (OH)
 Clarke Kagen
 Clay Kanjorski
 Cleaver Kaptur
 Clyburn Kennedy
 Cohen Kildee
 Conyers Kilpatrick
 Cooper Kind
 Costa Klein (FL)
 Costello Kucinich
 Courtney Lampson
 Cramer Langevin
 Crowley Loeback
 Cuellar Lofgren, Zoe
 Davis (AL) Lowey
 Davis (CA) Lynch
 Davis (IL) Mahoney (FL)
 Davis, Lincoln Maloney (NY)
 DeFazio Markey
 DeGette Marshall
 Delahunt Matheson
 DeLauro Matsui
 Dicks McCarthy (NY)
 Dingell McCollum (MN)
 Doggett McDermott
 Donnelly McGovern
 Doyle McIntyre
 Edwards McNeerney
 Ellison McNulty
 Ellsworth Meehan
 Emanuel Meek (FL)
 Engel Meeks (NY)
 Eshoo Melancon
 Etheridge Michaud
 Farr Millender
 Fattah McDonald
 Filner Miller (NC)
 Frank (MA) Miller, George
 Giffords Mitchell
 Gillibrand Mollohan
 Gonzalez Moore (KS)
 Gordon Moore (WI)
 Green, Al Moran (VA)

NOES—190

Akin Brady (TX)
 Alexander Brown (SC)
 Bachus Brown-Waite,
 Baker Ginny
 Barrett (SC) Buchanan
 Bartlett (MD) Burgess
 Barton (TX) Camp (MI)
 Biggert Campbell (CA)
 Bilbray Cannon
 Bilirakis Cantor
 Bishop (UT) Capito
 Blackburn Carter
 Blunt Castle
 Boehner Chabot
 Bonner Coble
 Bono Conaway
 Boozman Crenshaw
 Boustany Cubin

Feeney LaTourette
 Ferguson Lewis (CA)
 Flake Lewis (KY)
 Forbes Linder
 Fortenberry LoBiondo
 Fossella Lungren, Daniel
 Foxx E.
 Franks (AZ) Mack
 Frelinghuysen Manullo
 Gallegly Marchant
 Garrett (NJ) McCarthy (CA)
 Gerlach McCaul (TX)
 McCotter
 Gillmore McCreery
 Gingrey McHenry
 Gohmert McHugh
 Goode McKeon
 Goodlatte McMorris
 Granger Rodgers
 Graves Mica
 Hall (TX) Miller (FL)
 Hastert Miller (MI)
 Hastings (WA) Miller, Gary
 Hayes Moran (KS)
 Heller Murphy, Tim
 Hensarling Musgrave
 Herger Myrick
 Hobson Neugebauer
 Hoekstra Nunes
 Hunter Paul
 Hulshof Pearce
 Salazar Pence
 Sánchez, Linda Issa
 T. Peterson (PA)
 Sanchez, Loretta
 Schakowsky
 Schiff Johnson (IL)
 Jones (NC)
 Jordan
 Keller
 King (NY) Porter
 Kingston Price (GA)
 Kirk Pryce (OH)
 Kline (MN) Putnam
 Knollenberg Radanovich
 Kuhl (NY) Ramstad
 LaHood Regula
 Lamborn Rehberg
 Latham Reichert

NOT VOTING—21

Aderholt Cummings
 Bachmann Hoyer
 Boren Johnson, Sam
 Burton (IN) King (IA)
 Buyer Lucas
 Calvert Norwood
 Cole (OK) Obey

□ 1316
 So the resolution was agreed to.
 The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 65, I call up the bill (H.R. 5) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce interest rates for student borrowers, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “College Student Relief Act of 2007”.

SEC. 2. INTEREST RATE REDUCTIONS.

(a) FFEL INTEREST RATES.—
 (1) Section 427A(l) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1077a(l)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:
 “(4) REDUCED RATES FOR UNDERGRADUATE SUBSIDIZED LOANS.—Notwithstanding sub-

section (h) and paragraph (1) of this subsection, with respect to any loan to an undergraduate student made, insured, or guaranteed under this part (other than a loan made pursuant to section 428B, 428C, or 428H) for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2006, and before January 1, 2012, the applicable rate of interest shall be as follows:

“(A) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2006, and before July 1, 2007, 6.80 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(B) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2007, and before July 1, 2008, 6.12 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(C) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2008, and before July 1, 2009, 5.44 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(D) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2009, and before July 1, 2010, 4.76 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(E) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2010, and before July 1, 2011, 4.08 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(F) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2011, and before January 1, 2012, 3.40 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.”.

(2) SPECIAL ALLOWANCE CROSS REFERENCE.—Section 438(b)(2)(i)(ii)(II) of such Act is amended by striking “section 427A(l)(1)” and inserting “section 427A(l)(1) or (l)(4)”.

(b) DIRECT LOAN INTEREST RATES.—Section 455(b)(7) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(b)(7)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) REDUCED RATES FOR UNDERGRADUATE FDSL.—Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs of this subsection, for Federal Direct Stafford Loans made to undergraduate students for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2006, and before January 1, 2012, the applicable rate of interest shall be as follows:

“(i) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2006, and before July 1, 2007, 6.80 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(ii) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2007, and before July 1, 2008, 6.12 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(iii) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2008, and before July 1, 2009, 5.44 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(iv) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2009, and before July 1, 2010, 4.76 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(v) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2010, and before July 1, 2011, 4.08 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

“(vi) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2011, and before January 1, 2012, 3.40 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.”.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION OF LENDER INSURANCE PERCENTAGE.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Subparagraph (G) of section 428(b)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078(b)(1)(G)) is amended to read as follows:

“(G) insures 95 percent of the unpaid principal of loans insured under the program, except that—

“(i) such program shall insure 100 percent of the unpaid principal of loans made with funds advanced pursuant to section 428(j) or 439(q); and

“(ii) notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subparagraph, such program

shall insure 100 percent of the unpaid principal amount of exempt claims as defined in subsection (c)(1)(G);”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect with respect to loans made on or after July 1, 2007.

SEC. 4. GUARANTEE AGENCY COLLECTION RETENTION.

Clause (ii) of section 428(c)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078(c)(6)(A)(ii)) is amended to read as follows:

“(ii) an amount equal to 24 percent of such payments for use in accordance with section 422B, except that—

“(I) beginning October 1, 2003 and ending September 30, 2007, this subparagraph shall be applied by substituting ‘23 percent’ for ‘24 percent’;

“(II) beginning October 1, 2007 and ending September 30, 2008, this subparagraph shall be applied by substituting ‘20 percent’ for ‘24 percent’;

“(III) beginning October 1, 2008 and ending September 30, 2010, this subparagraph shall be applied by substituting ‘18 percent’ for ‘24 percent’; and

“(IV) beginning October 1, 2010, this subparagraph shall be applied by substituting for ‘24 percent’ a percentage determined in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary and equal to the average rate paid to collection agencies that have contracts with the Secretary.”.

SEC. 5. ELIMINATION OF EXCEPTIONAL FORMER STATUS FOR LENDERS.

(a) **ELIMINATION OF STATUS.**—Part B of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1071 et seq.) is amended by striking section 428I (20 U.S.C. 1078-9).

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Part B of title IV of such Act is further amended—

(1) in section 428(c)(1) (20 U.S.C. 1078(c)(1))—

(A) by striking subparagraph (D); and

(B) by redesignating subparagraphs (E) through (H) as subparagraphs (D) through (G), respectively; and

(2) in section 438(b)(5) (20 U.S.C. 1087-1(b)(5)), by striking the matter following subparagraph (B).

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect on July 1, 2007.

SEC. 6. REDUCTION OF LENDER SPECIAL ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS.

Section 438(b)(2)(I) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087-1(b)(2)(I)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clauses:

“(vi) **REDUCTION FOR LOANS DISBURSED ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2007.**—With respect to a loan on which the applicable interest rate is determined under section 427A(7) and for which the first disbursement of principal is made on or after July 1, 2007, the special allowance payment computed pursuant to this subparagraph shall be computed—

“(I) by substituting ‘2.24 percent’ for ‘2.34 percent’ each place it appears in this subparagraph;

“(II) by substituting ‘1.64 percent’ for ‘1.74 percent’ in clause (ii); and

“(III) by substituting ‘2.54 percent’ for ‘2.64 percent’ each place it appears in clauses (iii) and (iv).

“(vii) **SMALLER LENDER EXEMPTION.**—Clause (vi) shall not apply to the calculation of the special allowance payment with respect to any 3-month period for any holder of eligible loans that, together with its affiliated holders, is designated by the Secretary as a small lender.

“(viii) **DESIGNATION OF SMALL LENDERS.**—In determining which holders of eligible loans qualify for the exemption provided under clause (vii), the Secretary shall, using the most recently available data with respect to

the total principal amount of eligible loans held by holders—

“(I) rank all holders of eligible loans in descending order by total principal amount of eligible loans held;

“(II) calculate the total principal amount of eligible loans held by all holders; and

“(III) identify the subset of consecutively ranked holders under subclause (I), starting with the lowest ranked holder, that together hold a total principal amount of such loans equal to 10 percent of the total amount calculated under subclause (II), but excluding the holder, if any, whose holdings when added cause the total holdings of the subset to both equal and then exceed such 10 percent of such total amount calculated; and

“(IV) designate as small lenders any holder identified as a member of the subset under subclause (III).”.

SEC. 7. INCREASED LOAN FEES FROM LENDERS.

Paragraph (2) of section 438(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087-1(d)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) **AMOUNT OF LOAN FEES.**—The amount of the loan fee which shall be deducted under paragraph (1), but which may not be collected from the borrower, shall be equal to—

“(A) 0.50 percent of the principal amount of the loan with respect to any loan under this part for which the first disbursement was made on or after October 1, 1993, and before July 1, 2007; and

“(B) 1.0 percent of the principal amount of the loan with respect to any loan under this part for which the first disbursement was made on or after July 1, 2007.”.

SEC. 8. INTEREST PAYMENT REBATE FEE.

Section 428C(f)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-2(f)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking “SPECIAL RULE—” and inserting “SPECIAL RULES—(A)”;

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) For consolidation loans based on applications received on or after July 1, 2007, if 90 percent or more of the total principal and accrued unpaid interest outstanding on the loans held, directly or indirectly, by any holder is comprised of principal and accrued unpaid interest owed on consolidation loans, the rebate described in paragraph (1) for such holder shall be equal to 1.30 percent of the principal plus accrued unpaid interest on such loans.”.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DELAURO). The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, under what rule are we considering H.R. 5?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the resolution just adopted.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Further inquiry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Does the rule under which we are considering H.R. 5 allow for an amendment to H.R. 5?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Only by way of a motion to recommit.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Further inquiry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Can the Chair explain how a motion to recommit will be in order given that the committee

hasn't met, formed or adopted any rules?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill was referred to a committee, and, therefore, its committal to that committee would be a recommittal.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Further inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Please state your inquiry.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Can the Chair tell me whether or not the committee reported the bill out?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill has not been reported to the House.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 65, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) each will control 90 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today we have an opportunity to provide a great deal of assistance to those students who borrow from the subsidized student loan program. I want to thank the Rules Committee for providing for the passage of the rule for the consideration of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

Today, millions of students and their families all across America are struggling to figure out how to pay for college. They are making critical decisions about whether college is in their future, based on what they can afford and how much debt they will be able to reasonably take on.

We know that a college education is as important today as a high school diploma was a generation ago. Yet, since the 2000-2001 academic years, tuition and fees at public colleges and universities have soared by 41 percent, while those at the private universities have increased by 17 percent. This is not a problem that we can ignore.

The College Student Relief Act helps students and their families by cutting interest rates for undergraduate subsidized student loans in half, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, phased in over 5 years. Once this interest rate is fully phased in, a student with an average loan debt of \$13,800 will save approximately \$4,400 over the life of their loan.

I am pleased to report that the College Student Relief Act is fully paid for, and complies with the House's new, strict PAYGO rules. Additionally, all changes to both students and lenders only apply to future loans.

This legislation will give much-needed relief to some 5.5 million students who borrow subsidized loans each year. The majority of students helped by College Student Relief Act are low- and middle-income students with family incomes between \$26,000 to \$68,000. Half of these students are eligible to receive Pell Grants, but many such students find that Pell Grants alone are insufficient. Because of the failure to increase the value of the Pell Grants over

the last decade, the Pell Grant does not cover the cost of education, and so those students who are eligible for Pell Grants because of family income and resources also find out they have to borrow. They borrow from this program, so this program is an additional savings, when we pass this legislation, to those who are eligible for the Pell Grants.

Providing debt relief to our students is the right thing to do. Current studies indicate that more students are borrowing more than ever. The debt level of graduates from public universities has skyrocketed by 58 percent in the past decade. The Pell Grant recipients and students with modest incomes are likely to borrow more often and in greater amount than other students.

This is just the first step in helping students and their families with college education. We plan to increase Pell Grants later in the appropriation process in the amount which has seriously fallen behind the cost of college, and we need to again take a look at making college tax credits and deductions simpler to use and more robust. That is what this Congress is committed to doing in the future when we are done with these six bills in the first 100 hours.

I also believe that colleges and universities should play their part in addressing affordability by becoming more diligent about cutting expenses and more transparent about college costs. We hope to address this in the 110th Congress when we reauthorize the Higher Education Act.

We cannot ignore the fact that students and families are drowning in debt in such a way that many of them have been forced to make difficult choices. Some choose just not to go to school, they stop going to school or they defer going to school, or they choose professions that will be more lucrative, instead of public service professions such as teaching, social work, law enforcement and other such professions because they know the debt that they will have to repay.

The debt issue and the agony families feel when they think about being able to afford college for their children is all too familiar a story to many of us who have been involved in this issue for some time.

I am pleased this bill has earned wide support in the education community among students, with such groups as U.S. PIRG and the United States Students Association, with colleges and universities across the country, including the National Association for Independent Colleges and Universities and the American Council on Education, and with labor unions such as the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007, so we can tell middle- and low-income families that we want to invest in a college education, we want to help these families find a way to pay for

that, and we want to do whatever we can to reduce the burden of debt that these students are taking on today in unprecedented levels, the first generation to be put in that situation.

I think this is a good beginning in the first 100 hours to put this Congress on record not just as hoping to do something for students, but in fact doing something for 5.5 million students who will be eligible for the benefits under this interest rate cut.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this is a well-intentioned bill that I wish we had the chance to make better. Nonetheless, without the opportunity for amendments, I hope we can use these next 3 hours to analyze what H.R. 5 does and what it doesn't do.

Normally this is a task best reserved for regular order when you go through the committee process and have a chance to have hearings and have a chance to hear experts on the subject. We are forgoing that today because we are in this 100 hours of nondemocratic rule, and that is a result of the election. You won the majority, you use that majority the way you see fit; but I think that is unfortunate for America today.

Since we have bypassed that process, I would like to spend some time doing so right here today. First, let me underscore once again the fact that this bill has never been considered in committee. It includes some changes impacting the student loan industry that have never been tried before and, worse yet, they have never even been discussed in any meaningful way. Is that bad policy? Well, maybe so. But is it irresponsible policy-making? Most definitely it is.

Next, I caution my colleagues not to characterize what is before us today as a student aid bill. Ironically, the College Student Relief Act wouldn't impact a single college student. The way the loan program works, a student that wishes to borrow, and it is unfortunate, I think, that we are even having to have that kind of discussion today; I wish we were focusing on trying to keep the cost of education down so students didn't need to borrow a penny, but that is not going to be the debate.

The way it works, a student borrows the first year, the second year, the third and fourth years if they so desire; and then after they graduate from school and have a 6-month respite period, they begin to repay that loan. So this bill today addresses an interest rate that a college graduate will pay back in the repayment period 6 months after they graduate from school when they are definitely no longer students.

I also caution my colleagues not to buy into the talking point that H.R. 5 would save a typical borrower about \$4,400 over the life of their loan because it just simply isn't true.

Now what the Democrats talked about during the campaign of reducing all student debt by half may have met these requirements, but not what is actually on the floor here today. The fact is that a borrower cannot save nearly this much because under H.R. 5, the bill we are discussing here today, the interest rate phases down from the current 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over a series of 5 years. The borrower, for them to receive the complete \$4,400 in savings, the 3.4 percent interest rate must remain in effect the whole time and it only is actually in effect the last 6 months, and they must consolidate their debt at that time and stretch the repayment out over the whole 15 years.

However, Democratic leaders have crafted the legislation to ensure that the 3.4 percent rate stays in effect only from July 1, 2011, through January 1, 2012, 6 months. On January 2, 2012, the interest rate returns back to the current 6.8 percent making the \$4,400 in savings impossible to achieve.

In reality, a college freshman in the fall of 2011, when the rate is at 3.4 percent, would end up saving \$6.42 a month. That's right, \$6.42 once he or she begins repaying their student loan.

More broadly, H.R. 5 falls woefully short in dealing with what I consider the twin priorities for addressing the college cost crisis. That is, expanding access, which should be the Federal role in higher education, and enhancing affordability. Those are two very important items.

First, on access, as I said, by definition this legislation cannot expand college access because at its core it is not a student aid bill. Would it reduce payments for a limited number of college graduates who would see their interest rate gradually drop over the next 5 years? Yes.

Would it bring a low- or middle-income student any closer to the dream of attending college? Unfortunately not.

Compare this to the record \$90 billion we are investing this year, \$90 billion Federal investment this year, in student aid programs. That is an amount that has tripled over the last decade.

We have heard today in part of the rule debate about how over the last 12 years we have done nothing. We have tripled the amount of funding available for those who are going to higher education, under the Republican majority in Congress, I might add, and it is difficult to understand why our friends on the other side of the aisle act as if they have a monopoly on the college access debate.

□ 1330

On impacting college affordability, Madam Speaker, once again, this legislation falls short, and I truly did not believe this would have to be the case.

Consider this: On a 4-year public college education the tuition has risen 35 percent over the past 5 years. However, during the past decade, Federal aid for students has increased 300 percent.

Now, I ask my colleagues, if funding alone was the solution to the college cost crisis, wouldn't we have realized it by now? Of course we would have. And that is why institutional accountability is so important. It is at the very heart of the college cost crisis.

Yesterday, I introduced legislation, the College Affordability and Transparency Act, to help parents and students hold institutions more accountable for their role in the college cost crisis. I also submitted it, or tried to submit it, as an amendment to the Rules Committee, because I believed it was a vehicle through which we could have drastically improved the underlying legislation. Unfortunately, however, the closed process has placed the issue of affordability on the back burner, and these proactive commonsense reforms will have to wait for another day.

That is right, giving parents and students more information, in an easy-to-use format, about college costs and outcomes? That will have to wait for another day.

Establishing a system of simply and unmistakably comparing the cost increases of one institution against another? That will have to wait for another day.

And asking colleges that increase their costs the most and most often to identify ways to bring tuition under control on behalf of parents and students? Well, that too will have to wait for another day.

What is most disappointing is that many of these same reforms were passed by the House last year and Members on both sides of the aisle have backed exactly this type of approach. But to see them move forward from here, we will just have to wait for another day.

In countless ways, Madam Speaker, we can do better than H.R. 5. I just wish we had that opportunity. Because although the bill before us, as well-intentioned as it is, is just not what it seems. It is not a student aid bill, it doesn't expand student access, and it doesn't enhance affordability of a college education.

In the weeks and months to come, I hope we can work in a bipartisan way toward all of these things, and I look forward to working with Chairman MILLER, Chairman KILDEE, and Members on the other side of the aisle to ensure that this happens.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) controls the time for the majority.

There was no objection.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the College Student Relief Act. By making college more affordable for 5.5 million students each year, this bill is a big step in the right direction of helping low- and middle-income fami-

lies achieve the American Dream. Not only is it a step in the right direction, but it is a step in a new direction.

For years, the President and previous Congresses have passed billions of dollars of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans instead of investing in the potential of average Americans. The last Congress put college out of reach for many families by passing a \$12 billion raid on student aid, the largest cut in the history of the student aid program.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 5 will save the average borrower who starts at a 4-year college at Michigan next year nearly \$2,200 over the life of the loan, and will save the same student who starts in 2011 more than \$4,200.

Madam Speaker, when we debate the Federal budget around here, we talk about budget authority and outlays and offsets, and other complicated accounting procedures. But, in the end, what we really are talking about are not just numbers but real people in every corner of this country, making tough decisions about their lives.

One of the toughest questions these days is whether they can afford to attend or stay in college, especially because a college education is more important now than ever. These are real people with names, not numbers, who ask that question. They are people who live in your district.

Very simply, the reason I support this bill, and the reason I ask my colleagues to join me, is because this bill will help thousands of students to say yes to that question.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER), the ranking member on the Higher Education Subcommittee.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today as the ranking member on the Higher Education Subcommittee. I believe in higher Pell grants, lower interest rates, and a leveling off of college tuition. I come to this belief through my own life experiences. I grew up in relatively humble circumstances. My mom was a single parent who raised three kids on the modest salary of a secretary. If it wasn't for Pell grants and student loans, I wouldn't have been able to go to college and, ultimately, law school. I believe every child, rich or poor, deserves the chance to go to college.

Let us turn to student loans and how that impacts that. When I graduated from college in 1986, the student loan interest rate I had on my loans was 9.5 percent. In 2002, during my first term here in Congress, we decided to do something about that and we joined together, Republicans, Democrats, and student groups, and approved legislation in January of 2002 fixing the student loan interest rate at 6.8 percent.

On January 24 of 2002, Chairman GEORGE MILLER supported the 6.8 percent rate. He voted for the 6.8 percent rate, and he said on this floor that we should be commended for passing the 6.8 percent rate.

Last year, in March of 2006, when we were passing the higher education bill on the House floor, Chairman Miller said that he wanted to now cut the interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. It had a big price tag of \$18 billion. He didn't offer any ways to pay for it.

Today, he comes before us with another proposal to cut the rate from 6.8 percent, down to 3.4 percent, phased in over a 5-year period, so you hit the 3.4 percent in the final year only. This price tag is smaller, at \$6 billion. And to their credit, the Democrats have come forward with a way to pay for it, and that is mainly by taking money out of the student lenders' pockets.

The question before us is one of access. What is the best way to expand college access? Should we help college students on the front end afford to go to school by increasing their Pell grants, or do we help college graduates on the back end by phasing down their loan interest rates?

I think a better approach would have been to take some of this \$6 billion in savings and invest it in the Pell grant program. This is a program we Republicans have been pretty serious about during my 6 years in Congress, and I would like to show you a chart reflecting that.

This is the 20-year history of the Pell grant program. As you can see, in yellow, this is the 10 years the Democrats were in control of Congress. The red represents when the Republicans took control of Congress. You see a steep increase. If they had adopted the proposal we set forth, these charts would be literally off the charts in terms of such a dramatic increase in Pell grants.

Now, someone said earlier, well, we haven't done enough to increase Pell grant funding during our time in the majority over the past 6 years. Let us take a look at that claim. Overall, Pell grant funding from 2000 to today has gone up 71 percent, from \$7.6 billion to \$13 billion a year. And we have increased by 36 percent the number of children eligible for Pell grants from 3.9 million to 5.3 million. We have a pretty good record on Pell grants, one to be proud of.

If they had taken the \$6 billion and invested it in the Pell grant program, what a dramatic difference it would make when you consider the Pell grant program along with the Pell-eligible programs of competitiveness grants and SMART grants.

This is the difference: First-year students would get up to \$5,300 a year; second-year students would get up to \$5,850; third-year students would get \$8,050; and fourth-year students, up to \$8,050. We made this proposal, went before the Rules Committee, and it was a

closed rule. They didn't want to hear anything about it.

We also had some ideas about the skyrocketing cost of tuition. It has gone up 35 percent in the past 5 years at public colleges. We had some pretty good ideas to help, mainly Chairman MCKEON, now Ranking Member MCKEON's, bill. He went before the Rules Committee. Closed rule. Didn't want to hear about it.

Now, what did Chairman MILLER and others say about this problem with not investing enough in Pell grants and the skyrocketing costs of tuition? We will come back to those issues. We will deal with that a later day.

Now, here is the problem. Whatever we do on a later day with Pell grants will be \$6 billion less than it could have been because this \$6 billion is gone. It is gone, based on this approach here.

In summary, by ignoring our ideas about increasing Pell grants and addressing the rising tuition costs, the Democrats have managed to hit a single for themselves when they could have hit a home run for America's college students.

Education should not be a partisan issue. No one party has all the answers. Today, I will show a little bit of good faith and vote "yes" on this bill. Tomorrow, I hope the Democrats will show a little bit of good faith by listening to what people like me have to say about Pell grants and the skyrocketing costs of tuition.

Mr. KILDEE, Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I appreciate the presentation of my colleagues on the other side; their sort of would have, could have, should have.

But the fact of the matter is, last year, when they had the Higher Education Act in front of them, the only thing they did was take \$16 billion out of the student aid accounts and give it to pay for tax cuts to the wealthiest people in this country. They didn't think about the Pell grantees at that time. They talked about them, but they didn't do anything for the Pell grantees. They didn't do anything to lower the student loans here.

They took \$16 billion, and we begged them, we went to the Rules Committee and we begged them to let us recycle that money on behalf of the students on loans or Pell Grants or whatever. They said, no, this is going to the richest people in the country. And the fact of the matter is, the Rules Committee was so generous that in the entire higher education bill of last year, we got one amendment. We got one amendment.

So I think the point is that on this day, here in the first 100 hours, we are going to take care of middle- and lower-income students, 5 million of them who need these resources; then we will move on to tax deductions for families.

And then we are going to move on and deal with increasing the Pell, something the President promised to do 6 years ago and has never been done.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume just to correct the record a little bit.

Last year, when we did the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, we dealt with over 100 amendments, both Democrat and Republican, through the committee process that we have forgone today. And when we did take that money last year in the Deficit Reduction Act, we put over \$9 billion back into students.

What we did with that money for students, and these are students in school, we took the 4 percent loan fees that were being charged to many students and cut all loan fees to 1 percent. For the average borrower, that is, for students in school, it gave them a savings of \$525.

One of the problems we find is that students in their first and second years tend to drop out of school because they do not have enough money. So we gave them more of a chance to have their loans up front, and we increased those loan limits by \$1,000 per year, from \$3,500 to \$4,500 for first- and second-year students.

And we did some other things: High-achieving, low-income students in the first and second years are able to obtain additional grant aid. High-achieving, low-income students that major in math, science or certain foreign languages are eligible to obtain an additional \$4,000 in grant aid for their third and fourth years of college, and on and on. We put \$9 billion of that back directly into student and student aid.

Madam Speaker, I now yield to another ranking member of the committee, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), such time as he may consume.

□ 1345

Mr. CASTLE. I thank the distinguished gentleman from California for yielding.

Unfortunately, one concern that continues to arise, and has done so since I came to Congress, is the continuously rising cost of a college education. Tuition increases are outpacing the rate of inflation, increases in family income, and even increases in State and financial aid which have grown tremendously in recent years. These cost increases are pricing students and families out of the college market. In a time when we have reports suggesting that today's high school students recognize more than ever the importance of obtaining a college education, these students should not shy away because of skyrocketing costs.

While today's bill does seek to help graduates, it barely skims the surface of the true problem of how we can help increase access and affordability. I will support this effort but hope that this Congress will make substantive steps

towards helping current and future students.

We have all heard the statistics, and frankly we all deserve to hear them again. According to the College Board, the cost of attending a private college has soared by 52 percent, adjusted for inflation, since the 1991-92 academic year. Public colleges have increased costs by a whopping 86 percent in the same time span. In conjunction with these statistics, we don't often taught the fact that since 2001 under a Republican Congress, direct student aid has increased from \$9.6 billion to \$48 billion. During the same period, the number of students receiving such aid soared by nearly one-third, from 7.6 million to 10.1 million. Yet we are still in a predicament of students needing help. We must begin to look seriously and holistically at this issue. There is neither a simple solution nor one entity responsible.

First, it is my belief that one of the best things we can do is raise awareness, and to force transparency in the process. Legislation offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), which I support, seeks to provide parents and students the information that they deserve as consumers. They deserve the opportunity to understand why tuition is increasing at their universities. As educated consumers, it is my hope that they will in turn have the power to demand more, to demand answers, and ultimately drive down cost. Understanding that there are many moving parts to a solution, transparency is a good first step in the right direction.

Second, we all must be part of the solution. The U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, and the Commission on the Future of Higher Education have helped to bring the issue of access and affordability to the forefront. They too have identified areas in which they may implement solutions, such as simplifying the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Everyone is clearly beginning to recognize how they can alleviate this dilemma.

Third, the institutions must accept some of the responsibility. There are some fabulous colleges and universities out there making it happen for a fraction of what they could charge. For all of those, however, there are also plenty who are not being as efficient as they should be. I believe that these institutions need to take a long, hard look at every aspect of their budgets to identify savings from within. As highlighted above, despite record increases in student aid, tuition continued to increase. Some have studied and argued that there is in fact a correlation. Further, it was maintained in today's Wall Street Journal that the increase in aid will permit colleges to raise their tuitions in order to reap the benefit. Without the aid, colleges and universities would be forced to be more careful. In December, the New York Times reported that based on the fact that some

equate price with equality, some institutions raise their tuition for the sole purpose of matching their rivals. In some instances they also raise their discounts and assistance, but the fact remains that they are artificially raising the price which unfortunately may scare many students away from even applying. The reality is, Federal assistance does not give license to increase tuition. We cannot continue to offer the solutions. Don't be misled. I do support Federal assistance but do ask that colleges not take it for granted. Today's action must be coupled with responsible governing and accounting by our institutions of higher learning.

Fourth, I believe that Congress has a responsibility to spend efficiently and effectively. While this proposal is well-intentioned and does reach our low- and middle-income classes, it unfortunately may not be the best use of \$6 billion. Ideally, this money should be more evenly spent. Aid experts and those in the academic community often identify Pell Grants, the primary source of aid for the neediest students, as the best avenue for increasing affordability. Leading up to this bill, these groups argued that the money would be best spent in this manner. In the future, I hope that this Congress spends more time deciphering the best way to appropriate taxpayers' money.

Finally, I believe that we have to begin gaining a better understanding of private student loans. With the escalation in college costs, students are exhausting their Federal loans and are forced to turn to private loans, something that has not been a part of the conversation. Consider this: 40 percent of private loan borrowers are from the bottom two income quartiles of students going to college. Five years ago, private loans made up only \$4 billion of the \$850 billion of the asset-backed securities market. Today, it comprises \$13 billion. This is a completely different market and is not shaped with the policy goal of increasing access and affordability for students. There are many questions surrounding private student loans and I intend on beginning to ask these questions. If we are to tackle this issue, we must do so completely.

The issue of college affordability and access is complicated but one that I trust we can come together to help resolve, not just those of us in Congress but also those in academia, the lenders, students, parents and institutions.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank my friend for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this debate is about a promise broken and a promise kept. When President Bush ran for President the first time in 2000, he promised to make the maximum Pell Grant \$5,100 per year. Today, the maximum Pell

Grant is \$4,050 per year. It is true that the erstwhile majority spent more money on Pell Grants, but it is also true that many, many more people were eligible for Pell Grants and the value of the Pell Grant shrunk during the tenure of the erstwhile majority. The new majority is keeping a promise to significantly reduce student loan rates for students across this country. And we are keeping, in my view, a more important promise, to pay for keeping that promise by not adding to the deficit.

Unlike the tax breaks for the wealthiest 1 percent of the people in this country, this bill doesn't add to the deficit. Unlike the seemingly endless misadventure in Iraq, this bill doesn't add to the deficit. Unlike the huge tax breaks for the energy industry at a time when they receive the most profit in their history, this bill doesn't add to the deficit. The ways that this bill is paid for invite careful review of how we balance the direct and private loan programs and they invite careful review of how we adjust the present programs. But this bill is paid for.

This is the change that the American people voted for, help for the middle class, not increasing the deficit, and pay-as-you-go. I am delighted to hear that at least two of our colleagues on the other side will vote "yes" on this bill. I hope, Madam Speaker, that dozens or even hundreds of our colleagues on the other side will join us in voting "yes" in favor of middle-class students and deficit reduction.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate my good friend from New Jersey talking about promises. My opponent during the campaign, and I don't know if this was the full Democratic Party, but what he said was they were going to cut student loan rates immediately in half. I know as we got here in Washington and they assumed the majority, we were told that that would cost about \$60 billion. So they had to cut back that promise to what they have done now is a phased in approach that cuts the student loan interest rate ultimately at the end of 5 years to 3.4 percent for subsidized loans, which is considerably smaller than their original promise. I just wanted to correct the record with that.

I am happy now to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS), a member of the committee.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the distinguished gentleman from California for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, I certainly support the underlying goal of this legislation about making higher education more affordable for our citizens, and I plan to support this legislation to move the process forward because it is an important goal we are after.

I know from personal experience the importance of student loans. I am probably one of the few Members of this

Chamber that was elected while still paying for student loans. In fact, my wife and I could not have afforded our undergraduate degrees and our graduate degrees without the support of grants and loans, and we were delighted when we were able to pay the loans back a few short years ago.

While I support the underlying goal, however, I need to raise concerns about the manner in which we are attacking this issue and some of the substance of the issue.

First, the process. This bill has not been allowed to have committee hearings. There has been no opportunity for amendments in committee, and certainly no opportunity for amendments here on the floor. In fact, we have a closed rule, no amendments. If we had followed regular order and taken this bill through the committee process, we could have taken a bill with a good intent and made it a good piece of legislation on behalf of all of our Nation's citizens and done even better than we will do today.

I also need to address the failure of this legislation to address the reason that students are in need of more and higher student loans, the reason they need to borrow more and more, and that is ever-increasing tuition rates.

To the great credit of the distinguished gentleman from California, in previous years we sought to address that issue. He led the charge to try to work with the institutions of higher education across this country to be reasonable, to be responsible. This legislation does not address that at all.

I am often surprised when higher education institutions lobby for greater loan limits, and they don't disclose to their students the reason that they need higher loans is because those very institutions keep raising their tuition rates. This bill does not address that unfortunately.

I am also very disappointed that this bill does not address the ability of students to get into colleges, those up-front costs and the initial costs. This is about graduates who are in repayment. It does not help new students to help families get their children into school.

Unlike the Deficit Reduction Act, and this was addressed earlier by one of the previous speakers, that legislation actually gave additional assistance to students in going to school, significantly higher grant program amounts, I think over \$5 billion in new grant programs; lower loan fees that the distinguished gentleman from California addressed, from 4 percent to 1 percent; higher loan limits for those early years of college.

It made it more affordable for students, especially low- and middle-class family students, to get into college and to pay their bills as they were in college. This bill does not address that.

Finally, while I certainly support the pay-as-you-go approach and voted in favor of that reform this past week, this bill achieves that goal in a gimmick fashion. The way it spreads out

the reduction and pays for this is not true pay-as-you-go. And I think if we are going to do right by our citizens, in this case by those seeking and getting higher education opportunities, we need to make the tough decisions and truly pay for what we are providing in assistance.

I will vote in favor of this legislation to move the process forward, but I hope as it moves forward and we get to work with the Senate, that we will do much better in truly assisting the students who are trying to get into school or who are in school now with the cost of higher education. If we do so, as we have done in the past in some important ways with the Deficit Reduction Act, we truly will be about helping our Nation's students.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. I thank my friend from Michigan.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5, a bill that would cut in half student loan interest rates and make college more affordable, improve our economy, and improve the quality of lives across America.

The average student graduates with more than \$17,000 in loan debt, almost 45 percent more than just a decade or so ago. In New Jersey, in my State, this bill would save the average student 4 or \$5,000 over the life of the loans.

According to the Congressional Research Service, half of the student loan borrowers who benefit under this legislation have family incomes under 60 or \$70,000, and the median income of family borrowers is \$45,000. These are ordinary folks. Now, each of my colleagues can find thousands of stories of citizens in his or her own district where these loans have given a greater lease on life and livelihood to ordinary folks.

We can talk about might have been, should have been, things we can do to make college more affordable. This is something we can do right now. The legislation we are considering today will provide needed relief for cutting interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, and it will be a vital step toward making college more affordable for millions of Americans.

□ 1400

If we are going to stay competitive in the global economy, we must make access to higher education more possible; and helping qualified students pursue higher education is good not only for the individual students, but also for our economy, our competitiveness, our security, the future of this Nation.

We have an opportunity to do it. The opportunity has been passed over sometimes in the past, but let's do it now.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield at this time 3 minutes to the gentlelady from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), a member of the committee.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I am very grateful to my colleagues for giv-

ing me an opportunity to speak on this bill. I have been listening to the debate on this bill, and it is, again, an amazing situation for me.

My colleagues on my side of the aisle have been extremely articulate. They have presented the facts, and I am amazed that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, at how they can stand up and simply not tell the truth over and over and over again. I am just astonished by it.

I graduated from college after 7 years without a dime of debt. I worked my way through school. Any student who wants to go to college in this country can graduate from college without a dime of debt.

We have all kinds of choices in this country as to where to go to college. If people want a college degree, they can do it.

What we are doing, by decreasing, by the sham, it is nothing but a sham, and I think people have to say that over and over again. I am not going to repeat the statistics that have been given, because they have been given very well.

My opponents simply cannot deny the facts, they cannot deny the numbers. How we have increased the Pell Grants, they can't deny, and how they did nothing to increase the Pell Grants. But they cannot deny the facts. They can give your opinions, but they cannot deny the facts.

One of the facts is, there is going to be one time, 6 months, where this is going to be cut in half, as they said they were going to do. What a shame that they are doing that and making the people of this country believe that they are, quote, "keeping their promises." They are not keeping their promises.

All we are doing is inviting colleges and universities to increase their tuition and fees. I became a college administrator and a college president. So I know student financial aid from the inside and out. This is, again, a smoke-and-mirrors issue.

We are not going to help students, we are not increasing accessibility for poor students. If we were, we would be putting this into either work-study or Pell. That is how you really help the low-income students who are trying to go to school, not by decreasing to 3.4 percent for 6 months, the loans.

What they are really trying to do here, I think, is drive the private sector out of the market for having student loans. They would like the government, again, to take over this entire program.

We are not increasing this issue of accountability. We don't know when our students graduate from college now what skills they have. Republicans have tried and tried and tried to get schools to be accountable for what they are charging for, and it is very expensive to get a college degree these days, especially if you go to private institutions.

So we don't increase the accountability, but we increase what the col-

leges and universities are going to charge. I think it is a very cynical move on the part of the Democrats to do this, and I think it is very unfortunate.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Michigan for his leadership on this issue. I am proud as a 10-year member of the House Education and Labor Committee to stand here in support of H.R. 5.

With all due respect to my colleague from North Carolina, the previous speaker, facts can be a stubborn thing. The fact of the matter is, if we implement this law, if we get the President to support this cut in interest rate burden in half, over 750,000 undergraduates in my home State of Wisconsin will realize cost savings, over half of them in my home congressional district alone.

They are looking at, on average, about a \$14,000 debt burden by the time they finish school; and with this bill, they will realize close to \$4,400 in savings with this interest rate reduction, which almost covers a full year of tuition at a public university in my home State of Wisconsin. So, yes, facts can be a stubborn thing. What we are doing here is real.

But let us also recall why we are today, because we are following in the wake of the largest raid on student aid in our Nation's history when the Republican Congress last year, in their budget reconciliation, cut over \$12 billion from the student aid program, that the President went along with.

The irony is that budget reconciliations are supposed to reduce the deficit. What they did in delivering huge tax breaks to the most wealthy was doing that cut in student aid while also increasing the deficit, which is another thing that we need to emphasize here today, that we fully pay for this bill because of the pay-as-you-go budgeting rule we implemented this year.

Can we do more on accountability? Should there be more transparency in why there are rising costs? Should we be doing more with direct grant programs? Of course.

This isn't the final step of a long journey, but merely the beginning. I hope that by the rhetoric that we are hearing today that we will be able to produce a bipartisan higher education bill later this year that we can all be proud about, that will focus on access and affordability issues.

I may propose one way to find some cost savings. The Congressional Budget Office indicates that if we expand access to the STAR program, the direct loan program, we could realize over \$17 billion worth of savings over the next 10 years, and that is based on a very conservative utilization estimate from 25 to 44 percent. That is a very conservative increase in utilization.

In fact, if every school participated in a direct loan program, we could realize savings of over \$60 billion these

next 10 years. Imagine what we can do for student-need-based programs and direct grant programs like the Pell Grant program with an additional \$60 billion freed up for this higher education bill. So it is one proposal that I throw out there that maybe we can have a discussion about as we move forward with reauthorization of the higher education bill.

But I suspect we are going to get bipartisan support with H.R. 5. We should with this bill today. Not only does it bring real savings to real students making college more affordable, but we do it in a fiscally responsible manner by paying for it all and not adding to the deficit.

I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 5.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What I would ask of people that are following this debate, if they would take the numbers and then realize that what the bill does, it takes the loan rate, which is 6.8 percent, and reduces it to 6.1 the first year, and then incrementally drops it, and then the last 6 months, this is a 5-year bill, the last 6 months it goes to 3.4 percent.

If you will take those numbers and figure out how much to borrow each year to get to the 14,000 and then pay it off over the 15 years, if they consolidate the loan, pay it off over the whole 15 years, there is no \$4,400 of savings. It is more in the neighborhood of a little over \$2,000.

Madam Speaker, I would be happy to yield to a new Member of Congress, Mr. SMITH from Nebraska, 2 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise to express concern about what I have heard from both sides of the aisle, and that is the rising cost of postsecondary education. It concerns all of us here, and I know that we all want to work together. I hope to address these costs. My concern is that this resolution will not address this issue.

As we look to the larger issues of that growing cost, we have to look further than what many folks here can agree, that it is not a substantial effect that we can expect with H.R. 5. I hope that you will share my concern, and I hope we can continue to work in a direction of working together, hopefully through a committee process, and come up with something that will address these concerns.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY).

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding.

Madam Speaker, in the last session, the Democrats did, in fact, file a bill that would have done a lot of things to make colleges more accountable and accessible. Unfortunately, that is not the bill that was moved through Congress, and very little of it got discussed

or was paid attention to in the committee.

This year, we hope to refile bills along that way and work in a bipartisan manner so those larger issues will have that opportunity, and we intend on doing that. In the meantime, this is a down payment. It is a down payment on the need to make college more affordable and accessible by cutting the interest rates on student loans, as has been described.

We have more to do. We want to increase Pell Grants. Mr. KELLER said that, and he is right. Last year, of course, the majority of then Republicans had a wonderful opportunity to do that. Instead, they decided to cut a net of \$12 billion, basically to help the powerful and the privileged. They are busy trying to make sure that people have an incentive to get into a loan market for which no incentive is needed.

In fact, there will be very little impact on lenders with the way they are paying for this particular bill. They will digest that very readily and still make a handsome profit. As Mr. KIND from Wisconsin said, there is every opportunity for us to do more direct loans and to recapture more money, to give further Pell Grants and campus-based aid like student work-study.

We need to get States to reinvest more in education. They are falling off the cliff since 2001 in terms of their investment. We have a good bill that we will file and hopefully have the help of the Republicans. We will address that situation to get them back into the game.

We need to allow more tax deductibility for tuition so that families have a break. And moving forward, if we are serious about how much education is required, given the nature of the workplace, given nature of the competitiveness of the international arena, we need more college students.

There was a day when 8 years of school worked well for the agricultural era. Then it went to the industrial age where 12 years of school was necessary. We are beyond that now. For technology and other reasons, we need people to have more than 12 years; that means college, whether 2 years or 4 years. That means making sure that kids know they can get into college and afford to pay for it, with Pell Grants, with work-study, they still need loans.

I don't know where the gentlewoman from North Carolina, what her college was, but if she knew the rest of the country, they need to borrow, they need a break in their loans. We are happy to provide that here today.

Mr. MCKEON. If I might inquire of the Speaker, what time is left on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) has 60½ minutes, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) has 73 minutes available.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, at this time I am happy to yield to my

good friend from Utah, a member who is returning to the committee, Mr. BISHOP, 4 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, you know, about roughly three decades ago, Congress decided to offer dental health plan benefits to Federal employees. And as they sent out the price sheet to all the Federal employees and circulated amongst them, on that price sheet was a column that said what is not covered in the dental health plan. Underneath that column of what is not covered in the dental health plan was "teeth."

On the issue that we have before us right now, which deals with student payments and loans, I think if we had another column which said what is not covered in this bill, you might also have the word "students."

This particular bill is one that is extremely disappointing to me. Of the half dozen message bills that we had last week and continuing on this week, this is the one that for me held out the most hope for the future.

In fact, my disappointment is only perhaps met by yesterday when I went to the airport planning to fly into Washington, DC, and ended up in Baltimore. No offense to some of our wonderful staff who live there, but I didn't want to be in Baltimore, it didn't help me out.

This is another one of those bills. I say that from some kind of personal concept, because 2 years ago, I had four kids in college at the same time. This year, I have got three kids in college at the same time. Next year, I go back to four kids in college. Sometime, I hope the hemorrhaging will stop.

But I was hoping in some way that this could do some wonderful things for me. But this bill does nothing to expand the opportunity for kids to go to college. It does nothing to actually help kids as they are going through college. It only impacts graduates, and then only temporarily for a small period of time, the very people who probably need it the least.

Earl Weaver, the old manager of the Baltimore Orioles, used to try to bait the umpires by going in their face and simply saying, are you going to get any better, or is this it?

In all good deference, is this it? There is a significant problem we have, and hopefully once the rhetoric of the power plays of the couple of weeks are past, we can do some bipartisan work. For, indeed, the ranking member from California, my good friend, Mr. MCKEON, does have a bill which addresses the real needs of kids in public education and higher education at the same time, and it builds on a foundation of increasing support for higher education that has been going by the Republican Party for years and years and years.

□ 1415

It does try to expand access, which is what we should be doing. It does try and help those who are in school right

now, to support them. To be honest, I may even vote for this bill. This is one of those whoop-te-do bills. It doesn't spend a whole lot, it doesn't address a whole lot, it doesn't help a whole lot.

But, to be honest with you, what it does for my kids in college right now is nothing. What it does for the friends of my kids in college right now is nothing. What it does for the students I taught in high school who are still in college is basically nothing, when it could have done so much more and should have done so much more, and we need to move forward to do so much more.

There has to be something more. This isn't hopefully as good as it gets.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) now controls the time for the majority.

There was no objection.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY), a member of the committee.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank my chairman on the Education Committee.

Madam Speaker, I am watching and listening to this debate, and we certainly have had this debate going back into the committee last year. Many of us have said this is only the beginning of what we are going to be doing for our students.

When you travel around the world and you look at those students that are going to school and you see what those nations are doing to make sure that their students are prepared for the global economy, I have always thought, what are we doing here? What are we doing here in the United States?

I heard that some people say they can go to college without taking out a loan. Well, I wish a lot of my students back home, my constituents' children, could do that. Almost all the students that I know that are going to school have a job and go to school, because that is their dream.

Then I hear that this is not going to do anything for our students that are in school. I sit on the Financial Services Committee also, and we know the burden that our young people are facing when they finish college because of the interest rates. We are trying to address that. As I said, this is the first of the things that we will be doing to make sure that our students have the opportunity to go to college, to keep the costs down and help them on every single level.

This actually fits, in my opinion, with Leave No Child Behind, which we will be addressing in the committee this year also. We want our students to be well prepared so they are able to go to college, and it fits together, and we are going to make sure that we have a good plan for Leave No Child Behind. I am looking forward to working on that.

College education is expensive, and yet we know that our students need to

go to college to compete in the global economy that we are facing. This Nation has not stood up to help our students, and we need to do a better job of it. This is the beginning of that.

I hope all my colleagues will support this bill.

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act. Once again, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle bring legislation to the floor today that will do nothing to solve the problem they have outlined.

In this country, a college education is an accomplishment that all individuals should have the opportunity to pursue. I believe it is not only a noble, but also an essential endeavor for our government to pursue avenues to increase access to post-secondary education for any and all individuals interested. However, Madam Speaker, it needs to be said that this legislation does nothing to actually tackle that very real and crucial problem.

Right now our country is in need of leadership that will tackle the tough issues head on, not hide behind some quick sound bite solutions, rhetoric that does not translate to sound policy that actually combats the problem.

Madam Speaker, the problem really is the price tag of a college education. My colleague, the ranking member of the Education and Labor Committee, has brought this fact to the forefront of this Congress over a number of years, and certainly as chairman of this committee in the 109th. This is the real problem, the sticker shock of these low-income families trying to pursue for their children a college education. And here we are offering them a little bit, a very little bit in small increments over a 5-year period, cutting the interest rate.

I want to remind my colleagues, Madam Speaker, of the old adage that you can absolutely go broke saving money. These kids cannot afford a college education because of the inflationary spiral of tuition and fees at our college campuses and universities, both public and private.

So this is the kind of issue that we need to address, not this window dressing of just lowering the interest rate. They don't really get that break until they get out of college, 6 months after graduation, at a time where that shouldn't really be a problem for them. But coming up with that \$10,000 a semester to go to school is wherein the real problem lies, especially for these low-income families that would be eligible for the benefit, this \$6 billion benefit, which, by the way, Madam Speaker and my colleagues, was actually a \$60 billion promise in these recent elections last November. Ninety percent of the promise has automatically disappeared.

The point I want to make, Madam Speaker, is that this bill could be a lot

better had we had the opportunity for it to go through the regular process, the Education and Labor Committee, so that both Democratic members of that committee and Republican members, the minority, would have an opportunity to offer amendments to make this much, much better, and to let the American people know that we can do a much better job than this.

So we can do a lot better than this, Madam Speaker, and I am going to oppose this bill. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to look at this and give us the opportunity to recommit with instructions, so we can send this bill not back to committee, but to the committee under regular order and get a better product.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), a member of the committee.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5. As a first generation immigrant who came to the United States speaking no English, education was a great equalizer for me, which is why this bill is of particular importance to me. Access to education is critical, but college costs are so high that individuals and families are being priced out of the opportunity.

I worked to put myself through college and law school, but I couldn't have done it without student loans. It took me 15 years to pay those loans back, but I was glad to have them.

Today we have an opportunity to do something concrete, something real, to help make college more affordable and accessible. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. Education should be the great equalizer, but that can happen only when every qualified student has the opportunity to pursue it. Mahalo.

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), a member of the committee.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, as the first person on either side of my family to be able to have the opportunity to graduate from college, I understand what it is like for members of American families to have this dream of higher education and to have to work full-time, sometimes two jobs, and to go to school and to try to balance all that and see tuition keep climbing and climbing and the reach of a higher education starting to elude one's grasp.

Millions of Americans are facing this. This is why the College Student Relief Act is so important. Last year, over the strong objections of students and many Members of Congress, Congress cut approximately \$12 billion

from the Federal student aid program. But at the same time the price of a college diploma at a public university has continued to grow at a rate that far outpaces inflation. Since 2001, tuition and fees at public universities have increased by 41 percent after inflation.

Now, are students suddenly finding themselves in a market where they are making 41 percent more? Not a chance. They are lucky to have a job at all. Are their parents making more money? No. Most of their parents are maxed out on their credit cards. This bill is critical when we consider what the needs are.

We have to encourage innovation and talent of our youth and ensure that every American is given the skills and training necessary to reach their fullest potential. This Congress must work together to help ensure that every American, regardless of their income level, has the opportunity to continue their education.

Our Nation benefits from an educated and skilled workforce. We must not hesitate to invest in education for our students. The passage of this bill is a vital step in our efforts to increase access to college. With the passage of this bill, we can take the first step towards increasing access to college and ensuring that students graduating from college are not weighed down for life with debt.

I rise in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

Last year, over the strong objections of students and many Members of this body, Congress cut approximately \$12 billion from Federal student aid programs.

However, the price tag on a college diploma at a public university has continued to grow at a rate far outpacing inflation. Since 2001, tuition and fees at public universities have increased by 41 percent after inflation.

The prior Congress cut student aid, as the costs of attending a public university continued to rise.

Therefore it is no surprise that over the next decade financial barriers will prevent 2 million high school graduates from continuing on to post-secondary education, even at a local community college.

Furthermore, as Federal student aid programs have faced funding cutbacks, students have increasingly been forced to rely on loans as their primary source of support.

It is outrageous that easy access to a college education be restricted to the wealthy while students from less advantageous circumstances must either do without or be saddled with a paralyzing debt.

These plights make the passage of H.R. 5 all the more necessary. Cutting these interest rates is a first step towards ensuring the rising cost of tuition does not continue to place a college education beyond the means of many Americans.

Today, with the passage of this bill, this House can take the first step toward increasing access to college and ensuring that students graduating from college are not weighed down for life with debt.

When the interest rate reduction in this legislation is fully phased in the average borrower will save approximately \$4,400 over the life of their loan. This action will cut the cost of college for over 5 million students.

This Congress must work together to help ensure every American, regardless of their income level, has the opportunity to continue their education.

The benefits of expanded access to college are not limited to the individuals continuing their education, but extend to society as a whole.

We must encourage the innovation and talent of our youth and ensure that every American is given the skills and training necessary to reach their fullest potential.

Our Nation benefits from an educated and skilled workforce and we must not hesitate to invest in the education of our students.

The passage of H.R. 5 is a vital first step in our efforts to increase access to college and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act. And certainly what a relief it is.

Madam Speaker, for years, students and families have been burdened by growing debt and Congress' unwillingness to budge on any key higher education issues. The fear of student loan debt causes many would-be students to forgo the better quality of life that a college education offers.

These difficult decisions tangibly impact minority access to education. Over half of Arizona's K through 12 students are minority. By the year 2020, Latinos will make up almost one-quarter of our Nation's undergraduates.

Now we have the chance to make up for the \$12 billion cut in student loan programs that the former majority enacted during last year's budget reconciliation. This is just the first of many steps this Congress will take to achieve this end.

This bill enjoys bipartisan support. Unfortunately, last night the President released a statement indicating a possible veto of the bill, reasoning that H.R. 5 would direct Federal subsidies to college graduates and not to students and their families.

This statement is simply untrue. As an example, at the University of Arizona, in my district, all 6,200 Pell Grant recipients also receive subsidized Stafford loans. In our current higher education climate, subsidized Stafford loans are an integral part of a comprehensive, need-based financial aid package.

The fast-rising price of post-secondary education, coupled with the decline in need-based aid, endangers the opportunities of low income, first generation and students of color in the pursuit of a better life through education. This bill brings need-based aid front and center and provides real relief for student borrowers.

I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 5 and open the doors to college affordability once again for all.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield such time as he may

consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER), the ranking member of the subcommittee dealing with higher education, the Pell Grant expert.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding to me. I am back. Like gum under a bus seat, you can't get rid of me here. Let me just address a couple of issues to clarify some things.

First, you keep hearing about a \$12 billion raid on student aid. We didn't take a single penny away from a single student. Not one Pell Grant went down, not one student paid a higher interest rate on their student loans. What we did was take money away from lender subsidies.

Now, when we took \$12 billion away from lender subsidies, it is called a raid on student aid. When the Democrats today took \$6 billion away from lender subsidies, it is called the College Student Relief Act.

Now, they say, "well, we poured that money back into helping students with lower interest rates, \$6 billion of it." We poured \$9 billion back into helping college students. \$4.5 billion went to Pell-eligible students in something called Academic Competitiveness Grants and SMART Grants, giving high achieving Pell Grant students the opportunity to get an extra \$4,050 their final 2 years. We also lowered the amount of origination fees students would pay for loans and increased their loan limits.

So we poured \$9 billion back, 33 percent more than they did. So don't be fooled by the funny little names characterizing things, because it is not a lot of straight talk.

The second thing you hear is "would have, could have, should have." They had been in power for 6 years. Why didn't they do more to increase Pell Grants? Pell Grants in 2000 were \$7.6 billion. This past year, they were \$13 billion. That is a 71 percent increase. We did increase it. In addition, we paid down the shortfall of \$4.3 billion.

□ 1430

Second, if you look over here, in 2000, the maximum award was \$3,300. In the final year, it was \$4,050. This is an increase, not as much as many of us would like, but it is an increase.

Finally, the reason this \$4,050 did not go up to \$5,100, as President Bush and I and others had hoped, is because we had a dramatic increase in the amount of students who were eligible for Pell Grants from 3.9 million to 5.3 million. So the pie got a lot bigger, and rather than cut their grants, we still continued to fund them and had an extra 36 percent enrollment of people who got Pell Grants.

Now, what should we have done more? The Higher Education Act, we had language that I put in there that increased the Pell Grant authorization to \$6,000. We made Pell Grants year round. I sent letters to the appropriators asking them to fund that

amount. We had the funding up 71 percent. We have SMART grants and academic competitive grants. What more could we have done?

At some point, we have to realize as the authorizing committee, we are kind of dependent on what appropriators are going to spend. We have a pretty good record on the Pell Grant issue, one we can be proud of.

To see it visually a little easier, you can see the yellow marks the 10 years when Democrats were last in control of Congress. The red is when the Republicans took over. You can see a dramatic spike in Pell Grants. And what is interesting, in the final 2 years when Democrats were in control, 1993 and 1994, they actually cut Pell Grants.

So we have got a good record to be proud of, and that is one of the reasons we wanted some of this money to go to Pell Grants today so it would help people to actually go to college rather than just helping people on the back end.

With that, I am not here to make fun of the proposal the Democrats have come forward with. I am going to vote for it. The thing I am most impressed with is, this time they have offered a way to pay for it. That is something they did not do last year. They should be commended in doing that.

I just hope that, moving forward, they will work together with us in a bipartisan manner to address this skyrocketing increase in tuition costs and to help increase Pell Grants so that every child in this country, rich or poor, will have the opportunity to go to college.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5.

This bill cuts student loan interest rates to a fixed 3.4 percent over 5 years.

Right now, the average student loan debt is around \$13,800. By passing this bill, we are saving a student with average debt \$4,400 over the life of their loan.

Also, this legislation targets middle-class America. Half of the students that take on federally subsidized loans have incomes between \$26,000 and \$68,000 a year.

This benefits millions of lower income families, but also hardworking middle-class Americans that are trying to give their children a leg up in living the American dream.

College tuition has risen 41 percent since 2001. Just this year, the percentage of students relying on loans to get through school hit 52 percent.

This is a direct result of rising tuition costs in both public and private institutions.

These families need help and we should give it to them. Twice a year, our office holds a Paying for College workshop.

We bring in lenders and experts on filling out the FAFSA to help our students navigate through the application process and to come

to terms with the amount of debt they may take on.

The most important consideration for families in our Congressional District is what the cost of going to college will be.

Financial barriers inhibit the ability of high school graduates to go to college.

By reducing student loan interest rates, we are encouraging families and students to get a college education.

When we pass this legislation, we are investing in the future of our economy because we will have more college graduates with a lower debt burden.

This will enable graduates to do things like buy homes, invest and fuel our economy.

To offset the costs of reducing interest rates, we are reducing the amount the Federal Government guarantees lenders.

While this is not a popular idea with large lenders, smaller lenders will not be impacted by this legislation.

Student loans are not the bread and butter of large financial institutions, but smaller local banks and credit unions often provide student loans in smaller communities.

This is why lower volume lenders will not be impacted.

Madam Speaker, this is a win for middle class America, future generations of college students and our Nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE), a member of the committee.

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, today's college students are graduating with increasing levels of student loan debt. In Illinois, the average Stafford loan debt for students who graduate from a 4-year university is over \$14,000. Unfortunately, the cost of college tuition is skyrocketing, forcing more and more students to rely on loans than ever before. Because I believe higher education should provide economic opportunities for our students and not bankrupt them, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

This legislation will cut interest rates on subsidized loans in half, saving the average student thousands of dollars over the life of his or her loan. Additionally, by making student loans more affordable, H.R. 5 allows many qualified students from middle- and lower-income families to go to college who would not have been able to go to college before.

On behalf of the many students in my district, such as those at Western Illinois University with whom I will be discussing this issue this weekend, I will vote for H.R. 5 and will work on the Education and Workforce Committee to find better opportunities for students and their hardworking families.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), a member of the committee.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the College Student Relief Act. This bill will put college education back in reach for millions of students and their families.

The debt relief in this bill is targeted to help the students who need it most, students from 5.5 million working and middle-class families across the country.

Here I am, a kid from a family of seven whose parents came to this country without knowing English, without much money, and without jobs waiting for them. But with hard work, the great support of family and friends, and some good luck, and mostly because of affordable student loans, I made it where I am today. Each month when I write that check to make that payment on my student loan (because I am still paying off my student loans) I know that I am paying for an investment that was well worth it.

Many young people today find themselves where I was at age 18, wondering what they will do with their lives; and to those students, especially those whose parents did not go to college, the prospect of student loan debt can be very frightening.

When I was working as a bilingual aide in an elementary school to help pay my college bills, I would always talk to my students about going to college, what they would do when they went to college, and how hard they should work to prepare for college.

I used to talk to my kids about college all the time, and finally, one of them asked me, Teacher, what is college?

It is a long road from discovering what a college education is and what doors it can open to choosing the right college and then figuring out how to pay for it.

This bill makes the paying-for-it part a bit easier for millions of hardworking students and families and helps students make an investment in themselves by reducing the burden of debt that high interest rates create.

These students have worked hard to open the door of opportunity that a college education brings them. Those of us who have already stepped through that door have an obligation to hold it open for those who follow, and the College Student Relief Act does just that.

This bill will help make the prospect of college debt less daunting.

In this great Nation, what we teach kids from the youngest age is that there are no class barriers, that they can achieve anything they work for. Finances should not be a barrier between students and their educational training.

This bill will save students and their families thousands of dollars, giving them the opportunity to earn a college education. It will bring many American dreams that much closer to reality.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I really want those who are watching this debate to understand how much I

understand the importance of a higher education, how important it is and how necessary for someone to really achieve the American Dream; they need to get as much education as they can.

What we are looking at with this bill, though, really what it does is, if you look at it from July 1, 2007, to July 1, 2008, it cuts the fixed rate of student interest loans from to 6.8 to 6.1. A year later, it cuts it to 5.44; a year later to 4.76; a year later to 4.08. And then ultimately, 5 years from now, January 1, 2011, it cuts for 6 months the rate to 3.4, which is what they are saying is, it cuts the interest rate in half. Well, it does for 6 months of the 5 years that this bill covers.

I think what we need to really look at is the College Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance has done a study, and they show that 48 percent of low-income students cannot even get into college, into a 4-year institution. Twenty-two percent cannot even get into a community college because they cannot afford the upfront money.

What I am saying is what we should be looking at, even though we are putting in \$90 billion this year, three times more than just 10 years ago, it is still not enough to provide all of the things we would like to do for all of the students that need the opportunity to go to college.

So, if you have to look at just what resources you do have, what we are saying is, why do we not put those resources to those students that are trying to get into college, rather than give a bonus to those that are graduating and are now going to repay a loan; and that is what this bill does.

Those who have been fortunate enough to graduate are going to receive about \$1 million more income in their lifetime than those who do not get to go to college. We are saying in the time of limited resources, why do we not try to help those who are trying to get on that economic ladder to realize the American Dream rather than give a bonus to those who have graduated.

Even if you listen to the full debate, we are not even telling them the full facts. We are saying we are cutting your interest in half. For 6 months, we are cutting it in half. The other time, it is a phased-in cut over 5 years, and then it goes back up to the rate of 6.8 percent.

When I was chairman of the subcommittee when we did the last reauthorization in 1998, we came up with an interest rate that was the lowest in the history of the student loan business, and we did that in a bipartisan way, and it was good for students.

Now interest rates have changed, and in a bipartisan way last year, we set the rate at 6.8 percent, which is what it is now, which is a pretty good interest rate. Would I like it to be lower? You bet.

But I really think that we need to focus on helping those students, espe-

cially the lower- and middle-class that are just trying to get into school, that it will be 5 years. First they have to get into school, have enough money to pay their tuition and fees and make it through the 5 years to graduate, and then they start reaping some of the benefits of this as they repay their student loans.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY), a member of the committee.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, H.R. 5, introduced by Mr. MILLER in the opening hours of this Congress, begins the critical work we must do as a Nation to build an economy that is based on an educated workforce.

Make no mistake about it. The economic health of our country will turn on whether or not our children have the educational tools to compete and succeed. And make no mistake about it, all the present trends in access to higher education point to danger.

The bipartisan National Conference on State Legislatures issued a report last month which described higher education in America as a system in crisis, largely due to the Federal Government's declining commitment to keeping higher education affordable.

Coming from a congressional district that is home to the University of Connecticut, this finding comes as no shock. Students and their families all testify to the same grim condition: tuition has gone up 41 percent since 2001, college costs have gone up faster than health care over the last 25 years, and in Connecticut, college is increasingly becoming the sole province of the well-to-do.

According to the Hartford Current, 58 percent of Connecticut's young people from the top income tier are in school, and only 16 percent in the lowest are enrolled. Students are leaving college burdened with record levels of debt, and many are forced to leave early because of economic hardship.

Even though all these disturbing trends are occurring, the last Congress did the unthinkable. It cut \$12 billion of Federal assistance for college loans, pushing up the rate of interest for students. No other budget decision of the last Congress demonstrated how disconnected its priorities were than this cut, which hurt not only just students but America's future.

H.R. 5 will begin to repair the damage of the 109th Congress' harmful cuts to student hopes and America's economic future. It will reduce the rates of student loans by 50 percent over a 5-year period, and it will do it in a fiscally responsible manner with offsets, not an increase in the deficit.

Chairman MILLER deserves great credit for H.R. 5 and represents a down payment on the efforts of the Education and Workforce Committee to strengthen, and not weaken, our economic future.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as one who graduated from college with two of my elementary school teachers, because they did not have to have a college degree at that time and could not get one, I want to thank and commend Chairman MILLER for bringing this legislation to the floor.

As a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I am proud to cosponsor this historic legislation that will make college more affordable to students in Illinois and across the Nation.

A few minutes ago, I heard one of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle suggest that this was a sound bite of some kind, and I was thinking to myself, yeah, for those students in my district who live in and go to college at Columbia College, it is a savings bite of \$2,430 over the years that they will be in school; at Chicago State University, \$2,270; Concordia University, \$2,430; DePaul University, \$2,410; Dominican, \$2,580; and on down the line.

Well, if it is a sound bite, I think the sound of this kind of saving sounds pretty good to the students who live in the city of Chicago, the State of Illinois and across the Nation. I urge its passage.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

□ 1445

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, during the most recent vote to extend the Higher Education Act, I stood in this very spot and expressed my hope that during the next session of Congress, under a new majority, we would again address the needs of America's college students and make it this time about increasing access and affordability. Madam Speaker, that hope is now being realized.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007. This important legislation cuts interest rates for subsidized student loans in half, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over 5 years. In my home State of New York, students will save an average of \$4,500 over the course of their loan once the 3.4 percent interest rate takes effect. This reduction of the student interest rate will save millions of college students thousands of dollars, and it will help the estimated 4.4 million high school graduates who will be prevented from attending college this year because of financial barriers.

It is important to note that all of the changes proposed here today are accomplished under this Congress' new PAYGO rules and are done without harming students' access to loans. In addition, all but one of the offsets included in the bill have been proposed by either the former Republican majority or by the President himself.

Madam Speaker, during the 109th Congress this Chamber chose to cut \$12 billion out of the student loan program. These cuts, coupled with no increase in the Pell Grant maximum for 5 years, have sent a message to America's students that they are no longer among this Nation's top priorities. Today the message we send to students is loud and clear: We in this Congress are dedicated to helping you achieve the dream of a college education.

The changes we make here today are just a first step in a series of proposals that will make it easier for students and their families to afford college. As we move forward with the long overdue reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, I hope to see an increase in the maximum Pell Grant, simplification of the FAFSA, and an increased investment in campus-based aid programs. These changes are all part of an effort to narrow the expanding gap between the amount of available student aid compared with the cost of attaining a college education.

As a former college administrator, I know firsthand the beneficial impact this legislation will have for needy students and their families who are working to help their sons and daughters realize their slice of the American Dream.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 3 minutes to my friend from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time to discuss this matter.

Madam Speaker, the speeches and claims that we have heard from the other side sound so wonderful. They sound so good. If only this bill did what they say.

Madam Speaker, this bill is the hollow fulfillment of a solemn promise. It is the epitome of form over substance. And, Madam Speaker, it would be humorous if it weren't so serious. It would be humorous if it didn't increase the hopes and dreams of young people around this Nation only to callously and knowingly dash those hopes and dreams.

A couple of specific items. This really is bait and switch. Supporters of this bill contend that a borrower with \$13,800 of subsidized debt will save up to \$4,400. This assumes that they will see 4 years of loans made at the 3.4 percent rate. Under this legislation, however, no borrower will get more than one year of the 3.4 percent rate. And what happens in 2012? The rate goes right back up to 6.8 percent. Bait and switch. It is a shell game. It will result in damaging cuts to the program that has worked well for the vast majority of colleges in this country and in my own district, and not one single new undergraduate will be helped by this legislation. Not one. It is the fulfillment of a hollow promise. Very, very sad.

And it is the principle. Finally, as matter of principle, Madam Speaker, this proposal is a political gimmick.

The majority proposes to rob \$6 billion from the private sector loan programs, programs that work to not only offer and provide funding for college but also use market competition to drive down rates and offer borrower benefits the government can't match. And what will they do with the money? They will lower some rates for a short time on some borrowers who have in common only the fact that they have either graduated or left school and don't need the help as much as those who may lose the benefits and services that were cut in order to lower the rates.

It is a shame that those of us who desire to have a real debate about government's role in assisting middle class students achieve the American Dream of higher education are instead asked to support an expensive counterproductive cut in a student loan program that is working. Madam Speaker, this would be humorous if it weren't so serious.

I strongly support financial assistance for students who are in true financial need. Sadly, H.R. 5 is not a bill that will accomplish any of that.

I urge my colleagues to support a commonsense recommit that will indeed help students who are in financial need, and oppose the underlying bill.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, each year the number of jobs that require a college diploma grows. And with tuition swelling at the rate of 41 percent over the last 6 years, so does the number of capable and dedicated Americans for whom that training is simply unattainable.

H.R. 5 does more than save \$4,000-plus for 5.5 million students annually; it offers a chance to those who deserve it most. These are students who have put in their work, have demonstrated the desire, and possess the intellect to go to college, but don't have the means. These are some of the best and brightest this country has to offer. These young people are the hope for America's future.

Opposing this legislation is to turn our backs on these bright young dedicated citizens, creating a young workforce that is saddled with unmanageable debt, and each year preventing 200,000 of them from going to college at all. By failing to make education affordable, we are telling them we aren't interested in them or what they have to offer.

The University of Louisville is among a handful of universities which have developed programs to help low income students who have demonstrated exemplary potential. Their cardinal covenant is an innovative and necessary initiative. Programs like these can be an excellent supplement to sound national policy but cannot substitute for our responsibility to ensure that the capable and dedicated are also educated.

We have the chance to act on behalf of our country and our young adults; therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I ask if I might be apprised how much time each side has.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) has 55½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) has 43 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCKEON. At this time I am happy to yield 1½ minutes to my good friend from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman, Mr. MCKEON, for his leadership and expanding opportunities for students to attend college.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5. As the father of three college graduates and a college freshman, I am all too familiar with the financial burden higher education poses to families and students. That is why I am proud of the Republican efforts to expand college access and increase affordability.

During the past decade, House Republicans under the leadership of JOHN BOEHNER and BUCK MCKEON tripled overall Federal aid to a record \$90 billion, helping millions of Americans achieve their dream of a college education.

In addition, Republicans increased new aid for Pell students more than \$4 billion over 5 years, establishing the first ever grant program for high achieving Pell students in their first and second years of college. The program also provides grant aid to low income, high achieving students pursuing degrees in math, science, and critical foreign languages in their third and fourth years.

While the Democrat bill was well-intentioned, its focus on interest rate reduction does nothing to expand college access for new students. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the McKeon alternative, which will truly expand college access for young Americans.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES), a member of the committee.

Mr. SARBANES. I thank the chairman for yielding his time.

Madam Speaker, the cost of college education is becoming the great separator in American society. It threatens to make access to the American Dream a matter of means and not merit. If we let that happen, then we guarantee the decline of American competitiveness and risk a slow and steady slide into mediocrity.

We can do better, and today we will do better. By passing the College Student Relief Act of 2007 and cutting the interest rates on student loans, we will take an important step in providing fairness and opportunity to the next generation.

I want to tell you about a woman I met in Maryland during my campaign.

She is the mother of three college age students, a professional woman who works here in D.C. She came up to me, she looked me right in the eye, she said, "I have three children who are going to college and I can't afford it." And then she said, "I did everything they told me I was supposed to do. I worked three jobs, my husband and I between us, we saved our money, and we told our kids if you work hard and study, you can make it in America. And now we can't afford college."

What she was saying is what millions of Americans are saying, which is we worked hard and played by the rules, and then we found out we couldn't make it.

Madam Speaker, we have a chance today to begin restoring the bargain with America that so many fear is in jeopardy. No student who works hard and achieves should be denied the opportunity to attend college because they cannot afford it. Our country needs these young people if we are going to be strong. I urge passage of H.R. 5.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to our friend from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. I thank the gentleman very much.

This is a press release. It doesn't matter what press release it is, it is just a press release. Which means, it says something, argues a position on an issue, and it is on a piece of paper, but it doesn't actually do anything. It just talks about things.

What is before us, this bill, is like a press release. It makes an argument, it is on a piece of paper, but doesn't really do anything.

I heard everyone on the other side of the aisle here talk about how people can't afford to pay for college. Well, this bill doesn't help people pay for college. It claims to help them reduce their interest rate once they are college graduates, after they are out of college, but it certainly doesn't help you pay for college while you are there.

I have also heard the argument that it cuts the rate for student loans in half, and in fact it does: For 6 months, 5 years from now. For 6 months, 5 years from now, it cuts the rate in half, but the rest of the time the rate is either the same as it is now or somewhere in between those two. So let's not say that it cuts it in half.

And, to its credit, the bill is cost neutral. Now, cost neutral, it doesn't cost the government anything because although it cuts interest rates to some degree, it also raises or reduces subsidies on fees. So it is like I give you a dollar with less interest rate and then I take that dollar out of your other pocket with less fees. If it doesn't cost anything, net, how is it supposed to help someone, net, pay for the program? And because, perhaps, some of the loan providers could choose to absorb some of these fees if they did that, then it would likely result in less student loans. You know, this is not a bill, it is a press release.

Now, it is an issue we ought to be dealing with, because college tuition, I have two kids in college, has gone up four times the rate of inflation. But this is not the solution. This is merely talk and press and not substance.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

I just say it is an interesting discussion, but people who are betting with real money have a different discussion of this legislation. What they have said, the investment houses that are advising their people whether or not to buy stock in student loan lenders and others, have said that what we have done is absolutely manageable by these lenders. And, in fact, they were quite surprised that the committee had as light a touch on these lenders as we did. And that is interesting, because those are people who are advising mutual funds and others whether or not to buy the various lenders, and theirs was that this is essentially a neutral act and very manageable by those companies.

And so I think we ought to have it not what the political politicians are saying but what people who are betting with their money are saying.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding and for his leadership on this issue which is so important.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation to reduce interest rates for student loans. In my previous careers, I spent years teaching and caring for students from all walks of life. I have seen firsthand the value of quality education for all students. A lack of good education hurts not only today's students and tomorrow's workers, it hurts our country's efforts to remain competitive in an increasingly global market.

Madam Speaker, college is not for everyone, and not everyone needs a degree to achieve their goals, but no one should be denied an education simply because they can't afford the cost of tuition or because they fear being overburdened by tens of thousands of dollars in student loans over the years. We have all seen the rising cost of education; 41 percent increase in the last 6 years alone.

□ 1500

Students today graduate with greater and greater debt, which not only hampers them but also makes it hard for occupations that need highly skilled graduates but can only afford modest salaries. For example, nearly 32 percent of graduates pursuing teaching careers can't afford to repay their student loans on a starting teacher's salary. And if new graduates can't afford to work in the careers where we need them the most, like teaching, nursing or in social work, then all Americans will suffer.

By passing this bill, students starting school this year will be saving an average of \$2,490 a year and by 2011 we will be saving students an average of \$4,830 over the life of their loans.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 5. Help our students pursue their dreams and build our country.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in tepid support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act. As a result of this measure, approximately 55,000 subsidized Stafford loan borrowers in Iowa, many of whom attend Iowa State University and other colleges in my district, will have their interest rates reduced upon entering repayment after graduation.

The savings college graduates will realize through this interest rate cut, approximately \$2,300 for students starting school this upcoming academic year, is commendable and deserves our support.

However, any statements implying that this measure makes college more affordable or more accessible, those statements are simply incorrect. Several Members have made such statements and the official Website of the Democrat Caucus also claims the bill "makes college more accessible and affordable." The fact is this legislation does neither.

How can a reduction in student loan interest rates make education more accessible when students do not feel the effect of the rate cuts while they attend school? Only after the students are through school and enter repayment will they be able to take advantage of the provisions of this bill. So H.R. 5 does not expand college access for a single Iowa student in any way.

Further, any claim that this measure makes college more affordable is pure conjecture. Institutions of higher education have been increasing tuition at an alarming rate, 35 percent in the past 5 years. According to the Department of Education, financial barriers will prevent 4.4 million students from attending a 4-year public college and prevent another 2 million from attending any college at all over the next decade.

Unfortunately, the Democrat majority did not make any amendments that might actually make college education more affordable, including Ranking Member MCKEON's College Affordability and Transparency Act, which would hold schools accountable for the huge cost hikes that they implement year after year, in order under the rule.

If recent pricing trends continue, any savings college graduates might enjoy from interest rate cuts will be negated within 3 years before the 3.4 percent interest rate takes effect.

Madam Speaker, I am proud that the Republican-led Congress tripled student aid over the last 10 years, and I fully support measures that make college education more accessible and

more affordable for America's working families. But this legislation falls woefully short of those important goals and is nothing but a cheap, or I should say a very expensive PR measure that allows Congress to get into the business of setting student loan interest rates based on campaign promises, not on sound fiscal or education policy.

I had hoped that the Democrat majority would actually fulfill the promise to make college education more accessible and affordable. I guess I hoped for too much.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield myself 1 minute.

I find it very interesting that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle keep coming to the floor and saying this won't help a single student. You know who thinks this will help a single student, and in fact this will help 5 million students, are the students, the students who are getting ready to take out the loans to borrow money to pay the tuition, to pay their college costs. They overwhelmingly support this legislation because it will help them and their families finance their education.

So apparently it won't help Republican Members of Congress, but it will help students and that is why the students support it. That is why we call them "student loans" because they go to students and then the students have to pay them back. You say they don't have to pay it back until after they graduate. Yes, but they borrowed the money their freshman year, their sophomore year, their junior year, and their senior year. They got the benefit. They were the students. So the students have decided that this bill is good, and it is really good for them, and it will make college more affordable for them and it will allow more of their colleagues to participate in going to college because the overall cost of that college education will be reduced through this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I rise in support of H.R. 5.

Mr. MILLER, I can tell you that a single mom who talked to me this past weekend also recognizes the value of this bill. This past Saturday, Madam Speaker, I was at one of my daughter's swim-and-dive meets in Arvada, Colorado, and a woman whose kids have gone to school with mine approached me and she thanked me for the action that we are taking reducing interest rates on student loans. She told me that one of her kids is in college now, and she has another one that will be going in a couple of years. She is a single mom, and her kids have done well in school, but the cost of college has become prohibitive for their entire family. She said her kids have been excellent students, but she was fearful they could not get into college and be able to pay for it. She was very happy

we were taking these steps to reduce the interest rate on student loans.

She thanked me for the actions we have taken during these first 100 hours of this Congress to change the direction of this Nation and to change the focus and the cost of higher education for the millions of hardworking Americans in this country who want to send their kids to college just as she does.

This is a bill that helps so many Americans that people approach Members at swim-and-dive meets. They appreciate this bill, and I would urge everyone in this Congress to support H.R. 5.

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to respond to some of the comments of my good friend, Chairman MILLER.

He mentioned that Republicans keep coming to the floor and saying this won't help students. Let me get away from Republicans and just read a few comments of people from the press.

The first is in the Chronicle of Higher Education. The quote is: "The question is, What are you achieving by cutting the interest rate?" asked Jamie P. Merisotis, President of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, a Washington-based research group." Not Republican. He stated, "You are not encouraging any more students to go to college because you are cutting the interest rate on loans that students have already taken out."

Another one, Sandy Baum, a senior policy analyst at the College Board and an economics professor at Skidmore College, said the interest-rate proposals "costs a ton of money and is not a well-targeted policy." That was in Chronicle of Higher Education.

In Congress Daily: "The much-touted Democratic measure to slash in half student loan interest rates over 5 years has been drafted to offer only temporary relief with the lowest rate of 3.4 percent effective for only the last 6 months of 2011."

Now since we didn't have the opportunity to debate this bill in committee or explore it to any great extent, I can only guess that the bill was crafted so that the 3.4 percent interest rate is only in effect for half of that last academic year because the Democrats know the interest rate cut is unsustainable in that it would cost \$22 billion if it ran for 10 years.

Another thing that was mentioned is that this will cut all student loans by half. I am hopeful that those students that are now in college that will benefit from this at some point out in the future when they become graduates will check to see if they are in a subsidized loan because they are the ones that will be covered. They should also check when they graduate to see what interest rate they will pay because again this just takes effect year by year. It doesn't reach the ultimate half until 5½ years from now. And also, those who are not on subsidized loans, don't get too excited about this be-

cause your loan interest will not be cut.

Another thing that the chairman mentioned was that there was an article, a Wall Street analyst referring to this felt that it was okay, that this wouldn't hurt and you could still buy mutual funds and everybody would get along just fine. I read the same article, and I think he was referring to Sallie Mae, the giant, the largest lender, and he said he felt they would be okay, especially based on the promise that the hit was going to be for \$60 billion, and when the bill was finally written last Friday it was \$6 billion. He was comparing what they will have to live with versus what the original promise was of the \$60 billion cut which would have cut all student loans in half instead of reducing year by year a little amount until we get to only the subsidized loans and only for 6 months that they enjoy that cut before it goes back up to the 6.8 percent.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

So under the gentleman's theory, apparently the Republican repeal of the estate tax is only good for one day because you have a sunset on it.

And when the gentleman says one of the pundits, as opposed to a student who is going to get value for this, one of the pundits says this isn't good because it is on existing loans, no, it is on new loans.

So the pundits don't like it, the Republican Members of Congress don't like it, but the students like this. Hey, a novel idea. Let's do something the students like that they think will help to make college education affordable. There is an idea. Let's vote for that.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman, and I also thank Speaker PELOSI for making this a national priority within our first 100 hours agenda.

This is about the middle class and those struggling to make it to the middle class.

Frankly, I am stunned at the opposition from the Republican side. I guess I shouldn't be because the Republican Party opposed the GI Bill of Rights half a century ago which in so many ways created the middle class in this country by enabling soldiers coming back from World War II to be able to afford to go to college.

I guess I shouldn't be stunned either given the fact that when 9 months ago Chairman Miller suggested that we increase the value of Pell Grants for low income families and reduce the cost of student borrowing, it failed on virtually a party-line vote 220-200.

I guess I shouldn't be stunned either because 6 months ago, the White House and what was then the majority Congress, decided it was more important to give tax breaks to the very wealthiest

people in this country than to give some help to those middle class and working class, families who couldn't afford to go to college. Then they took \$12 billion out of college student aid to pay for those tax cuts. You have to ask yourself, where are there priorities?

You know, the cost of college has gone up by more than the cost of health care. It has gone up by more than the cost of inflation per capita personal income and by more than the cost even of health care.

□ 1515

The fact is, right now, here in January, there are hundreds of thousands of families trying to decide whether they can send their child to college. How can they afford it? And there are also any number of college students trying to decide whether they can become a teacher or work in health care or any other number of professions we critically need because they have to pay off their college student loans and those professions generally don't pay enough.

This is the right thing for America. It will make America stronger and smarter.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume just to respond a little to the gentleman.

He talked about the \$12 billion in cuts. Yes, we cut \$12 billion out of the lenders, and we put \$9 billion of it back into students. Not graduates, students.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds to correct the record.

You took \$20 billion out of the lenders and put some back. And the rest of it you just took off with, and that could have been used.

Mr. MCKEON. For deficit reduction.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. No, no, no, to pay for your tax cuts, which was driving the deficit.

Mr. MCKEON. Deficit reduction.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. That was your priority. You are welcome to do it.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ARCURI).

Mr. ARCURI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of legislation that is very important to the many colleges and institutions in my district in upstate New York.

The legislation before us is a promise made to the American people, a promise to make college more affordable to the Nation's future leaders and to the people that need it most, the middle-class families. We are doing that by cutting student loans in half over the next 5 years.

It is no secret that rising tuition fees are making it more difficult for students to attend college. In response, we are taking action today to alleviate the heavy financial burden many students face after graduation when the loan collector comes knocking on their door. Through this legislation, we are

providing relief where it is needed most, while at the same time creating incentives to attend college for those who otherwise might not, and we are doing it in a fiscally responsible way by meeting the pay-as-you-go requirements.

Madam Speaker, the message from America is clear. The time to act is now. I urge my colleagues to support this measure and provide needed financial relief to the hardworking, middle-class families and students who need it most.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for introducing this legislation. I am a granddaughter of immigrants to this country that couldn't speak English. They had no education when they came to the United States. The only thing they had was a dream, and that dream was that their children and their children's children would lead a better life here in the United States.

My father has a 9th grade education because he had to quit school in order to support his widowed mother and five brothers and sisters during the Depression. So my father had no education and my mother graduated high school, but the one thing they stressed in our home was that their children would get a good education.

Now, my dad was a waiter all the years I was growing up. And if it hadn't been for Federal loans to help me get through college and law school, I guarantee I wouldn't be sitting here as a Member of the United States House of Representatives.

For the people I represent, most of the students that attend college in Nevada are first-generation college-goers, just like I was. Their parents work in the casinos, they work in the service industry, and they didn't get an education, but they want their kids to. So these are the people that we are talking about.

There are almost 11,000 students that are similarly situated to what I was when I was a student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. There are 11,000 of them that are depending on these Federal subsidized loans. Of those 11,000, they are going to benefit if we pass this legislation to the tune of \$2,300 over the life of that loan. That is a substantial amount of money when you are a first-generation college-goer and your family works as a waiter or waitress or a keno runner in a Nevada casino.

I cannot understand how anybody would think cutting an interest rate in half would not be a benefit to these students. I wholeheartedly endorse this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, since the Republican majority's record on student aid has been one of the things we have focused on today, as well as the Democratic leadership's rhetoric over the past few years, I believe it

might be useful to take a few minutes to be perfectly clear about where Members on this side of the aisle stand when it comes to expanding college access.

Now, I was really interested in the gentleman from Nevada's discussion about her family, because that is the beautiful thing about this country, that you do have the opportunity to go to college. My dad, during the Depression, didn't have the opportunity and my mother didn't have the opportunity. I was the only one of five sons that was able to graduate from college. It took me 30 years. I graduated with my oldest daughter.

We have six children. Four of them have graduated from college and two are still working on it. We have 28 grandchildren. So I have a big interest in the opportunities of education, and I am hopeful that all of my grandchildren will be able to get an education.

Before Republicans gained control of the House in 1995, there had been no serious congressional effort to address the issue of rising college costs or even discuss it. We have seen the charts. We have seen how from the time Pell Grants were instituted, all the time that the Democrats were in charge, they got the Pell Grants up to \$2,000. In the 12 years that we had the majority, we more than doubled that and put much more money into Pell Grant relief and to other student aid projects.

Similarly, there has been very little discussion on whether our colleges or universities were producing graduates who were ready for the job market. In fact, the entire American competitiveness discussion we are having these days was not on the minds of those inside the Beltway at that time. But over the course of the past decade, we have made it a priority, often working in a bipartisan fashion. We gathered facts, talked within the higher education community, and worked to craft legislation that represented a fresh approach to policy.

In fact, as I said earlier, we have been talking about student loan interests. And when we did the reauthorization in 1998, in a bipartisan way, we came up with the lowest interest rate in history, which has afforded many, many more students the opportunity to go to school. But what we came up with was something that was not necessarily revolutionary, but at the same time, it was vitally important.

It was a two-pronged approach. First, we made an unprecedented commitment to student aid, and today our efforts are paying off. Some \$90 billion in Federal resources currently fund student aid programs, from loans and grants to work-study programs and education tax benefits. That is nearly triple what it was just a decade ago. And within that \$90 billion is a record \$13 billion for Pell Grants, a two-thirds increase over the past decade. That is a record we should be proud of.

On top of that, we have also eliminated a troubling shortfall in the Pell

program, placing it on a sound financial foundation for years to come. Beyond that, just last year alone we enacted legislation to increase loan limits to give students access to more financial aid; reduce loan fees so students can keep more of what they borrow, and this is students I am talking about, money they can put in their pockets; established \$4.5 billion in new grant aid for low-income students studying math, science, and critical foreign languages, as well as high-achieving Pell eligible high school students; and we permanently expanded loan relief for highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers who commit to teaching in high-need K-12 schools for 5 years. These are things that really help us in K-12 and in higher education.

To pay for these new student loan benefits, which again included \$4.5 billion in new grant aid for our Pell students, we reduced the subsidies paid to student loan lenders by more than \$20 billion, as the chairman previously stated. We need to be thoughtful about increased cuts to the private sector so that we don't leave students with the poorly run direct loan program as their only option.

In short, Madam Speaker, our commitment to student aid has never been stronger. Anyone who says otherwise simply is not being candid.

The second and equally important part of our two-pronged approach to expand college access gets to the heart of the college cost crisis itself, the actual cost of a college education. This is what we really should be talking a lot more about instead of trying to get a little, small reduction in the interest rate. We should be trying to cut the total cost.

In short, we are aiming to bring greater accountability to an unchecked system so that consumers of a higher education have more information than ever before about the cost of a college education. As a result, we have dramatically shifted the college cost debate. A decade ago, the interest of students and colleges were seen as identical, and the conventional wisdom was that colleges knew what was best for students. A decade ago, the higher education establishment made clear that simply adding more Federal student aid was the solution to the problem of rising costs and that there was no point in questioning why costs rose.

Today, while we maintain an unprecedented commitment to student aid, we have also identified students, parents, taxpayers, community organizations, and employers as legitimate stakeholders in the outcomes produced by our higher education system. We are asking hard questions of colleges, such as why costs are so high, how successful the college is in helping students graduate on time, which helps keep costs down, and whether the college will give them the skills needed to compete successfully in the workplace.

Admittedly, we have gotten some blow-back. Some of these colleges

don't want to answer these questions. They want us to just leave them alone, send more money. But you know what? We were and are right to demand such accountability, and we will continue to do so.

I wish we were able, as part of this debate, but the closed process under which we are operating won't allow that possibility. Still, I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle as we do so in the weeks and months to come.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) now controls the time for the majority.

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the College Student Relief Act of 2007. This legislation makes college more affordable and higher education more accessible for all Americans. But the bill, as we know, will do much more than help Americans make it to college. As we know, graduates today often spend years paying off their loans.

This fall, a young woman named Amy wrote to me and explained the challenges her family faces. Their income is over \$60,000 a year. She pays \$700 a month in student loans. I am an attorney, she wrote, and my student loans are killing me. Without help, I risk never buying a home or being able to save for retirement.

By reducing interest rates, those who graduate from college will save more than \$4,500 over the life of their loan. Lower interest rates also mean that college graduates will have more money to contribute to the economy, start innovative businesses, that kind of competition we talked about, and save for their retirements. Do we really want to discourage our young people from taking the kinds of career risks that bring a benefit to society?

This Congress has an opportunity to help a new generation become engineers, doctors, business leaders, teachers, public servants, or whatever they dream of becoming. So let us not shackle young adults with spiraling debt just as they reach independence. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5.

□ 1530

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the time that we have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DELAURO). The gentleman from California has 25 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from California has 41 minutes remaining.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend, Chairman Miller,

for bringing this bill to the floor. We campaigned on the fact that we would do certain things; one of those was to try to bring down college costs as they escalate throughout this country. All of us heard, throughout this country, parents who came up to us, students who came up to us and said, Mr. HOYER, Mr. MILLER, Mr. MCKEON, we need that done. Mr. WICKER, we need that done.

This bill is not perfect. It doesn't go as far as some would like. Frankly, I would like to have very substantial impact on the Pell Grants, but we have adopted pay-as-you-go because we think you need to pay for what you buy. So we are constrained. But I hear people saying this isn't going to do anything for anybody. I disagree with that.

Madam Speaker, our Nation's economic security and future prosperity are inextricably bound to our ability to compete in the global marketplace. And in the 21st century, a century in which knowledge, skills and creativity are key, our competitiveness necessitates a highly educated citizenry.

As the journalist and author Tom Friedman has observed, and I quote, "The main challenge to America today comes from the fact that all the walls are being taken down and many other people can now compete and collaborate with us much more directly." In fact, he has observed that the world is flat. That means we are more competitive. That means that we need to be better able to compete. That means that our young people need to be better educated. That means that we need to give them access to affordable, quality higher education.

Former President Clinton also has remarked that, and I quote, "We are living in a world where what you can earn is the function of what you can learn." I think all of us agree with that. That is not a debating item. It is, how do we get there?

Today, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support this legislation, the College Student Relief Act of 2007, which is the first step by House Democrats to make college more affordable and accessible.

In short, this bill will cut interest rates on need based Federal student loans for undergraduate students from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over 5 years. Why over 5 years? Because we have got to pay for it. It would be very nice to do it like that if we could pay for it. But we are in a position where we are in deep debt. We can't do that.

This legislation will cut the cost of college for an estimated 5.5 million undergraduate students and their families. That is a significant number of people. And when fully phased in, it will save the typical borrower, with \$13,800 in need-based student loans, \$4,400 in savings over the life of the loan.

Now, frankly, that is not a big sum when you think of the life of the loan. I understand that. But, frankly, we view large sums differently than some

others, but we make \$165,000 a year. Very few Americans are so privileged.

The irony of course is that at a time when an education is more important than ever to one's success, the costs of attending college have continued to skyrocket. For example, just since 2001 the tuition and fees at public universities have increased 44 percent when adjusted for inflation, and tuition and fees at private universities have risen 17 percent.

Madam Speaker, we simply need to make a college education more affordable and accessible, and this legislation helps us to do that.

Let no one be mistaken, H.R. 5 is not a panacea to the high costs of college education. But it is a good first step, and I know that Mr. MILLER and Mr. MCKEON are going to be looking at ways and means to do better for our students.

In the weeks ahead, House Democrats will continue to work on efforts to make college more affordable and to help our Nation maintain and strengthen its leadership role in education and the world economy.

Finally, I should note, Madam Speaker, that this bill contains no new costs for taxpayers. It meets all pay-as-you-go budget requirements, containing offsets that pay for the cost of cutting interest rates. This legislation is supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans. Eighty-eight percent is the figure, but whether or not they specifically know about this legislation, the overwhelming majority of Americans know that we have to bring the cost of college education down if we are going to remain competitive.

I congratulate Mr. MILLER on his leadership, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation as a step, a good step that we can take to make ourselves more competitive and to give our students greater access to college.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I agree with much of what the majority leader just said. I think we do have to expand access. We have to give opportunities to students.

My real concern is at the end of this debate, I am hoping that students understand that the 6.8 percent interest right now, tomorrow, doesn't go to 3.4; even if the Senate were to act on this and pass this bill exactly, that it would be almost 5 years, and then it only is cut in half for a 6-month period. So that if you look at how much they really would save over the period of a repayment, the way it works is when they graduate, 6 months later, they have to, or they have the opportunity to consolidate their loans and they can take all the loans because they get one their first year, one the second year, third year, and if they go through in 4 years they probably will end up with four loans. They consolidate those loans and they will take the interest rates, well, anyway, they are 6.8 now,

and then they go to 6.1 and then they work their way down to 3.4. They will take how much they borrowed each year. They consolidate those loans. They average those out, and they will probably get a reduction of about like 4½ percent. And if they borrow the maximum during that period of time, they will end up with a savings of a little over \$2,000, not \$4,400, as some are saying.

I think it is really important to really have the true facts out there so that we don't give people this idea that tomorrow my interest rate is cut in half.

And also, that only pertains to the 50 percent of students that are borrowing on the subsidized basis. I know the promise during the campaign was, we are going to cut student loans across the board in half for all students. But when you tested that out you found out it cost about \$60 billion, and to comply with the PAYGO they had to come back with this reduced offer.

Again, it will help people that have graduated from college, but those people are already well on their way to realizing the American Dream. If we could just take this same amount of money, the savings and try to help those who are trying to get into college, that is probably the major difference in our debate, is how we help people get an opportunity, not those who are now graduating and are benefiting from the college graduation and also benefiting from this reduced student loan rate.

Madam Speaker, I am happy now to yield to my friend from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) 4 minutes.

Mr. WICKER. Madam Speaker, I expect a lot of Members on both sides of the aisle are going to vote for this legislation. I can't vote for it because it doesn't live up to the rhetoric that we have heard from the proponents of the legislation in debate today.

If you want to come up with a bill to, indeed, make college more affordable for middle America, then count me in. If you want to improve access to a college education for millions and millions of American young people, then count me in. If you want to do something about the very real problem of slowing the growth rate of college tuition, which is really what we should be getting at, then count me in. But I don't think this bill does any of that. And frankly, I am afraid that in the end this legislation, if enacted, would actually make a college education more expensive.

But I have to respond to some comments made by my friend from Virginia, Mr. MORAN, just a few moments ago to the effect that Republicans are not interested in helping Americans get a college education, that we somehow have a poor record in supporting student aid and higher education. I would take strong exception to those remarks, and I would submit to the contrary, Madam Speaker, that House Republicans, over 12 years of Republican majorities in this House of Rep-

resentatives, have a proud record of working to expand college access through a two-pronged effort: Number one, working to hold institutions more accountable for their role in college costs, and this bill does nothing to address that whatsoever, and number two, maintaining a historic bipartisan commitment to Federal student aid. Under 12 years of a Republican majority in this House of Representatives we have achieved record levels of overall student aid, more than tripled what it was a decade ago. We funded more Pell Grants, a two-thirds increase over the past decade. In addition, the Republican record on student aid includes new grant aid for Pell Grant students, higher loan limits to give students access to more financial aid, lower loan fees so that students can keep more of what they borrow, tuition savings and deductibility, reduced student loan payments and ending the single holder rule, student loan relief for higher demand teachers—and certainly, that is something that we could have hearings about and have a bipartisan consensus about, Madam Speaker, targeting this student aid to those students who plan to go into difficult areas where there is a great need in this country—taxpayer savings through fewer lender subsidies and, finally, less fraud and abuse in Federal student aid.

So I would submit that this party has had a proud 12-year record of accomplishment in student aid, and I could not let the statements of my very good friend from Virginia go uncontested. We are all for helping students, for making college education more affordable and more accessible and for helping move more people into a higher education and a better way of life for them and their families. And I don't think this bill gets us there. I think 12 years of Republican leadership is something that we can all be proud of. So I will be voting against the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) now controls the time for the majority.

There was no objection.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I just want to take a moment, just one moment, to thank Chairman MILLER on behalf of hundreds and thousands of students attending the eight colleges and universities in my district for bringing this legislation to the floor. They will be more than grateful to you forever for bringing this legislation to the floor, and I want to thank you, Chairman MILLER.

Madam Speaker, for too long the doors to our colleges and universities have been closed to too many of our young people. Too many of our best and brightest cannot afford to go to college, and those who do are buried under a mountain of debt when they graduate. Today we can ease that burden. Today we can make colleges and

universities more affordable by passing H.R. 5. The best and brightest American minds, rich and poor, all of our children, must have access to higher education. Our young people will be competing with young people from around the world, not just on this little piece of real estate we call America, but from around the world, and they must have every opportunity to succeed. I am the first person in my family to finish high school, to go to college.

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I worked in a kitchen washing dishes, pots and pans, serving food, working as a janitor. That is how I made it through school. But today, hundreds of thousands of our young people cannot make it because of the debt, because of the high cost of student loans. American students should never, never be turned away from college because they cannot afford it.

It is unacceptable, it is a shame, it is a disgrace that our country is willing to spend millions and billions of dollars to fight a war in Iraq that we know is a mistake, while the doors to our colleges and universities are closed to too many of our young people.

Vote "yes" on H.R. 5, vote for America's future. Vote for our young people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASCRELL). The time remaining for Mr. MILLER from California is 38 minutes. Mr. MCKEON from California has 18½ minutes.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, maybe if I reserve for a while, you can catch up with us a little bit.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA), a member of the committee.

Mr. HINOJOSA. I want to thank Chairman MILLER for yielding time and for bringing the bill to the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Debt Relief Act of 2007. Last year, the 109th Congress cut \$12 billion from the student loan programs. These savings were not reinvested in helping low- and moderate-income families send their children to college. Instead, the \$12 billion from the student loan program was used to underwrite the irresponsible deficit spending generated by the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Those cuts severely hampered our Nation's ability to close the college access gap for Hispanics and other low- and moderate-income students.

The 110th Congress has a new set of priorities. H.R. 5 will cut in half the interest on subsidized student loans by the year 2011. This legislation will save average borrowers \$4,400 over the life of the loan.

The student loan programs have become an important piece of the access puzzle for Hispanic families. This interest rate reduction is part of the solution. Hispanic students borrow less on average than other groups. The reluctance to assume debt that could be dif-

ficult to repay has pushed many Hispanic students into attendance patterns that jeopardize their ability to persist until graduation. Nevertheless, according to the report, "How Latino Students Pay for College, Excelencia in Education," the average loan amounts exceeded the average grant amounts by more than \$1,800.

It is of critical importance to the Hispanic community that we provide assurances to borrowers that there are protections to help them meet their student loan obligations. We are committed to addressing the other pieces of the access and affordability puzzle as well. We will move forward to ensure that academic preparation is no longer a missing piece of the puzzle.

The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance estimates that in 2003 more than 400,000 college-qualified low-income students did not enroll in a 4-year college and 170,000 did not enroll in any college at all because of financial barriers.

We here in the 110th will right a wrong and place savings from the student loan program where they belong, with our low- and middle-income students. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this down payment on college access and affordability and to vote "yes" on H.R. 5.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to respond to my good friend from Texas, whom I have worked with in the 1998 reauthorization when we helped the Hispanics, adding the title that helped the Hispanic community. He was one of the strong leaders that really helped his people and community. We worked together then. We worked together last year in bringing the bill to the floor that unfortunately died in the Senate, but it would have reauthorized the Higher Education Act.

I want to congratulate him. I understand he is going to be the chairman of the subcommittee in this Congress, and I am looking forward to working with him.

But I just want to say one thing to straighten the record out, we took \$20 billion in the Deficit Reduction Act last year from the student lenders. We put \$9 billion of it back into student services to help them; the balance we used in the deficit reduction which resulted in the \$71 billion decrease, the deficit right now, versus last year.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of a unanimous consent request, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

(Mr. WU asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5, the legislation to lower student loan interest rates.

According to the Department of Education, two-thirds of undergraduate students will take out a Federal student loan this year to help finance their college education.

As tuition costs swell and grant-aid fails to keep pace, students and their families are in-

creasingly turning to loans as the primary mechanism to finance a higher education. While student loans make the college dream a reality for millions, they all too often turn into a nightmare of debt.

Over the past eight years the typical student loan debt has more than doubled to approximately \$19,000. In addition, 39 percent of all student borrowers now graduate with unmanageable debt levels. Too many student borrowers struggle to make their monthly loan payments, and many must forgo savings, public service careers, and home ownership.

Borrowing for higher education should be a sound investment for the future, both for the student, and our society. Yet, today we are asking far too many students to mortgage their future at too high a cost.

I am proud to support this legislation which will help ease the burden of student loans. H.R. 5 will cut the interest rate for subsidized student loans in half to 3.4 percent. For a student with \$13,800 in student loans, this will save them \$4,400 in interest over the life of their loan and will help make the college dream a viable reality for countless students.

I have been working in Congress to do just that. I have been pushing for legislation that will not only make student financial aid more flexible for students but also ease the financial burden of student loans.

For instance, I have been pushing for passage of the Student Loan Interest Full Deductibility Act, which would allow eligible taxpayers to deduct the full amount of their student loan interest and would remove the current income cap limiting the deduction. Current law only allows for \$2,500 to be deducted, even though many students pay thousands more each year in student loan interest, and phases out this deduction if a taxpayer's income is greater \$50,000 a year.

I have also been advocating for the Community College Partnership Act, which would create partnerships between community colleges and four-year institutions to encourage students to continue their education at a college or university. This is based on an Oregon idea where colleges noticed their students were taking classes in non-traditional ways. Students would take classes at a community college in the morning, go to work, and then take another class at a different campus at night, or vice versa. However, in order to create such a class schedule, the students had to deal with two sets of administrations, two sets of paperwork, and two sets of financial aid. In order to encourage more of these students to continue and complete their studies at the 4-year institution, Portland State University partnered with neighboring community colleges to make this transition seamless through dual enrollment programs in which enrollees' class credits, financial aid, and administrative paperwork seamlessly transfer between the schools. The Community College Partnership Act expands on this idea by establishing a competitive grant program to encourage or expand similar partnerships throughout the United States.

Finally, I am proud to be investigating the high price of college textbooks. Recent news reports have exposed what has long been experienced by students and college bookstores: often the exact same college textbooks that American college students are required to buy for class are sold overseas for less than half the price. This situation does not meet the test

of fairness and common sense, and it is especially troubling when one considers the skyrocketing cost of higher education in general and of college textbooks in particular. It is increasingly common for students to pay in excess of \$1,000 per school year for textbooks and supplies alone. Last Congress, I was successful in getting the Government Accountability Office to investigate the high price of college textbooks and the disparity of prices between textbooks sold in the United States and overseas. The GAG report unmasked the problem of rising prices of college textbooks. Given this, Congressman BUCK MCKEON and I commissioned the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance to further study the problem and to develop solutions.

Again, I am pleased to support H.R. 5 today because it will help address the rising cost of college. We are at the dawn of a new economy—one that is based on knowledge. A higher education is more important than ever in this economy. We must work on policies that not only improve access to a higher education but also makes this education more affordable. That is what H.R. 5 is about, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, of all the barriers that families have faced these last several years, from the rising cost of health care and energy, to the outsourcing of good-paying American jobs, few have had as chilling an impact on opportunity as the skyrocketing cost of college tuition. The last 5 years, tuition at public universities shot up more than 40 percent.

These kinds of financial barriers prevent about 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a 4-year public college over the next decade, 2 million high school graduates finding themselves unable to attend any college at all. This, when the United States has talked about a proposed projected shortage of up to 12 million college-educated workers by 2020.

There are so many challenges before us, breathtaking challenges that impact every American. This Congress has to recognize how closely tied access to a quality education is to our economic prosperity, our national security, our civic health. Strengthening those bonds, reaffirming our commitment to our Nation's family, that is what this legislation is about. Cutting the interest rate for undergraduate students with a subsidized student loan in half over the next 5 years, we can help 5.5 million students fulfill their dream.

In Connecticut, more than 33,000 students currently take out 4-year loans. They have an average debt of \$14,200. We are going to help these youngsters save more than \$2,300 over the life of the loan.

I happen to represent an area with many first-rate universities. The time has come to make these universities and the lifetime of opportunity they unleash accessible to every American, to every parent who wants to send their child to college.

Lowering college costs is about expanding opportunity. It is what government should be all about. It is the reason why the people in our communities send us here, to try to help them have the opportunity to have an education for their children at a rate that they can afford, an interest rate that they can afford.

Let's help them with the college loans. This legislation deserves our support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) will control the time for the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON).

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to reserve the time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, allow me to take a moment to thank Chairman Miller and the Democratic leadership for the powerful groundwork that they are laying to provide relief to the Nation's college students and aspiring college students seeking an opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a number of Horatio Alger stories here on the floor of the House, representing the lives of so many of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, and I salute them. So many of us are first-generation college students who have had the opportunity to receive a degree in the Nation's institutions of higher learning.

But let me cite for my friends and colleagues the landscape of the 21st century when China is producing more engineers in 1 month than America is producing in 1 year. It is a landscape that my friends from the other side of the aisle created, for over the last couple of years, Pell Grants have had no meaningful increase in the last 5 years. Last year, the maximum Pell Grant was worth \$900 less in inflation-adjusted terms than it was in 1975 and 1976. Since 2001, Pell Grants have only increased by \$300. Yes, more students are getting Pell Grants, Mr. Speaker, because more are eligible because they are poor.

So there has been no educational agenda, but I am delighted that we are going to fix it for Texas. In the name of my schools, Texas Southern University, the University of Houston, Rice University, Houston Baptist University, Houston Community College, North Harris Montgomery Community College and University of St. Thomas, University of Houston-Downtown, we will finally, for the 208,000 students in Texas, bring down the cost of student interest rates some \$4,000 over the next 5 years. This is relief, and this is opportunity.

We need to move quickly to pass this legislation to go to the Senate and, yes, to have the President's signature.

This is long overdue, and this is a meaningful response to students who are seeking an equal opportunity.

I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 5. It is the right thing to do. It is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007. This bill does much more than ease the burden of student loans for college graduates—it will make the American dream possible for the children of more than 5.5 million working and middle-class Americans.

Mr. Speaker, in 21st century America, a college education is critical for individual success and the strength of our nation. Higher education is associated with better health, greater wealth and more vibrant civic participation, as well national economic competitiveness in today's global environment. As the need for a college degree has grown, however, so has the cost of obtaining that education. The result is rising student debt.

About 5.5 million students borrow subsidized Stafford loans every year. Of those borrowers, nearly 3.3 million attend four-year public or private nonprofit institutions. The vast majority of these borrowers come from low- and middle-income families. According to the Congressional Research Service, 75% of traditional-aged borrowers with subsidized Stafford loans come from families with incomes below \$67,374. The median income for an American family of four is \$65,000.

H.R. 5 CUTS INTEREST RATES IN HALF

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5 because it cuts the fixed interest rate on subsidized Stafford loans for undergraduates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over the next five years. Loans originated during the intervening five years would be set at fixed interest rates of 6.12 percent in 2007–2008, 5.44 percent in 2008–2009, 4.76 percent in 2009–2010, 4.08 percent in 2010–2011, and 3.4 percent from 2011 forward. After graduation, students could consolidate their loans into one loan at the weighted average of the interest rates of their various loans.

Mr. Speaker, by lowering interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans, Congress can save college graduates thousands of dollars over the life of their loans. For example:

The average four-year college student starting school in 2007 with subsidized Stafford loans would save about \$2,280 over the life of his or her loans under the proposed legislation.

When the interest rate cut is fully phased in, the average four-year college student starting school in 2011 with subsidized Stafford loans would save \$4,420 over the life of his or her loans.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5 because it will bring relief to the more than 205,000 student loan borrowers in my state of Texas. Today, the average subsidized Stafford Loan debt for a 4-year graduate of a Texas public college is more \$14,230. Under H.R. 5, the savings for the average student starting school in Texas this year will be \$2,350 over the life of his or her Stafford Loan and more than \$4,500 for a student starting college in Texas in 2011.

Last year, the Republican-led Congress cut \$12 billion in federal student aid to give tax cuts to the wealthy. H.R. 5 would serve to give just a bit of that back by cutting interest rates on student loans in half by 2011. It may seem like just a small step, but reducing the interest

rate on student loans from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent will do a lot for many Americans.

HIGH STUDENT DEBT DETERS COLLEGE GRADUATES FROM BECOMING TEACHERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

Mr. Speaker, recent graduates, especially those with low and moderate incomes, must spend the vast majority of their salaries on necessities such as rent, health care, and food. For borrowers struggling to cover basic costs, student loan repayment can create a significant and measurable impact on their lives. Crushing student debt also has societal consequences, Mr. Speaker. According to a report by two highly respected economists, Drs. Saul Schwarz and Sandy Baum, the prospect of burdensome debt likely deters skilled and dedicated college graduates from entering and staying in important careers educating our nation's children and helping the country's most vulnerable populations.

To solve this problem and ensure that higher education remains within reach for all Americans, we need to increase need based grant aid; make loan repayment fair and affordable; protect borrowers from usurious lending practices; and provide incentives for state governments and colleges to control tuition costs. H.R. 5 is an important step in a new and right direction for America. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY).

Ms. HOOLEY. Thank you, Mr. MILLER, for yielding time. Americans have always seen access to higher education as one way to help them live out the American dream. Starting with the Greatest Generation and the GI Bill, our Nation's citizens have been able to pursue an education beyond high school because of Federal assistance.

Today's job market is increasingly knowledge driven, and people are deciding they need skills beyond what is taught in high school. Whether it is 2 years, 4 years, public, private or community based, students are realizing there are economic benefits to expanding their skill set beyond a high school education. An educated workforce will also stem the flight of jobs overseas.

When I meet with the college students in my district, one of their biggest worries is, how am I going to pay off my student loans. I was talking to one young woman who had a great job. She said, I have to find a new job. She said, there is no way I can keep this job and still pay off my student loans.

As college tuition continues to skyrocket, more and more students are turning to loans to help meet the costs. In my State, the average debt for students coming out of a 4-year school is \$15,000. This legislation will save those students, on average, \$4,400 over the life of the loan.

I applaud Chairman MILLER and his committee for the work they have done on behalf of American students and recent college graduates. They have done the work necessary to prevent higher education from again becoming a luxury of just the wealthy.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for gathering support from both sides of the aisle. To those who have said this is a Pyrrhic victory, I ask them to look at the record here. This is a victory for undergraduates and future undergraduates.

What I also hear on the other side is that, perhaps, why are we waiting till students get out of school, why don't we do something about the tuition in school? We believe, most of us, on both sides of the aisle, in the free market. You certainly aren't suggesting that we inject ourselves in what colleges charge as tuition. I don't think that is what you mean. But I don't know what you mean.

What I do know is what I have heard on the other side of the aisle from too many that defend the lenders and not college students.

I am the first member of my family to have the opportunity to go to college. I am a strong believer in the importance of higher education, like many in this room today. Our success in educating today's generation of students will have a striking and lasting impact on the Nation's success.

According to the Department of Education, financial concerns will prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a 4-year college. That is not acceptable to anybody here. It will prevent another 2 million high school graduates from attending college at all at any time. That is not acceptable either.

As tuition and fees at 4-year public colleges and universities have risen 41 percent, after inflation, since 2001, the typical student now graduates with an enormous \$17,500 in total Federal debt. Besides what we are doing on interest rates, we will be working in the future, down the road, consolidating these debts, providing some loan flexibility within this program and loan forgiveness for many public service employees who give their lives and put their lives on the line today.

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In my home State of New Jersey, the College Student Relief Act will save students an average of \$2,370 on interest payments over the life of their loan if the student starts school this September. And if the student starts school in 2011, he or she will save \$4,600 over the life of the loan. This is not theory, this is not empty. This is substantial.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) will control the time for the minority.

There was no objection.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to

the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO).

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Chairman Miller.

Madam Speaker, following each statement I will provide a translation in Spanish.

Today, I join my colleagues to support the College Student Relief Act, H.R. 5. A competitive global economy cannot be sustained without an educated workforce and the affordable education for those people.

Hoy, acompaño a mis colegas en apoyar la propuesta. La economía competitiva global no se puede llevar acabo sin tener ciudadanos educados y hacer educación accesible.

Like many students from my district, Jenna, a Pomona student, recently spoke of her \$30,000 debt for her post-graduate degree.

(En Espanol) Como muchos estudiantes de mi distrito, estudiante Jenna recientemente habló sobre su deuda de 30 mil dólares, el costo para obtener su licenciatura posgraduada.

She is burdened not only by the high cost of education tuition, the loan payments, but also by having to look for employment, much like many of the other minority and Hispanic peers.

(En Espanol) No solo tiene la deuda de su colegiatura y de su préstamo, también tiene que buscar empleo, como la mayoría de sus colegas Hispanas y otras minorías.

Students like her will save \$2,500 over the life of their loan at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

(En Espanol) Sin costo adicional al los que pagan impuestos, estudiantes podrán ahorrar más de \$2,500 sobre el total del préstamo.

It is time to help our students. Give them the aid they need. Lower the student loan rates. I certainly want to ensure that all my colleagues on both sides vote for this proposal, H.R. 5.

Es tiempo que ayudemos a nuestros estudiantes. Denles la ayuda necesaria!! Bajemos la tasa del préstamo!

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA).

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the chairman, Mr. MILLER, for carrying this legislation. It is very important to thousands of students and giving them the accessibility to education. It is about time.

As Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I believe this bill is a good start in helping Hispanic students across the Nation. I thank Congressman RUBEN HINOJOSA as Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Education Taskforce for working to ensure Hispanic students have equal opportunity. Let's make sure that college is affordable and accessible for all students.

We need to prepare our students to make sure that we have a workforce for the 21st century. The only way we

can do that is to make sure that all students have access to affordable education.

We know that most of the students right now are relying on student loans. Forty-one percent right now have increased the student loans since the year 2001. So more students are relying on student loans. We want to make sure that it is affordable for every student.

Hispanics: 33 percent of Hispanics in their communities are under the age of 18 and the number of Hispanics attending colleges are growing in numbers. We want to make sure that they have access and an opportunity to fulfill their goals. It is not just about attending college. It is about completing college and making sure they become part of our workforce. In order to have a strong America, we must make sure that they fulfill their dream and opportunity. I am like many of those, the first one out of a family of 15 that was able to graduate; out of 15, the first one to graduate and obtain college. I went through the military, obtained the GI bill, obtained loans.

We want to make sure it is accessible and individuals have that opportunity. An educated nation is a successful nation. The only way we can do that is providing this service.

I encourage everyone to support H.R. 5. I thank Mr. MILLER for carrying this legislation and caring about many individuals, and I thank my colleague across the aisle too as well, because he has cared about education.

We need to support this legislation to make sure that every student has access to affordable education, to make sure that we have the workforce that meets the needs of the 21st century.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I also rise in strong support of H.R. 5.

The high cost of education and the lack of adequate financial aid make obtaining a higher education unattainable for many of America's working families, including Latinos. This has been a great challenge for us in the last decade.

Since 2001, tuition and fees have jumped by 17 percent at private universities and by 41 percent at public universities and student loan interest rates have risen by 2 percent. According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, the cost of higher education will prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a 4-year public college or institution.

Obtaining a higher education is especially difficult for Latinos, who face low family incomes, low financial aid awards and a reluctance to assume debt. The median household income for Latino families has fallen by over 4 percent over the past 5 years.

Latinos, as you know, represent about 15 percent of the college-age pop-

ulation, and yet only represent 12 percent of all undergraduates in U.S. colleges and universities and only represent 5 percent of those students in graduate schools.

Of all undergraduate students enrolled in the 2003–2004 academic year, 49 percent of Latino undergraduates were more likely to be first-generation students, much like myself. Fifty-one percent are enrolled on a part-time basis and the majority are coming from low income households. Yet Latinos receive the least financial aid of any ethnic group in the country.

Latinos and other low income communities deserve the security provided by an affordable higher education. H.R. 5 is part of that solution. Cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans in half from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent will make college more affordable for many thousands and thousands of Latino students.

A higher education should not be a privilege and available only to the few. Today, we are fulfilling that promise by passing this bill, H.R. 5.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, Mr. MILLER, for this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the College Student Relief Act, a bill that will lower the interest rates that college students pay for subsidized loans from the current fixed rate of 6.8 percent to 3.5 percent over 5 years.

This is a fair bill that pays for itself by reducing the profit that the top lenders make from subsidizing loan debt, and it gives help to lower and middle income students who want to go to college but cannot afford it.

The Project on Student Debt states that over the past 10 years debt for graduating college seniors has increased by 108 percent. For graduates from public universities it has more than doubled, increasing by 116 percent.

This bill is needed because we want students to receive a college education without the stress of leaving with massive amounts of debt that will force them into jobs just for the sake of saving their credit. Furthermore, we do not want students to decide not to enter college because they are afraid of acquiring unmanageable debt.

According to Baum and O'Malley, in 2002, loan debt caused 14 percent to postpone marriage, 30 percent to postpone buying a car, 21 percent to wait on having children and 38 percent to wait on buying a house.

This bill chips away at the opportunity gap that keeps students of needy families and communities of color at the bottom of the ladder of success. Half of the students with Federal loans come from families with incomes between \$26,000 and \$68,000. The lower end of this range is close to the national poverty level for a family of four of \$20,000.

Many parents who want to send their children to college have to take on large debt, rather than invest in homes or their retirement.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the strong position you have taken on the floor today as you have presented this bill, and I would like to ask my colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle, if they had an opportunity to reduce the interest rate on their mortgage loans by 50 percent, on their automobile also by 50 percent, or any of their other debt, would they think it was such a terrible thing, as they think about this that we are doing today?

I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act. A college education is the foundation of economic mobility in America. College graduates enjoy higher incomes, better career opportunities and more financial stability.

College has never been more important than it is today and, sadly, never more expensive. But in the last few years Federal support for higher education has declined. We have been moving in the wrong direction.

That is why H.R. 5 is so critical. It will save middle and low income students thousands of dollars in debt. The bill cuts the interest rates on federally subsidized Stafford loans in half over 5 years. It will save the average college student in Maine who starts school next fall \$2,170 over the life of his or her loan. Maine students starting in 2011 or after will save an average of \$4,200.

Sixty years ago, the GI bill sent a generation of veterans to college. Thirty years ago, Pell Grants and Stafford loans extended this opportunity to more working class Americans. The future economic prosperity of America turns on giving today's students the same opportunity. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume just to respond to the words that we just heard.

If a student in 5 years takes out a loan, they will not save \$4,000, because this ends at the end of 5 years and the 3.4 percent is only good for that 6 months, the last 6 months of the bill. Then the loan goes back up to 6.8 percent. So at the end of 5 years, the student will be paying the same as they are now.

We just have to keep the facts correct. The rhetoric is good, but we should try to keep the facts correct.

Madam Speaker, I would be happy to yield 6 minutes to my friend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

As I sit here, I am reminded of the story we have all heard about the guy who goes on the \$100 cruise. He sees an advertisement for a \$100 cruise. Like all of us, especially a guy like me, I have never been on a cruise, he goes down to the dock real excited about it and he gives the man \$100. The man pulls out a two-by-four, hits him over the head, puts him on an inner tube and pushes him into the water. And he is cruising along. After a while he wakes up. He bumps into another guy with an inner tube and he is rubbing his head. Finally, the first guy says to the other guy, "Hey, do they serve drinks on this cruise?" And the second guy says, "Well, they didn't last year."

Now, the point is, how vulnerable could you be to do this twice? How vulnerable would these students be to believe what they are hearing about an interest rate that, it is true, it does go to 3.4. It dips down to 3.4, and then it springs back up.

I only wish the stock that I owned in whatever my savings account is would dip down like that and then go immediately back up the way the Democrat Party is.

But this bill had no hearings. A broken promise right off the bat. We would have hearings, we would have amendments. There are no amendments, there are no hearings.

What happens when you have no hearings and no amendments? You can get to only what can be called the tuna fish clause. We know what the tuna fish clause is. That is where there is something embarrassing stuck in a bill that nobody quite understands. And I think Mr. McKEON over and over again has pointed out what the tuna fish clause is in this, and that is that the 3.4 percent interest rate is only in effect for 6 months, from 2011 to 2012.

Now, I want to explain to the folks who haven't been paying attention, when we passed the minimum wage bill the other day and we heard over and over again how it was going to help save the workers of America and how it was good for all, at the same time the very people who were telling us what a great bill it was had put in a scheme to exempt the tuna fish industry from American Samoa, the very people who are telling us this is great for all.

□ 1615

So it can be called the tuna fish clause. We are going to look for the tuna fish clause over and over again.

Now, one thing that we have not talked about is that universities have had a 35 percent inflation rate over the last 5 years. That is relevant because not everybody is going to go to college on a loan or on a scholarship, and so when you have a 35 percent inflation rate, you have got to say, well, what does that do to the rest of the student population. That is something the Republican Party and, frankly, the Democrat Party should focus on, what can we do to bring this under control.

The second thing is, there has been a commitment on this. Frequently, you

hear about a poll that is taken that says 90 percent of the people of America believe in clean air. Oh, my goodness, 90 percent. Please tell me about the 10 percent who do not believe in clean air. So when you hear the guy standing on the dock with the \$100 cruise, that this is good for education, of course, it is good for education. Who does not want more kids to get a college education? Because our kids today are going to be competing against kids from Tokyo, and from Moscow and from Beijing.

It is important in an international global economy that we have kids that are as competitive as possible, and that is why we have always worked on a bipartisan basis. I mean, think about this. In 1995, when the Republican Party took over the House, the Pell Grant money was \$2,340. We increased it the next year to \$2,470, and now it is at \$4,050. We did not do that only with Republican votes. We did it with Republican leadership, but the Democrats were there with us. We think bipartisanship is very important.

In addition to that, we have together worked on Perkins loans, on college work student loans, on supplemental education grants. It is very important that we as a bipartisan body come together on education just like national defense issues, because education no longer ends at the water line. It goes internationally.

So when we hear over and over again that this bill will save a student \$4,400 over the life of the loan, it is absolutely mathematically impossible, and maybe that is one thing we need more of, math education, so folks could tell a fraud when they see it.

In order for you to save that kind of money, the 3.4 percent interest rate would have to stay in effect for years at a time, but as Mr. McKEON said over and over again, it is only in effect from July 2011 to January 2012. That is the tuna fish clause of this bill.

If we had worked through committees on a bipartisan basis, regular order, hearings and amendments on the floor, we could get rid of the tuna fish clause in this, and we want to do that.

I am the son of a college professor, the brother of a college professor. I am the only one in my family who only has an undergraduate degree. I believe in higher education. Who does not believe in higher education? But I also believe in truth in representation and in bipartisanship.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Across America, our Nation's young people are burdened with this President's misplaced priorities. With the debacle in Iraq, many of our young people actually give their life or their limb, and with the soaring national debt combined with the personal debt

for the cost of going to college, many of our young people find that their future is already mortgaged.

Escalating costs for tuition, the textbooks, for the cost of gasoline to get to and from school and work, they all impact who can afford the opportunity of higher education.

It was Thomas Jefferson who urged public support of higher education, wanting the youth of all of our States to, "drink from the cup of knowledge." But today, those students, thirsty for knowledge, confront too often a parched, unwelcoming desert of financial need and debt; and the last Republican Congress just made matters worse.

This bill represents a constructive step forward in making the dream of attending quality institutions a reality. It is a reality that will be there, now available, for 47,000 students each year in Texas who choose not to get a higher education because of financial barriers.

It lends a hand to working parents who want to earn a degree and provide a better life for their children.

It lends a helping hand to a young person who is the first in her family to see the inside of a college classroom.

And it lends a hand to middle-class Americans who struggle to save for college while their cost of living continues to increase.

A skilled, productive workforce is an investment in our future. We cannot afford to leave higher education unaffordable to so many of our neighbors.

Pass this bill because our youth are worth the investment.

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I have here a copy of three letters that I have received out of 500 letters I have received on this bill that we are addressing today, from my constituents in my district in central Texas. They are raising a lot of issues that they are very, very concerned about.

The trend of the letters is, we were promised a 50 percent reduction in interest rates for the money that we borrowed to go to school or that we are going to borrow to go to school and we are not getting that. The only subsidized loans for undergraduates fall in the category of this bill. They are concerned about that. They are unhappy and mad about that.

Then the cost of this bill comes out of the Federal Family Education Loan Program, those other loans that are not being addressed in this bill, to reduce the interest rate which was promised to the American people by the other party. This is a concern for people in my district because many of those people are going to school with the same financial burdens that they thought that were going to be addressed by the bill, that are not being

addressed; and the programs that they work through are going to bear the cost, which is going to make that market weaker and less available for those students who have to go to that market so they can go to school. Quite frankly, these letters are very concerned about that.

And then I have letters from people who work in the FFELP program, who are concerned about the fact that what this bill is going to do is put them out of work. Eight hundred people in my district work in the student loan program and have expressed a concern that this bill will put them out of work because it actually puts the burden of taking care of the subsidized undergraduate students on all the other Federal programs in fees and taxes that are added on.

So I have 500 letters in my office expressing concern, three of which I have with me.

When we tell the American people we are going to do something, we ought to do it. This bill would be much more acceptable, I think, to these people who have written me from my district if we were meeting the promise that was made to the American people, and, more importantly, to our college students, and addressed lowering interest rates for everyone.

So I rise today on behalf of the 500 letters that I have received in my office since this bill came on the radar screen, and I rise on behalf of those of us who wish we could have had some input into this bill so that possibly we could have addressed these issues and possibly we could have come up with better solutions that would not deprive others of the ability to go to school.

Finally, nothing is done here to address the real costs of education for our American students, which is also a promise broken.

So I rise here on behalf of the people of central Texas to express our concern about promises broken.

I must oppose this legislation because of the negative effects this program will have on the Federal Family Education Loan Program, FFELP, program. The new taxes and fees imposed by this legislation will devastate the FFELP industry—an industry that has been proven successful by any imaginable measurement. FFELP makes higher education more affordable by using market forces to provide borrowers with the most competitive rates. FFELP also works with students to manage their debts, an effort that has led to record-low default rates. By attacking the FFELP industry, this language will cause decreases and lender competition and affect the ability of families to choose the lender that best suits their needs. I wholeheartedly support attempts to lower the costs of higher education, but the unspoken consequences of the bill will result in less competition and fewer options for these students. That is a consequence I cannot support.

DECEMBER 21, 2006.

Hon. JOHN CARTER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: I have worked at Sallie Mae for 17 years and am a supervisor in Killeen, Texas.

Sallie Mae does a great job helping students and parents get the loans they need for college.

Sallie Mae also works hard to help make our community a better place and just received an important award from the President for its community service.

Please continue to support the Field Program that has worked so well.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

DON MCCANNELL.

DECEMBER 18, 2006.

Hon. JOHN CARTER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: I'm a Sallie Mae employee and now company officer, and have worked here for over 17 years. I'm really proud of what I do at this company to assist students to go to college. Not only do we help students and their families but we give back to our communities here in Texas. The Killeen/Ft. Hood area benefits greatly.

As you get ready to start the new Congress, I ask that you please remember the great help that the guaranteed education loan program provides for our Nation's students.

Thanks for all your support of higher education. It's priority for us and I know it's a priority for you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

DEBORAH J. BRAGG SATHER.

DECEMBER 18, 2006.

Hon. JOHN CARTER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, I am a Sallie Mae employee and have worked here in Killeen, Texas for 15 years. I can say in all honesty, I have never worked for a more caring, generous and respectful company than Sallie Mae.

I am very proud of the part I play at this company to help students go to college. Not only do we help students and their families, we give back to the community here at Sallie Mae.

When I tell my family and friends all the charitable events we participate in, they are amazed. Their amazement is not because I participate but because of the extent Sallie Mae the corporation participates, matching our donations (2:1), giving employees time off for fund raising and encouraging all employees to give back to the community. I personally participate with, The American Cancer Society, March of Dimes, United Way, American Heart Association, Families in Crisis and a few others. The giving doesn't stop with our local communities, Sallie Mae reaches across the country to people in so many ways.

I had the privilege to participate in one of the Sallie Mae Fund's National Latino "Paying for College" Bus Tour events. I cannot express in words how overwhelmed I was to see the company I work for reach out to young Hispanic adults, showing them the way to a better life through higher education. Thirty years ago, I was a young Hispanic adult with parents who did not speak English and there was no "Sallie Mae" to help me find the path to higher education. Although I did not go to college, Sallie Mae has given me an opportunity to succeed and achieve my goals in life. I have been able to use the tools Sallie Mae has shared with thousands of people to ensure my children follow that road to higher education. I do not understand how Senator Kennedy and others can say Sallie Mae puts profits ahead of students. Over the past five years alone, The Sallie Mae Fund has distributed nearly

\$90 million in philanthropic giving to support programs and initiatives that help open doors to higher education, prepare families for their college investment, and bridge the gap when no one else can.

As you move forward to help families afford the rising college costs, I ask that you not dismantle the FFELP loan program that has worked so well to help millions of Americans go to college and achieve their dreams.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

BLANCA VAZQUEZ.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, Mr. MILLER, for his work on this and other education issues, as well as my other colleagues.

It is interesting to hear people talk about the fact that this does not totally reduce the cost of going to college when, for the past many years, this body has not delivered on that commitment to the American people.

In the last campaign, we did make a commitment to reduce the cost of going to college, and this bill is a follow-through on that commitment, and we will reduce the cost. We know in this country that one of the greatest impediments we have to people getting ahead is the burden of the cost of college tuition, a burden that has risen dramatically over the years.

Right now, many students who graduate from college are faced with a big debt burden that takes a long time to retire, and even worse than that is the number of students who are deterred from even going to college in the first place because of the cost of going to college and the debts they will incur. This bill takes a significant step toward reducing that burden and opening up the doors of opportunities.

We lose some of the very best and brightest in this country who have the ambition to go out and learn, who are qualified to go out there, who have done the work and gotten the grades, and because of the high costs are prohibited from going forward. In fact, about 4.4 million students are essentially deterred from going to college it is estimated over the next 10 years as a result of these high costs.

So, yes, during the last campaign this was a very, very important issue to the American people. Instead of raising the costs of going to college, instead of cutting \$13 billion from higher education as was done in the last Congresses, we said, we are going to turn that around; we are going to make it easier for people to go to college; we are going to open the doors of opportunity, not just because it is the right thing to do to make sure that every individual has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential, but because our Nation needs to make sure we do that in this competitive era.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me remark again, as I said earlier, the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance issued a report saying that 48 percent of our low-income high school students are not able to enter a 4-year university, and 22 percent of them cannot even get into a community college. I think we are in total agreement that we want to do what we can to help them get into school, and the numbers are not much different for the middle-income students.

The one thing that we are not really talking about too much is the cost of the education. I am concerned that the young people are graduating from college with a mortgage and no home. This debate we are hearing is all about the interest rate on that mortgage, on that loan, but what we should really be addressing is the cost of higher education.

I would like to just mention a few things that are driving that cost of education, some examples of some extravagant spending on college campuses, that if we had held hearings, we could have talked about a little bit. We have done this over the past when I was a chairman. We did have some hearings about this, but let me get some of these in the RECORD.

Cornell is investing \$259 million in what it calls student life and residential facilities alone.

Ohio State University is spending \$140 million to build what its peers enviously refer to as the Taj Mahal, a 657,000-square foot complex featuring kayaks and canoes, indoor batting cages and ropes courses, massages and a climbing wall big enough for 50 students to scale simultaneously.

The University of Cincinnati is spending \$250 million on a Main Street of sorts, with everything from outdoor cafes to what is called a mall-style student center.

The University of Houston spent \$53 million on a wellness center, including hot tubs, waterfalls and pool slides. The school has a 5-story climbing wall, while boulders and palm trees frame the leisure pools outside.

The University of Vermont plans to spend \$70 million on a new student center, a colossal complex with a pub, a ballroom, theater, an artificial pond for wintertime skating and views of the mountains and Lake Champlain.

Now, we are not going to be able probably to talk about extravagant spending by the schools because we are not talking about the cost of college. We are talking about the cost of student loans that, because of this extravagant spending, students are having to take out to go to college.

Makes me want to go back to school. Some of these things sound pretty enticing. Some are pretty nice.

□ 1630

But what about the kids that are trying to get an education? They don't really, some of them, have time to use these hot tubs, anyway. They are work-

ing to put their way through school. Why don't we focus some of that stuff on the cost of an education rather than on just trying to save a few students who have already graduated, who are already on the ladder to receiving the American Dream.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy.

In listening to my friends from the other side of the aisle, first of all, I am sorry my friend from Georgia is not here because I think I could tell him who the 10 percent are who don't believe in clean air, at least I could direct him to people in the administration and to the committee leadership on the other side of the aisle for the last 12 years who proposed policies that clearly indicate that they don't care about clean air.

It is amusing to hear from our friends from the other side of the aisle who for 12 years have run the show and are complaining about some of the choices that are being made by some 4,000 institutions of higher education. If they had something that they wanted to do, I am sorry, but they didn't for the last 12 years. But what we have done in the first 12 days is to act to make a difference.

Mr. MCKEON. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would be happy to yield on the gentleman's time?

Mr. MCKEON. I yield 1 minute so we could talk about that.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would be happy to.

Mr. MCKEON. I introduced a bill that really would have addressed some of these issues. In fact, in the last Congress we passed a bill out of this body. It stalled on the other side of the Capitol, but we passed a bill out of this body that would have addressed some of those issues, and we did it in a bipartisan way. I appreciate those who voted for it on that side of the aisle.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. And I am saying for 12 years they had a chance. I am sorry if you couldn't work with the administration and the Republicans who ran the other Chamber. But my point is I am not dealing with Taj Mahals; I am dealing with community colleges that have not had the basics. I am not talking about rock walls for 50 students at one time; I am talking about basic laboratory space, classroom space, library space, people who are having difficulty getting access.

The point is that the people on the other side of the aisle have been talking about this while they have been cutting opportunities and cutting budgets, cutting taxes. This bill continues our commitment to working families, promoting competitiveness in the workforce by starting by cutting interest rates on these subsidized un-

dergraduate loans. It targets the lower and middle income students and their families with the most financial need and the least support.

The poor often get grants; the rich don't need them. This bill would save that college borrower in the middle thousands of dollars. In my State in Oregon, our students have the second highest amount of debt in the country. Over 40,000 Oregon students a year will be substantially helped by this legislation amongst the 5½ million students around the country in times of skyrocketing tuition.

Now, unlike the Republican approach of the last 12 years of cutting budgets and cutting taxes and putting the tab on the credit cards of our youth, this bill is fully paid for by offsets. Five of these six were included in President Bush's fiscal year 2006 budget and have bipartisan support.

We owe it to our students, our communities, and hard pressed families to make college not just a dream but an affordable reality, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5 as an important first step in making that happen.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) for 1 minute.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the Chairman for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5. This legislation will help ease the burden of student loans that so many of today's young people face by cutting loan interest rates in half over the next 5 years.

As the father of three, I am all too familiar with the challenges of financing a college education. I have one child in law school, one in undergraduate school. It is very, very difficult. I can imagine the vast majority of the American families that don't make what Members of Congress make, how even more difficult it is for them. So a college education becomes out of reach for many families. It is very, very important.

We are going to cut student loan interest rates in half by the next 5 years. The vast majority of student loan borrowers are low to middle income students who are burdened with huge amounts of debt upon graduating. In my home State of New York, the average subsidized Stafford loan debt for a 4-year graduate is over \$14,000, and a student starting school in 2007 will save \$2,360 over the life of his loan; a student who starts school in 2011 will save over \$4,500 over the life of this loan.

These are real savings put directly into the pockets of people who need it most, and I am proud that Democrats have made it a priority to make college more affordable in this 110th Congress. This is the right first step. I commend the Chairman and I commend the leadership of the Democrats here in the 110th Congress.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I now yield to Mr. ETHERIDGE from North Carolina for the purposes of engaging in a colloquy.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I thank the chairman for yielding to me and I support this bill to cut interest rates in half for our students.

Let me say, as the first member of my family to graduate from college, I know firsthand that affordable access to higher education is the key to the American dream for working families. The cost of attending college continues to skyrocket and puts it out of reach, as we have already heard and I won't state the numbers, for many working families and students.

In our State of North Carolina, Mr. Chairman, we have a unique situation where our State nonprofits provide significant benefits to students. I am concerned that this legislation could have the unintended consequences of reducing the benefits that our students will receive through our nonprofit lenders.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for his inquiry, and I would say to the gentleman that I appreciate you sharing your concerns with me. Nonprofit lenders, certainly, our guaranty agents all play a necessary role in the Federal student loan program. Our goal is to ensure in the end that our policy benefits all students, and I pledge to work with you to ensure that we meet this goal and maximize the benefits of the most number of students.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I thank the gentleman, and look forward to working with you as the bill moves along to make sure that this takes care of our students.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5 and urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass this important first step toward making college more affordable.

As the first member of my family to graduate from college, I know firsthand that affordable access to quality higher education is the key to the American Dream for working families. The costs of attending college continue to skyrocket and putting college out-of-reach for middle class families. Since 2001, tuition and fees at public universities have increased by 41 percent after inflation, and tuition and fees at private universities have jumped by 17 percent after inflation. According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, financial barriers will prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a four-year public college over the next decade, and prevent another two million high school graduates from attending any college at all.

Unfortunately, recent Congresses and this Administration have failed to take action to help our working families and college students. In fact, the 109th Congress raided billions of dollars from federal support for college aid to pay for tax breaks for the wealthiest few. And even yesterday, the Administration announced its opposition to H.R. 5 by stating college students do not need more help because college graduates "have higher lifetime earnings." Sadly, this Administration just doesn't get it.

H.R. 5 is designed to make college more affordable and accessible by cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans for undergraduates in half over the next five years. H.R.

5 will cut the interest rate from the current 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. As a strong supporter of education, I support H.R. 5 and also want this Congress to increase investments in Pell Grants for low-income families and other federal financial aid for college. Education is the great equalizer in our society because it gives each citizen the opportunity to make the most of his or her God-given abilities. The new Democratic Majority must reverse the failed priorities of the past and invest in education for greater opportunities for all Americans.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support budget discipline, and I am pleased the Democratic Leadership has made good on our promise of no new deficit spending.

I urge all my colleagues in joining with me to pass H.R. 5.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time.

Mr. MCKEON. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, once again, we just heard that 5 years from now somebody that takes out a loan will save \$4,400. Five years from now, there will be no savings based on current interest rates which are 6.8 percent because that is what the rate will go back to. There will be a 6-month window; if somebody takes a loan out at that point, that particular loan they will repay at 3.4 percent. The rest of the time it goes back.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear. Had this debate been held in the Education and Labor Committee, I believe the bill we are slated to vote on in a few minutes would have been substantially better.

What could we have done in committee to improve upon this badly flawed legislation?

For starters, we would have been able to change the fact that college students won't even feel the slightest impact from this plan until they begin repaying their loans when they aren't even students anymore. In other words, we would have made clear that this proposal does nothing to expand college access. And, as a result, we could have done better.

Had we done our work through regular order, rather than providing 5 years of gradually increasing benefits to college graduates, we could have crafted a reform measure that continues our commitment to real student aid, a reform measure, while ensuring a sharper focus on institutional accountability. And, as a result, we could have done better.

And, had this bill gone through committee we also would have been able to work to ensure this proposal included language that improves college affordability. We would have discussed the fact that we are spending some \$90 billion this year on Federal student aid, triple what it was just a decade ago, and we also would have reminded one another that even in spite of this dramatic increase in aid, tuition continues to skyrocket. And, as a result, we could have done better.

In committee, Madam Speaker, we also would have more quickly exposed

those who were playing fast and loose with the facts. For example, when some on the other side of the aisle say that a typical borrower would save about \$4,400 over the life of his or her loan because of H.R. 5, we would have made clear that this simply is not possible. We would have explained to our committee colleagues that for a borrower to receive the complete \$4,400 in savings, the 3.4 percent rate must stay in effect for years at a time rather than the 6-month window, and they must consolidate their loans and stretch out repayment over 15 years.

In reality, Madam Speaker, for a college freshman who receives a loan at 3.4 percent in the fall of 2011, the only semester during which such loan rate will be available, he or she would save a whopping \$6.42 a month in repayment. That is right, \$6.42, thanks to the bait and switch tactic disguised as a sunset in this flawed legislation.

Consider this: If we were to put the same savings into Pell Grants, for example, that H.R. 5 earmarks for these gradually reduced interest rates for college graduates, we could increase Pell by about \$500.

I only wish we were afforded that opportunity. However, we weren't, and the legislation before us is little more than a reflection of the broken process by which it was cobbled together.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the staff of the majority side of the committee, Gabby Gomez, Julie Radocchia, Lisette Partelow, Stephanie Moore, Brian Kennedy from my staff for their great efforts in helping to prepare this legislation for the 100 hours, legislation that will have a dramatic and important impact on the cost of student loans for students borrowing from the subsidized loan program.

Madam Speaker and Members of the House, we come to the end of this debate on the question of whether or not we ought to make an effort to reduce the cost of college for millions of college students who will be taking out loans in the future to try to pay for that cost of college, and I think the resounding answer of this Congress in a few minutes will be: Yes, we should. Because we understand from discussions with our families, with our neighbors, with people in our communities that families are struggling with their children to try and figure out how they can afford them the opportunity that has become so terribly important in the economic future of these young people, and that is a college education. No longer today can you get by with a high school education. In fact, for most jobs now and most jobs certainly in the future we know that employers are telling us that at a minimum 2 years of college education is required. So this bill is about the opportunity to provide those students the means by which they go to college.

I have listened to all of this discussion on the other side of the aisle. The fact of the matter is they simply don't understand the bill. When a person is deciding whether or not they are going to pay the tuition this year, some of these students are eligible for a Pell Grant, they will get their \$4,100; they still won't be able to meet the cost of the college, and they will borrow money. And under this legislation, after July, they will start to get a reduced interest rate, and next year they will get a further reduction in the rate and it will continue on. Unless the Republicans are going to repeal this legislation, maybe you are going to repeal it and take away this benefit for the students, it will continue on, as the gentleman knows. Just as we have a sunset in the Higher Education Act, a reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, we continue to reauthorize them time and time again because that is the commitment of this Congress, and I don't think the gentleman is suggesting that.

So what we have today is the opportunity for this Congress in the first 100 hours, in the first 100 hours of legislative business to reduce the student loans for those people on a subsidized loan from 6.8 percent down to 3.4 percent over the next 5 years and then thereafter. That is a magnificent opportunity.

When it is fully implemented this legislation will provide \$4,400 in interest rate relief. \$4,400 is a very substantial relief to low income and middle income families when they look at the life cycle cost of what it is going to cost to acquire 4 years of education to get that basic B.A. degree. When they look at that, they will see that this legislation will substantially reduce their costs.

But as Speaker PELOSI made very clear about this 100 hours, this is only the beginning. This is a down payment on our efforts to reduce the cost of college.

Yes, we want to follow along with Mr. McKEON's suggestions and his work in talking to the universities about whether or not they are doing all they can to keep the cost of college down and to make it affordable. We want to increase the Pell Grant, and we will be doing that in this committee and in the Appropriations Committee. And we hope to be able to enlarge the tax deduction for parents who are paying for the tuition and the cost of college beyond that.

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So, yes, in this 100 hours, this is what we can do. This is what is affordable. Yes, my colleagues talk about all that they wanted to do. They paid for none of it. They sent the bill to these very same college students in terms of deficit, in terms of debt, in terms of interest on the debt, trillions of dollars of debt. This they may think is too small now, but the fact of the matter is, it is very important to these families that

it is paid for so we don't continue to add to the debt because we have said we were also going to be fiscally responsible and have pay-as-you-go.

Finally, there has been a lot of discussion today about who doesn't like this bill. Maybe some of the lenders don't like this bill, some of the pundits don't like this bill. Maybe some of the people who work with the lenders don't like this bill. The people who like this bill and the people who matter are the students. And that is why U.S. PIRG and the U.S. Student Association and so many students support this legislation, because they know what this means to them with the passage of this bill, that their interest rates will be lower. They know this will lower the cost of college.

That is what we said we would do. That is what we are going to do. That is what the 100 hours have been about. That is what is going to happen with the passage of this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support the legislation. Help these students and help families with the cost of college.

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I believe we can all agree that we must work to increase opportunities to enhance the education of America's men and women. Education provides the needed foundation for helping Americans become productive working citizens. This makes our country stronger and more competitive both now and in the future.

Because I believe we must open the doors to higher education while ensuring taxpayers are protected, I plan to vote in favor of H.R. 5. This bill cuts subsidized student loan interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over a period of 5 years and includes offsets within the federal budget to ensure the budget deficit is not increased. This makes the bill a "win-win" situation for both college graduates and taxpayers.

However, the bill before us contains serious weaknesses—weaknesses that could have been avoided had the Majority allowed for a more open discussion both in committee and on the House floor. The bill lacks in its ability to help individuals who need to fund their education today. To truly increase college enrollment and affordability, students need to have increased access to financial aid while they are attending college.

Last year Republicans brought to the House floor more comprehensive legislation that created Academic Competitiveness and Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grant programs to supplement the existing Pell Grant program. I supported this measure as well as an increase in student Stafford loan limits from \$2,625 to \$3,500 a year for first year students and \$3,500 to \$4,500 a year for second year students. These measures were signed into law on February 8, 2006 and are helping students get increased access to financial aid as we speak.

By focusing on the principles of fairness, accountability, affordability and quality, we can continue to reform federal student aid programs to both maximize the benefits for students and spend taxpayer dollars wisely. I look forward to the Majority changing their closed door policy and giving all Members of Congress an opportunity to put forth their ideas to develop comprehensive higher edu-

cation reform this year. We must continue to improve our efforts to increase college access and affordability to help Americans achieve a better future for themselves and their families.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce interest rates for student borrowers. This bill would provide a fifty percent reduction in the interest rates applied to loans provided through the Federal Family Education Loan and Direct Loan programs to undergraduate students over the next five years. These interest rates would be reduced to the 3.4 percent by the year 2011.

Tuition costs and fees for four-year colleges and universities in the United States have risen 41 percent after inflation since 2001. The Congressional Advisory Commission on Student Financial Assistance reports that nearly 4.4 million high school students will not be able to afford to attend a four-year public college over the next 10 years. If we do not act today, Madam Speaker, 12 million fewer college-educated workers will be among America's workforce by the year 2020.

The interest rate cuts proposed by H.R. 5 are significant, and will help stem this potential crisis. For example, a student with a \$13,800 loan will save nearly \$4,400 over the life of their loan. This will serve to mitigate the rise in college tuition, and will allow nearly 5.5 million students in the United States and the territories—especially those in the middle- and low-income brackets—to pursue and attain a quality higher education. Increasing the numbers of American workers who earned a college degree will help ensure the strength and vibrancy of America's economy into the next generation. The realities of the global marketplace place a high premium on workers with advanced education and training. We must do all that we can to make such education and training accessible to as many of our children as possible.

I represent the territory of Guam. This legislation is of great value to my constituents who plan to seek higher education. It is my hope that enactment of the provision of this bill into law will those among my constituency who previously believed higher education to be unaffordable to reconsider and pursue college degrees. This legislation will significantly lower the overall financial burden of higher education for Americans.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of the College Student Relief Act of 2007. This bill will make college more affordable for the more than 5.5 million students who depend on subsidized student loans to pay for a higher education.

If our country is to continue as the world leader and remain competitive in today's highly technical global economy, we must maintain a highly educated workforce. To achieve that goal, we must give all America's children the opportunity to develop their talents and reach their full potential.

Tragically, our country fails to benefit from the talents of so many of our students simply because they cannot afford a college education. Tuition and fees at most four-year institutions have skyrocketed in recent years, rising 41 percent since 2001. These high costs are financial barriers for many students seeking a college degree. In fact, over the next ten

years the cost of higher education will prevent nearly 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a four-year public institution and another 2 million from going to college at all.

The passage of the College Student Relief Act will help to alleviate this financial burden for talented, hardworking students who cannot afford their education without financial assistance. For example, over five years, the bill will cut student loan interest rates in half, saving a student on average \$4,400 over the life of his or her loan. That \$4,400 in savings will be a lifeline to low and middle income students as they deal with the financial pressures of life after college, such as paying for rent, utilities, groceries, health care, and other essential costs, in addition to paying off their loans.

I am especially excited about this bill because it will greatly help poor and middle-income students in my district realize their dream of a college education. These students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college, pay for college through a combination of scholarships, need-based loans, and jobs on the side. I am always impressed that, even in the face of so many obstacles and sacrifices, they remain determined to succeed, make their family proud, and give back to their community.

Madam Speaker, cutting interest rates on subsidized student loans today will not only help students across our country realize their dreams, but it will also help to make our country stronger. I support the bill before us today and I will continue to support other legislation to lower the financial barriers to a college education for our nation's children.

It is time to pass the College Student Relief Act.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Loan Relief Act. As many of my colleagues have explained, H.R. 5 cuts in half over the next five years the interest rates on subsidized student loans for undergraduate students. This will make college more affordable and accessible for low- and middle-income students and their families.

Since 2001 tuition and fees at public universities have increased by 41 percent after inflation. During that same period tuition and fees at private universities have also increased by 17 percent after inflation. At the same time, interest rates on student loans have risen by almost 2 percentage points, adding another increasing cost to students and their families. It is estimated that 4.4 million high school students will be prevented from attending a four-year public college over the next decade, and another two million high school graduates will be prevented from attending any college at all, because of financial barriers.

In my home state alone, over 20,000 students currently have subsidized loans at four-year institutions, at an average debt of over \$12,000. For these students starting school in 2007, over the life of the loan they will save over \$2,000, while the average student starting school in 2011 will save over \$4,000 over the life of the loan. While this savings is certainly significant, more than saving money, this legislation will provide opportunity to students across New Mexico, and the country, who otherwise might not be able to attend college. This is an inestimable value both to each of these students, as well as to our respective state's and our nation, which benefits from having a highly skilled and well-educated workforce.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of America's college-bound students. As an original co-sponsor of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act, I join my colleagues in helping increase the access and affordability of college to over 5 million students.

In today's economy, the key to higher wages is through higher education. Unfortunately, the soaring cost of college education has left many of America's young adults behind. No student should ever be turned away from college for fear of being unable to pay the debt.

The College Student Relief Act of 2007, H.R. 5, makes good on the Democratic pledge for a New Direction for this country. This smart, fiscally-responsible bill would cut the interest rate for undergraduate students with subsidized student loans in half over the next five years, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. H.R. 5 is targeted to help the students most in need, those with subsidized loans from low and middle income families. The bill's cost is offset with six modest reductions in various subsidies to lenders and guaranty agencies.

In my home state of Connecticut, over 33,000 students with subsidized loans would benefit from this bill. For those entering college in 2007, they will save more than \$2,000 over the life of their loans. When the rate cut is fully implemented in 2011, students will save over \$4,000. This is a substantial savings for students entering our workforce.

Today's legislation is about helping students and their families. The opportunity for a college education should be available to all Americans. As a Nation, we must invest in our youth and insure they have every tool and opportunity to succeed in the global economy. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, a bill that would expand educational opportunity for millions of young Americans by slicing interest rates on federally subsidized student loans in half.

This fair, well-balanced legislation would open the doors to America's colleges and universities for millions of our sons and daughters who would have otherwise been dissuaded by the high cost of pursuing a higher education. Among those millions will be young men and women who will be the first in their families to attend college. There will be inventors and innovators, businessmen and women, generals, scientists, leaders of all stripes, and, surely, future members of this body.

At the University of Texas at El Paso, UTEP, in my district, students entering school in 2007 will save \$2,300 on an average debt of \$13,800, and students entering in 2011, when the full interest rate cuts take effect, will save over \$4,400 on the same amount of debt.

These savings would mean the world to my community of El Paso and to Latino communities across the country. This is true because Hispanic students have historically borrowed less on average than other groups, a reluctance that means students are often too busy working for a paycheck to complete their degrees in a timely fashion. The six billion dollars in loan relief we are passing today will mean our kids will have the ability to borrow the money they need to finance their edu-

cations and ultimately get the jobs that will allow them prosperous lives.

What we are doing today also has broader significance. It is significant to the strength of our economy and the security of our country. If America is to compete economically with countries like China and India and fill key positions in our national security agencies, we need to start by sending more kids to college. Under current policy, financial barriers will prevent 6.4 million high school graduates from attending college and would cost our economy 12 million college-educated workers by the year 2020. This is a crisis, Madam Speaker. We need to recognize right now that the investments in education we make or choose not to make today will determine our economic future—whether or not our grandchildren and great-grandchildren have high-quality jobs.

College access is an integral part of our competitiveness and security puzzle, because we will not find the answers to the challenges we face as a Nation without a well-educated and innovative workforce. The bill we are passing today will make our country a safer and a more prosperous place.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill, and I look forward to continuing this dialogue about the importance of education for national competitiveness and security.

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I stand here today in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007.

I was proud to cast my support for this bill earlier today and commend the democratic leadership for making college affordability one of our first items of business in the 110th Congress.

Our children's future is very important to America's families. A quality education is key to that future.

However, many of America's working families, including Latino families, struggle to provide this future for their children.

The high cost of an education and the lack of adequate financial aid makes obtaining a higher education unattainable.

Since 2001, tuition and fees at private universities have jumped by 17 percent after inflation.

At public universities tuition and fees have increased by 41 percent after inflation.

In addition to tuition and fees rising, interest rates on student loans have risen.

Over the last 5 years, the interest rates on student loans have jumped by almost 2 percent—further increasing the cost of college.

During the same period of time that tuition jumped by 41 percent, the median household income for Latinos fell by 4 percent.

Of the millions of student loan borrowers with need based loans, half have family incomes between \$26,000 and \$68,000.

According to the 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 73 percent of Latino families had incomes below \$62,240. Forty-seven 47 percent of Latino families have incomes less than \$34,288 per year.

In 2005, the total cost of college for one Latino student was 32 percent of a median household's income for a public institution.

It nears 75 percent of a median household's income for a private institution.

Yet Latinos receive the least financial aid of any ethnic group, including Federal and non-Federal aid.

While the average total aid award for all undergraduates in 2003–04 was \$6,890, Latinos

received the lowest average aid award of \$6,250.

The high cost of higher education leaves many Latino students with no choice.

According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, the cost of a higher education will prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a 4-year public college over the next decade.

And would prevent another two million high school graduates from attending any college at all.

This road is especially difficult for Latinos, who face low family incomes, low financial aid awards and a reluctance to assume debt.

Latinos represent 15 percent of the college-age population, yet only 12 percent of all undergraduates in U.S. colleges and universities, and 5 percent of students in graduate programs.

Only 12 percent of Latinos over the age 25 have a bachelor's degree.

Of all undergraduates enrolled in the 2003–2004 academic year, 49 percent of Latino undergraduates were more likely to be first-generation students, 51 percent are enrolled on a part-time basis and the majority have low-incomes.

Latinos and other low income communities deserve the security provided by an affordable higher education. H.R. 5 is part of the solution.

Cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans in half from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent over the next five years will make college more affordable for thousands of Latino students.

In fact, this bill will save students with \$13,800 in subsidized federal student loan debt approximately \$4,400 over the life of their loan.

At a time when financial barriers are preventing millions of young Americans from attending college we must make college more affordable.

I was fortunate to have access to federal and state programs such as the Pell Grant and Work-Study Program.

As Director of the California Student Opportunity and Access Program, I was able to help students find ways to afford their college education.

As a former Member of the Rio Hondo Community College Board, I know the struggles our colleges face in providing services to students.

My experience taught me that access to higher education should not be a privilege available to a select few, but a right available to all.

Investing in affordable higher education for every child benefits our society as a whole.

Today we are fulfilling our promise to make college more affordable for students.

Cutting interest rates in half on student loans is the first step.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensuring our children—all of our children—have a brighter future through education.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, one of the pillars of the New Direction for America was a promise to make higher education more affordable and accessible so that more Americans can advance their education and enhance their economic future in an increasingly competitive global economy. Today we are taking a first step towards achieving this goal.

For a country whose economic success relies on the very best colleges and universities

in the world, we are at an important crossroads. Today's college students are graduating with increasing levels of student loan debt—\$17,500 on average. In many cases, this debt is simply too substantial to manageably repay. For many young people, the mere thought of putting themselves in such enormous debt could lead them to delay or forgo college. Indeed, according to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, financial barriers will prevent at least 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a four-year public college over the next decade, and prevent another 2 million high school graduates from attending any college at all.

At a time when college tuition is skyrocketing—increasing by 35% at four-year public institutions over the past five years—it is clear that Congress needs to act and act now to make college more affordable.

The College Student Relief Act cuts the interest rates for undergraduate students with subsidized student loans in half over the next five years at no cost to the taxpayer. This commonsense legislation will help 5.5 million students across the country.

In Michigan, for about 144,000 student borrowers who will graduate from Michigan colleges and universities, this bill would generate savings of over \$4,200 on average over the life of their loans. For example, these savings will benefit close to 1,200 students at Lawrence Tech and 3,500 students at Oakland University.

For Michigan, the benefits of this loan relief couldn't be clearer. A report by Michigan's Lt. Governor John Cherry's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth spelled out how Michigan's economic future is directly linked to our ability to accelerate the completion of degrees of higher education. Two-thirds of the jobs created in the next decade will require post-secondary education and training.

By making a higher education more affordable for thousands of Michiganders we are not only helping them realize their dreams, but we are also helping ensure the future of our state.

I urge all of my colleagues to stand today with our students and support the College Student Relief Act.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5, a bill to lower the cost of college for millions of middle class Americans.

Tuition all over the country has skyrocketed. The State University of New York (SUNY) costs over \$12,000 a year to attend for a commuter and almost \$17,000 a year to live on campus.

And these are resident in state tuition figures.

The GOP's response to the sky-rocketing price of college tuition: Last year, Republicans cut \$12 billion from student aid. To add insult to injury on December 23, 2004 with a Christmas gift only worthy of the Grinch, the Republicans actually cut back college grant programs to 1.3 million students.

Democrats offer a New Direction. Our American direction is designed to make college more affordable for Americans by cutting the current interest rate for student loans in half. Our bill will save middle class families in New York and nationwide approximately \$4,400 over the life of their loan.

Democrats are putting our money where our mouth is and passing legislation to actually benefit middle class families. I urge my col-

leagues to pass this common sense legislation.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the "College Student Relief Act of 2007," H.R. 5. Every opportunity I get, I tell young people about the benefits of a college education. I use my own experience as an example of the opportunities that higher education can afford. I have a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a law degree from the University of Maryland and I am convinced that, without those degrees, I would not be standing before you today. The statistics support this assertion. The poverty rate for college graduates is about one-third that of high school graduates and individuals with college degrees are less likely to be unemployed. Further, women with bachelor's degrees earn 70 percent more than those with high school diplomas, and for men the difference is 63 percent.

Regrettably, a college education is becoming increasingly inaccessible in this country. A recent assessment by The Education Trust entitled, "Engines of Inequality: Diminishing Equity in the Nation's Premier Public Universities," finds that public institutions are no longer the engines of upward social mobility that they once were. To the contrary, these institutions are pursuing increased selectivity over expanded opportunity—targeting wealthier students to improve rankings in college guides. Some argue that the system is now a meritocracy, but this is by no means the case. The highest achieving students from high-income families are nearly four times more likely to attend a highly selective university than the highest achievers from low-income families.

Our nation's low-income and middle-class students are being pushed out of premier colleges and universities simply because they cannot afford to attend. Tuition and fees have risen by 35 percent in the past five years, and the typical student now graduates with \$17,500 of debt. The Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance predicts that rising costs will prevent at least 4.4 million high school graduates from attending college over the next decade. This trend affects not only individual students, but our nation as a whole. By 2020, the U.S. is expected to experience a shortage of nearly 12 million college-educated workers, losing its competitive edge in the global marketplace.

That is why I stand before you today to express my strong support for this bill, which would cut student loan interest rates in half over five years—giving 5.5 million students a much needed break in the cost of college. In my home state of Maryland alone, 48,484 students would get a break. We must do all that we can to provide every American with access to a college education. I want to thank Mr. MILLER and the Democratic leadership for introducing this vitally important legislation and bringing us one step closer to achieving that goal.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of making higher education more affordable. Access to college is absolutely necessary if our country is to fulfill its promise of economic, social, and political inclusiveness for all individuals. By cutting interest rates in half on needs-based student loans, we will make college more accessible to hundreds of thousands of students from low- and middle-income families.

Last November, the American people sent a clear and powerful message. They are tired of

business as usual in Washington. Instead of economic policies that help the rich get richer, they want education policies that will help their children to realize an American dream that is increasingly difficult to come by. Since 2001, college costs have risen by 41 percent. According to the Department of Education, such increases put college out of reach for as many as 200,000 would-be students a year. Rising costs have also forced more and more students to rely on loans to pay for college, which now saddle the average graduate with \$17,500 in Federal student loan debt.

The College Student Relief Act, H.R. 5, offers real relief to students priced out of college and burdened by debt. According to USPIRG, my home State of California has 228,500 subsidized loan borrowers. This bill will save the average California student enrolling in college this fall \$2,490. When fully implemented, it will save the average student who starts college in 2011 \$4,830.

Today's legislation is an important first step in what I hope will be an ongoing effort to make college more affordable. This effort should include raising the maximum Pell Grant amount and exploring other policies to open the doors to college to a larger slice of our society. Our guiding principle should be ensuring that all students who meet academic requirements for undergraduate study can afford to attend college, not just those from wealthy families.

I urge my colleagues to heed the voice of the American people and take this initial step toward making higher education accessible to all.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

The strength of our economy relies on a highly-educated workforce. That's why Congress can and must do more to help families afford college. Cutting the interest rate on student loans is a good place to start in reducing the financial burden students and their families face.

Each year the high costs of college education will prevent many American students from pursuing a college education. The savings created by reducing the interest rate of student loans from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent will provide an opportunity for more of those students to afford a higher education.

According to analysis provided by U.S. PIRG, there are over 94,000 students in the State of Indiana who are currently receiving subsidized loans. Upon graduation from a 4-year institution, these Hoosier students are saddled with an average Stafford loan debt of \$12,967. Enactment of this bill will bring an average savings of \$2,140 to \$4,140 over the life of the student's loan.

The financial burden of today's college graduates continues to worsen as college tuition escalates at a steady clip. This weekend I heard this very sentiment from students at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville and Indiana State University in Terra Haute. Passage of H.R. 5 will help ease this burden and give college graduates a break as they begin their career.

Enacting H.R. 5 is only a start. Congress must press ahead by finding sensible ways to make college education both affordable and assessable to students from low- and middle-income families. Our strength as a nation depends on fostering a highly-educated workforce.

It is also important to note that the College Student Relief Act adheres to the pay-as-you-go budgeting rule that Congress adopted earlier this month.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act, shows Congress can make a significant difference in the lives of average Americans without raising taxes or adding to the staggering national deficit. I am proud to support this bill and I look forward to keeping the focus on making a college education accessible and affordable for Hoosier families.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H.R. 5, the "College Student Relief Act of 2007."

I want to thank Chairman GEORGE MILLER for his leadership on this bill, and thank Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic Leadership team for making this a priority during the first 100 hours of the 110th Congress.

Madam Speaker, today, we take an important step in the right direction—a direction that leads to closing the gap between the have's and the have not's in this Nation.

And in doing so, Madam Speaker, today the doors of opportunity will swing open to a whole new generation.

Cutting the interest rate on student loans in half will have a tremendous impact on our nation's students and allow millions of others to pursue their dreams of higher education. In my home state of California, the estimated savings for one student will be over \$4000. By making this cut, we are alleviating the burden on lower and middle class families, and allowing their children to reach higher.

Madam Speaker, we all know that there are many challenges in our current educational system. Excessive student loan payments are just one of many obstacles. Today, we remove an obstacle placed in the path of the students that need this help the most.

We need to be creating the workforce of the future. It is estimated that 42 percent of all jobs next year will require post-secondary education. That is why, I know, that today is just one step in why this Democratic House will take in improving the accessibility to our institutions of higher education.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5, for the future of our children.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the College Student Relief Act, as it will give financial assistance to millions of student borrowers.

In order to remain competitive in a global economy, students are taking out more loans and falling further into debt. The College Student Relief Act will go a long way towards making college more affordable and accessible. H.R. 5 will cut interest rates in half on certain federally subsidized student loans over the next 5 years. These cuts will particularly impact low- and middle-income students saving the typical borrower approximately \$4,400 over the life of their loan. These interest rate cuts will help more than 5.5 million undergraduate students once they are fully phased in.

With the cost of higher education continuing to skyrocket, this is an important first step in easing the financial burden for millions of students and their families. It's estimate that around 200,000 students delay or completely forgo going to college due to the associated costs. This is simply unacceptable. We will not be able to continue to compete in the global

economy if we continue to throw hurdles in front of our young people. Today's vote to ease the debt burden for millions of students will go a long way toward increasing access to higher education.

If Americans fail to address these issues now, we will default on our traditional commitment to a better future for our children. We owe it to our young people to provide the opportunities that will allow them to become successful and productive adults.

I would like to commend the Democratic Leadership for their dedication to this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5, the so-called "College Student Relief Act." Although its supporters would have the public believe that implementation of this bill would be a cure-all to the skyrocketing costs of higher education, the truth is that H.R. 5 does nothing to address tuition costs for students and could actually end up making college even more expensive.

In fact, the only students who will be fortunate enough to reap the full benefits of this proposal are those who take out their loans during the small 6-month window from July 1, 2011 to January 1, 2012. Before that date, the promise of halving the interest rates is unfulfilled. And, after that date, the interest rate will again double.

While this bill provides great sound bites and interesting political opportunities for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, it also demonstrates that they have no intention of implementing an enduring plan which will address the costs of higher education. And, while this bill purports to help those in financial need, in reality, it only applies to college graduates who have already reaped the financial and other benefits of that education.

I am concerned for those students who apply for loans on January 2, 2012 and any date afterwards, for they will not only have missed the boat on a low-interest rate loan, but they will also bear the brunt of having to pay higher tuition costs. The proposal before us will exacerbate perverse incentives already at play with regard to government subsidies for student loans. College tuition costs have skyrocketed by almost 300 percent between 1982 and 2003. The only segment of our economy that comes even close to such growth—where costs have also outpaced inflation by such a dramatic gulf—is health care, which grew by nearly 200 percent. As the Wall Street Journal noted in an editorial today, "it's no coincidence that third parties foot the bill for big chunks of both higher ed and health care spending. . . ."

Colleges are serving up these Federal subsidies to education-hungry students knowing full well that those students will not be able to realistically judge the costs of the education they receive. Those students who apply for loans in that first semester of 2012 will be forced to pay for the sound bite we consider today.

While cutting the interest rates on students' loans made for an attractive campaign slogan, the new leadership is creating a program which is costly, has negligible effects for those it purports to help, and has retroactive consequences for many aspiring scholars. I challenge my colleagues to evaluate this bill for what it truly is: a political stunt which sorely

lacks an effective plan to cut college costs for future students.

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5, but I also stand to say that the legislation should be expanded to address not only college graduates but also students who are in college now and struggling with the weight of mounting tuition and expenses—or families that are considering college for their high school children.

The Chronicle of Higher Education reported this month that average tuition and fees at four-year colleges have increased by 38 percent in recent years. “Tuition inflation” far exceeds inflation in the general economy, and is pushing the dream of a college education away from too many families and students. For too many parents and too many children, college simply isn’t an option because it’s not affordable.

That’s wrong. But while H.R. 5 would aid college graduates, it would do nothing to help today’s college students or families that are struggling to pay for their children’s college expenses. H.R. 5 does not address the growing barrier that restricts access to higher education and new opportunities.

That’s a missed opportunity—not only for this House but also for the families who cannot afford their children’s college tuition and fees.

As H.R. 5 is considered in the Senate and later in the legislative process, it is my desire that its scope include not only college graduates but also current and prospective college students—and their families.

It is my further desire that the legislation should not hamper competition and restrict access to student loans for future graduates.

During the last six years, Congress increased spending on federal student aid by 57 percent. Funding for Pell Grants increased by nearly 50 percent. These programs have helped college graduates and current students.

It is my hope that before we vote again on H.R. 5, its scope is expanded to address the urgent needs of prospective and current college students, too.

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, like many of my colleagues have mentioned today, my brothers and sisters and I were the grandchildren of immigrants who barely knew English, and the first in our family to go to college. Although my mother was only able to attend school through the 5th grade, she instilled in us the importance of an education. My mother led by example, receiving her GED on her 80th birthday, and all six of us received at least one college degree. And we all worked our way through college, I myself swept floors. She wanted us to have a better life, to be able to provide for our families without constantly worrying and living paycheck to paycheck. And we have all led successful and happy lives thanks to her encouragement and strong will.

But this Nation has lost sight of the importance of an education. We have allowed our education system to fall to the wayside, and put our citizens at a disadvantage—when they try to move up the career ladder, and when our Nation competes on a global level. We have failed our constituents when we fail to not only provide access to education, but when we fail to encourage our young people to dream and to achieve.

America is now 39th in the world in math and science. As a former physical science

teacher and the current representative for Houston’s Johnson Space Center I find this simply unacceptable. During the Apollo years, our Nation united behind a vision, and backed that vision with proper resources, in turn inspiring millions of children to go into these fields. The technological and medical advances that followed continue to benefit our Nation and the world. We have lost our vision. Our commitment to education and our position as a global leader.

Now is the time to repair the foundation that our country is based on—equality. It has long been said that education is the great equalizer. In recent years, millions of working and middle-class families have been left behind as college tuition has skyrocketed and student loan interest rates have risen sharply. By taking this important first step—making college more affordable and accessible for all Americans—we are showing our Nation’s young adults that we are dedicated to their future. We will not make it to Mars, grow new hearts in Petri dishes, or develop new fuels without a renewed commitment to education.

A commitment to education should include all types of post-high school programs. We must encourage young adults to attend vocational schools as well as universities. Those who work as skilled laborers, such as mechanics and electricians, keep our society running and deserve encouragement and aid as well.

This bill, H.R. 6, The College Student Relief Act of 2007, is a fiscally responsible measure that meets our new pay-go requirements. It will ease the burden students and families bear as they strive to improve their situations and contribute to our Nation’s economy, but not increase the burden on taxpayers. This is not merely a win-win situation; this is a win-surplus. Our country will benefit immensely both globally and locally through a renewed commitment to education.

Our students deserve the best. They are our future, and by cutting student loan interest rates and expanding access to higher education we are ensuring our Nation’s future.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007. Currently, Massachusetts has about 99,000 undergraduate students attending 4-year colleges and universities who receive federal need-based college loans—or Stafford Loans.

In my own district, the 3rd Congressional District of Massachusetts, at Worcester State College, a 4-year public college, more than 1,300 students have Stafford Loans; and at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a 4-year private college, more than 1,700 students have Stafford Loans.

In Massachusetts, the average Stafford Loan Debt is about \$14,000 (\$13,994).

Even though, under H.R. 5, the full reduction in the interest rate takes five years to achieve—because Democrats believe in making sure their proposals are fully paid for—Massachusetts students starting college in 2007 will benefit immediately from these changes to the interest rates. The savings for the average student in Massachusetts receiving a Stafford Loan who starts school in 2007 will be \$2,310. That translates into \$1,760 for that student at Worcester State College and \$2,750 for the student at WPI.

And for the students who start school in 2011, when the interest rate reduction is fully

phased in, their savings will increase to \$4,470. Or once again, about \$3,420 for the student at Worcester State College, and about \$5,330 for the student at WPI.

These figures have real meaning to low- and middle-income students and their families. They are targeted at families whose annual income is less than \$70,000. These are the families and individuals who most need our support to achieve the dream of a college education. According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, financial barriers will prevent at least 4.4 million high school graduates from attending 4-year public colleges over the next decade—and another 2 million high school graduates from attending any college at all.

These reductions won’t cost the U.S. taxpayer a single dime.

They will barely cause a ripple in the profitability of banks and lenders currently doing business with the federal government in managing Stafford Loans—no matter how much complaining and moaning we’re likely to hear from them.

And let me emphasize one other point—I agree with my friends on the other side of the aisle that there are many reasons why a higher education is increasingly out of reach for many American families: The failure over the past several years to increase the maximum Pell Grant level, the stagnation of funding for campus-based aid programs, and the soaring costs of college tuition, fees, room and board—to name just a few. As my colleagues know, I have been a particular champion of significant increases both to the Pell Grant maximum level and overall funding of the program.

It’s my understanding that the gentleman from California, Chairman GEORGE MILLER, will begin hearings on these and other issues related to the affordability of a college education. Working through the Education and the Workforce Committee, legislation will be drafted and marked up through regular Committee process, reported out, and hopefully be scheduled on the House legislative calendar in the 110th Congress. So these profound issues that concern Republicans and Democrats alike will proceed through regular order with the full participation of the Minority.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the rule and the underlying bill. The cost of public university tuition has increased a staggering 41 percent since 2001. In my district in California’s Central Valley, high college costs have been a persistent barrier for working families seeking to send their children to college.

If our country is serious about preserving the American Dream and extending educational opportunity to the next generation of Americans, then we must take action. The College Student Relief Act would cut the interest rate on federal, subsidized loans in half over five years.

As a Blue Dog, I am proud to say that this bill is fiscally responsible: the cost will be offset by reductions in subsidies to lenders which have enjoyed bipartisan support in the past. This is a good bill for the American people, and I urge my colleagues to open the doors of opportunity for young Americans and support this bill.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act.

This much-needed legislation will make college more affordable and accessible by cutting the interest rate in half for undergraduates who take out subsidized Stafford loans. Because subsidized loans are need-based loans, the primary beneficiaries of this legislation will be low- and middle-income families.

In Michigan's 15th Congressional District, the average amount borrowed under the subsidized loan program is about \$14,000 per student. If this legislation is enacted, students who take out loans this fall will save \$2,300 over the life of the loan and students starting in 2011 will save nearly \$4,500. This is a significant amount of money, especially for a college student.

I would like to point out that despite all of the arguments I've been hearing about how much this bill will cost, I am proud to say that the Democrats are committed to fiscal responsibility and have drafted this bill to fully comply with the pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) budgetary requirements passed earlier this month. The PAYGO rules require any new spending to be offset in other spending areas. The costs of this legislation are entirely offset by six modest reductions in subsidies to lenders and guaranty agencies, five of which were proposed by President Bush in his budget for fiscal year 2006.

Our goal of creating a highly skilled and innovative domestic workforce begins with a college education. This bill is a bold step in the right direction towards advancing America's competitiveness in the global marketplace. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the future on additional measures such as increasing the maximum Pell grant, which will contribute to our mutual goal of higher education for all Americans.

Mr. SIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act, which cuts interest rates in half over the next five years for undergraduate students with subsidized loans. As a former teacher, I understand how important education is to every child. It ensures that everyone has the opportunity to succeed and to make the most of their dreams.

Yet college is soaring out of reach for American students. Today the average student graduates with \$17,500 in loan debt; almost 45 percent more than just 11 years ago. H.R. 5 makes a great first step in reducing the burden on students with these loans. In my home state of New Jersey, the typical student loan borrower will save approximately \$4,600 over the life of their loan because of this legislation.

Not only does this bill make college more affordable, it does so without further increasing the nation's debt. Specifically, this bill is paid for by six modest reductions in various subsidies to lenders and guaranty agencies.

I urge everyone to support making college more affordable by voting in favor of this legislation.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, Ohio students and their families are struggling. In fact, Ohio ranks 49th in affordability of college.

Sadly, this is a barrier many hard-working families cannot overcome. Bright young Ohioans are being shut out because college costs too much.

Today, by cutting student loan rates in half, we are opening up important opportunities for thousands of young Ohioans and young people across the nation.

Just in the first two years, this bill will save Ohio students an average of \$2,230 and in four years \$4,320.

We should ease the burden on our working families. We should put our students in a position to succeed in school and beyond. This bill, which cuts student loan rates, does just that.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the College Student Relief Act, which over the next five years will cut the student loan interest rate in half for undergraduate students with subsidized loans. And, I take exception to this Republican rhetoric about what the Democrats could have done under Republican domination.

Madam Speaker, Since 2001, tuition and fees have increased by 41 percent, after inflation, at four-year public colleges and by 17 percent (after inflation) at four-year private colleges.

Now, we have a chance to act; otherwise financial barriers will prevent more than 4 million students from attending a four-year college and more than 2 million from attending any college in the coming decade.

That would be a crisis for millions of hard-working families—but it also would be a crisis for our country's ability to compete in the 21st century economy.

In his article, "It's a Flat World, After All," Thomas Friedman argues that America's historical economic advantages have disappeared because "the world is flat, and anyone with smarts; access to Google; and, a cheap wireless laptop can join the innovation fray." No matter where they live in the world.

This means we must invest more in our most valuable resource—our people—and this bill would do just that.

For example, this bill will save the average student borrower who starts at a four-year college in California next year nearly \$2,500 over the life of a loan—and will save the same student who starts in 2011 nearly \$5,000 over the life of a loan.

Those savings are necessary to make a difference in the lives of millions of Americans and in the life of our country as to success over failure.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I am proud, as part of our first 100 hours, that Congress has committed to expanding higher education opportunities to more Americans. Education has always been the great equalizer in this country. With each generation doors are opened through greater access to education.

The health of our economy and prosperity of our middle class rests on having a highly-skilled and well-educated workforce. We all know stories of working class families struggling to make ends meet to put a child, sometimes the family's first generation, through college. It is a struggle millions of families go through, as college costs skyrocket year after year. Reducing the debt burden these families and students face is the least Congress can do to help meet their commitment and sacrifice.

H.R. 5 will provide a significant reduction in student loan interest rates for students who borrow under the subsidized student loan program.

This legislation is worthy in its intent and it is legislation I support. However, it is my hope

to work with my fellow members and the distinguished Chairman of Education and Labor to recognize the important role small, not-for-profit lenders play in opening doors to more working families. I believe it makes sense to distinguish not only between large and small lenders, but those that lend on a not-for-profit basis and who reinvest all revenues into additional student financial assistance.

Our goal is to improve educational opportunities for students and it is a goal I know our non-profit lenders share.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5.

In today's increasingly competitive economy, a college education is more important than ever. That's why it's essential for us to ensure that anyone who has the desire to receive a higher education has the opportunity to do so. Higher education shapes citizens as well as the future of our country.

Today escalating college costs and legislation passed by the Republican Majority in 2006 are creating insurmountable barriers across the country for students to afford a college education. According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, financial obstacles will prevent at least 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a four-year public college over the next decade. This is an inexcusable waste of our most valuable resource, the young people of our country.

H.R. 5 will lower these barriers, cutting interest rates in half over the next five years for undergraduate students with subsidized student loans. This relief is targeted to reach those most in need . . . students and families making between \$26,000 and \$68,000. When fully phased in, this legislation will save the typical borrower in California with \$15,125 in subsidized federal student loan debt approximately \$4,830 over the life of their loan. All told, this legislation will provide students with \$5.5 billion in financial relief and is entirely paid for through adjustments in lender rates, participation fees for financial institutions and collection fees for defaulted loans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. By doing so we will take an important step to improve access to higher education across the country as well as helping to relieve the burden on middle class families across the nation.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 65, the bill is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. MCKEON

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. MCKEON. I am.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. McKeon moves to recommit the bill H.R. 5 to the Committee on Education and

Labor with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. ____ BENEFITS CONTINGENT ON INCOME OR MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) **ELIGIBILITY FOR REDUCED RATES.**—Notwithstanding the amendments made by section 2 of this Act, a borrower shall not be eligible for a reduced interest rate under the amendments made by such section for any year during the repayment period of the loan unless—

(1) the borrower demonstrates, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, that the borrower's adjusted gross income for the most recently preceding year was less than \$65,000; or

(2) the borrower, during any part of that year—

(A) is serving on active duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency (as such term is defined in section 481(d)(4) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 188(d)(4)); or

(B) is performing qualifying National Guard duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency (as such term is defined in section 481(d)(5) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 188(d)(5)).

(b) **INCOME VERIFICATION.**—In prescribing regulations for purposes of subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall provide methods for verifying the adjusted gross income of a borrower that are, as nearly as practical, identical to the methods used to determine adjusted gross income and to verify that income for borrowers of income contingent loans under section 455(e) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(e)).

Mr. MCKEON (during the reading). Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, as I have said repeatedly today, the process followed to get this bill to the floor was badly flawed, and the legislation in question is a reflection of that. Our inability to amend the bill means that the bill we have before us today is exactly the same well-intentioned, yet completely misdirected proposal the majority leader thrust upon us just days ago.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle have been touting H.R. 5 as a student aid bill during this debate. However, as we have pointed out time after time, not a single college student or potential college student will benefit from this legislation. It impacts only those who graduate when, by definition, they are no longer students.

However, Madam Speaker, this motion would transform H.R. 5 from a critically flawed gimmick into a proactive measure that indeed could benefit borrowers, students, and taxpayers alike.

To begin, this motion would not block the new majority's promise to reduce college loan interest rates. In

fact, it would allow reductions to take place as scheduled for many of the very same graduates who would benefit from them in the first place. However, to ensure that those graduates who could pay their loans under a higher interest rate will do so, this motion establishes an income cap of \$65,000, the income level at which the existing student loan tax deduction is phased out, at which the interest rate for a loan will revert back to the current level of 6.8 percent.

That is almost twice the average family income of a student eligible to receive a subsidized student loan. However, graduates who may not have as high an income, those men and women who need a little extra help after graduation, will see their interest rate stay at the same exact level as directed by this legislation, as will active duty Armed Forces personnel.

This means for many first responders, nurses, teachers and other graduates who choose public careers, their interest rates will remain as scheduled, under H.R. 5. In other words, this motion will maintain most of the same borrower benefits embraced by the Democratic leadership. However, unlike H.R. 5, this motion reduces college loan interest rates and then some. By making the interest cap adjustment I just described, this motion will generate additional savings within the legislation, savings that can be directed toward deficit reduction or an increase in need-based aid such as Pell Grants.

I have argued throughout today's debate, and for years, frankly, that our first priority in higher education must be to expand access for low- and middle-income students. This motion embodies that very philosophy.

With the savings we will generate as part of this motion, we could provide more aid to a student struggling just to find the means to pay for college. Sadly, more than 400,000 students are fully prepared to attend 4-year college, but will be unable to do so due to record high financial barriers, according to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. For these students, the promise of a college education is an empty one, and for our Nation, the loss of human capital is a serious economic and social tragedy.

Under H.R. 5, highly paid college graduates would reap the benefits, but those struggling to find a way into school, they are forgotten altogether. It is ironic that the very same Members who supported the minimum wage increase a week ago for "fairness" reasons are today champions of a bill that would undermine that same principle.

Madam Speaker, a "yes" vote on this motion is a vote for lower college loan interest rates, more needs-based aid, and additional funds to pay down the Federal deficit. A "no" vote is a vote for providing benefits to well-paid graduates, not low-income students.

Let's give borrowers, students, and taxpayers a better deal. Let's improve this flawed legislation. Let's vote "yes" on this motion to recommit.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I would hope that the House would turn down this motion to recommit because if you don't, there is going to be an awful lot of people who are going to be terribly disappointed.

This motion as presented today would knock almost a million students out of the benefits of this legislation, the benefits of a reduced interest rate on their college loans.

This motion if it is accepted would mean that families that might have one, two or maybe three kids in college, if they earn more than \$68,000, they wouldn't get the benefits of this program.

This amendment, as offered and if it is accepted, means that perhaps a firefighter who is married to a teacher or teachers who are married to one another would not be able to get the benefits of this program for their families.

Is that what we want to do? Is that what we really want to do? We knock a million of the 5.5 million beneficiaries off eligibility for this interest rate reduction? Do we want to knock off families that may have more than one child in college off of this ability to benefit from the interest reduction? Do we want to take middle-class families, where a teacher might be married to a firefighter or teacher married to a nurse, and say to them, you are not eligible for this? I don't think you want to do, and I certainly know that the Congress doesn't want to do that.

This is aimed, based upon income, the cost of the institution you go to, the number of children in your family, income determinate, you get a subsidy. What they want to do now is put a cap on the income of about \$65,000, which means if you have more than one child or two children in college, you still have the income cap and you can't get help.

So we are sending a message that you can help make your first child, but not the second child? That is what we are going to tell families? Their income didn't go up, but their cost just went up because another child is eligible for college? Another child said, I want to go to college. The family has to say, We can't help you because there is a cap.

That is why this is called the subsidized loan program, because we recognize there are people within the middle class, at the lower end of the middle class who need this help. Two and a half million of the recipients are eligible for Pell. They are going to get this help. That is what this is designed for.

This is designed for those families in the middle class that need this kind of interest rate help and is designed for those in Pell who still need additional

money to go to school. That is why we picked this category of people.

But to now tell hardworking Americans because of a cap you pulled out of the sky in the last 5 minutes that they can't help their children with the cost of education, that they are not eligible for this subsidy of cutting the interest rate from 6.8 to 3.4 percent, I don't get it. I don't understand it, and I don't think the Congress should support it.

I don't think that is the message that we want to send to those working families. I don't think that is what we want to do.

You think of your districts and you think of somebody with a family income of \$65,000, and you start thinking who you are telling, you are not prepared to help with reducing the cost of college for those families. Start thinking now because you are going to vote in a few minutes. Think about that family, two parents working their tails off to make ends meet. They are firefighters, construction workers. They don't work all year round. They get laid off. They are married to a nurse or a teacher or a policeman. All of a sudden they find out that they are not eligible for this.

I ask this House to give this a resounding "no." This isn't fair, it isn't just, and it is wrong. It is going to drive up the cost of college for the very families and students who need it the most.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of H.R. 5, if ordered, and the motion to suspend on H. Res. 58.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 186, nays 241, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 31]

YEAS—186

Akin	Bishop (UT)	Burgess
Alexander	Blackburn	Camp (MI)
Bachmann	Blunt	Campbell (CA)
Bachus	Boehner	Cannon
Baker	Bonner	Cantor
Barrett (SC)	Bono	Capito
Bartlett (MD)	Boozman	Carter
Barton (TX)	Boustany	Castle
Biggert	Brady (TX)	Chabot
Bilbray	Brown (SC)	Coble
Bilirakis	Buchanan	Cole (OK)

Conaway	Inglis (SC)	Price (GA)
Crenshaw	Issa	Pryce (OH)
Cubin	Jindal	Putnam
Culberson	Jones (NC)	Radanovich
Davis (KY)	Jordan	Regula
Davis, David	Keller	Rehberg
Davis, Jo Ann	King (IA)	Renzi
Davis, Tom	King (NY)	Reynolds
Deal (GA)	Kingston	Rogers (AL)
Dent	Kirk	Rogers (KY)
Diaz-Balart, L.	Kline (MN)	Rogers (MI)
Diaz-Balart, M.	Knollenberg	Rohrabacher
Doolittle	Kuhl (NY)	Ros-Lehtinen
Drake	LaHood	Roskam
Dreier	Lamborn	Royce
Duncan	Latham	Ryan (WI)
Ehlers	LaTourette	Sali
Emerson	Lewis (CA)	Saxton
English (PA)	Lewis (KY)	Schmidt
Everett	Linder	Sensenbrenner
Fallin	Lungren, Daniel	Sessions
Feehey	E.	Shadegg
Ferguson	Mack	Shays
Flake	Manzullo	Shimkus
Forbes	Marchant	Shuster
Fortenberry	McCarthy (CA)	Simpson
Fossella	McCaul (TX)	Smith (NE)
Fox	McCotter	Smith (TX)
Franks (AZ)	McCrery	Souder
Frelinghuysen	McHenry	Stearns
Gallegly	McKeon	Sullivan
Garrett (NJ)	McMorris	Tancredo
Gerlach	Rodgers	Terry
Gilchrest	Mica	Thornberry
Gillmor	Miller (FL)	Tiahrt
Gingrey	Miller (MI)	Tiberi
Gohmert	Miller, Gary	Turner
Goode	Moran (KS)	Upton
Goodlatte	Murphy, Tim	Walberg
Granger	Musgrave	Walden (OR)
Graves	Myrick	Walsh (NY)
Hall (TX)	Neugebauer	Wamp
Hastert	Nunes	Weldon (FL)
Hastings (WA)	Paul	Westmoreland
Hayes	Pearce	Whitfield
Heller	Pence	Wicker
Hensarling	Peterson (PA)	Wilson (NM)
Herger	Petri	Wilson (SC)
Hobson	Pickering	Wolf
Hoekstra	Pitts	Young (AK)
Hulshof	Platts	Young (FL)
Hunter	Poe	

NAYS—241

Abercrombie	Costello	Hinches
Ackerman	Courtney	Hinojosa
Allen	Cramer	Hirono
Altmire	Crowley	Hodes
Andrews	Cuellar	Holden
Arcuri	Cummings	Holt
Baca	Davis (AL)	Honda
Baird	Davis (CA)	Hooley
Baldwin	Davis (IL)	Hoyer
Barrow	Davis, Lincoln	Inslie
Bean	DeFazio	Israel
Becerra	DeGette	Jackson (IL)
Berkley	Delahunt	Jackson-Lee
Berman	DeLauro	(TX)
Berry	Dicks	Jefferson
Bishop (GA)	Dingell	Johnson (GA)
Bishop (NY)	Doggett	Johnson (IL)
Blumenauer	Donnelly	Johnson, E. B.
Boren	Doyle	Jones (OH)
Boswell	Edwards	Kagen
Boucher	Ellison	Kanjorski
Boyd (FL)	Ellsworth	Kaptur
Boyda (KS)	Emanuel	Kennedy
Brady (PA)	Engel	Kildee
Bralley (IA)	Eshoo	Kilpatrick
Brown, Corrine	Etheridge	Kind
Brown-Waite,	Farr	Klein (FL)
Ginny	Fattah	Kucinich
Butterfield	Filner	Lampson
Capps	Frank (MA)	Langevin
Capuano	Giffords	Lantos
Cardoza	Gillibrand	Larsen (WA)
Carnahan	Gonzalez	Larson (CT)
Carney	Gordon	Lee
Carson	Green, Al	Levin
Castor	Green, Gene	Lewis (GA)
Chandler	Grijalva	Lipinski
Clarke	Gutierrez	LoBiondo
Clay	Hall (NY)	Loeb sack
Cleaver	Hare	Loftgren, Zoe
Clyburn	Harman	Lowey
Cohen	Hastings (FL)	Lynch
Conyers	Herseth	Mahoney (FL)
Cooper	Higgins	Maloney (NY)
Costa	Hill	Markey

Marshall	Payne	Smith (NJ)
Matheson	Pelosi	Smith (WA)
Matsui	Perlmutter	Snyder
McCarthy (NY)	Peterson (MN)	Solis
McCollum (WI)	Pomeroy	Space
McDermott	Porter	Spratt
McGovern	Price (NC)	Stark
McHugh	Rahall	Stupak
McIntyre	Ramstad	Sutton
McNerney	Rangel	Tanner
McNulty	Reichert	Tauscher
Meehan	Reyes	Taylor
Meek (FL)	Rodriguez	Thompson (CA)
Meeks (NY)	Ross	Thompson (MS)
Melancon	Rothman	Tierney
Michaud	Royal-Allard	Towns
Millender-	Ruppersberger	Udall (CO)
McDonald	Rush	Udall (NM)
Miller (NC)	Ryan (OH)	Van Hollen
Miller, George	Salazar	Velázquez
Mitchell	Sánchez, Linda	Visclosky
Mollohan	T.	Walz (MN)
Moore (KS)	Sanchez, Loretta	Wasserman
Moore (WI)	Sarbanes	Schultz
Moran (VA)	Schakowsky	Waters
Murphy (CT)	Schiff	Watson
Murphy, Patrick	Schwartz	Watt
Murtha	Scott (GA)	Waxman
Nadler	Scott (VA)	Weiner
Napolitano	Serrano	Welch (VT)
Neal (MA)	Stestak	Weller
Oberstar	Shea-Porter	Wexler
Olver	Sherman	Wilson (OH)
Ortiz	Shuler	Woolsey
Pallone	Sires	Wu
Pascarella	Skelton	Wynn
Pastor	Slaughter	Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—8

Aderholt	Calvert	Norwood
Burton (IN)	Johnson, Sam	Obey
Buyer	Lucas	

□ 1726

Mr. KLEIN of Florida changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. RENZI changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA). The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 356, nays 71, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 32]

YEAS—356

Abercrombie	Bishop (NY)	Carnahan
Ackerman	Blumenauer	Carney
Akin	Bono	Carson
Alexander	Boozman	Castle
Allen	Boren	Castor
Altmire	Boswell	Chabot
Andrews	Boucher	Chandler
Arcuri	Boustany	Clarke
Baca	Boyd (FL)	Clay
Bachus	Boyda (KS)	Cleaver
Baird	Brady (PA)	Clyburn
Baldwin	Bralley (IA)	Cohen
Barrow	Brown, Corrine	Cole (OK)
Bartlett (MD)	Brown-Waite,	Conyers
Bean	Ginny	Cooper
Becerra	Buchanan	Costa
Berkley	Butterfield	Costello
Berman	Camp (MI)	Courtney
Berry	Capito	Cramer
Biggert	Capps	Crenshaw
Bilirakis	Capuano	Crowley
Bishop (GA)	Cardoza	Cubin

Cuellar
 Cummings
 Davis (AL)
 Davis (CA)
 Davis (IL)
 Davis (KY)
 Davis, David
 Davis, Jo Ann
 Davis, Lincoln
 Davis, Tom
 DeFazio
 DeGette
 Delahunt
 DeLauro
 Dent
 Diaz-Balart, L.
 Diaz-Balart, M.
 Dicks
 Dingell
 Doggett
 Donnelly
 Doyle
 Drake
 Duncan
 Edwards
 Ehlers
 Ellison
 Ellsworth
 Emanuel
 Emerson
 Engel
 English (PA)
 Eshoo
 Etheridge
 Everett
 Fallin
 Farr
 Fattah
 Ferguson
 Filner
 Forbes
 Fossella
 Frank (MA)
 Frelinghuysen
 Gallegly
 Gerlach
 Giffords
 Gilchrest
 Gillibrand
 Gillmor
 Gohmert
 Gonzalez
 Goode
 Goodlatte
 Gordon
 Graves
 Green, Al
 Green, Gene
 Grijalva
 Gutierrez
 Hall (NY)
 Hall (TX)
 Hare
 Harman
 Hastings (FL)
 Hastings (WA)
 Hayes
 Heller
 Herseth
 Higgins
 Hill
 Hinchey
 Hinojosa
 Hirono
 Hobson
 Hodes
 Holden
 Holt
 Honda
 Hooley
 Hoyer
 Hulshof
 Hunter
 Inglis (SC)
 Insole
 Israel
 Jackson (IL)
 Jackson-Lee
 (TX)
 Jefferson
 Jindal
 Johnson (GA)
 Johnson (IL)
 Johnson, E. B.
 Jones (NC)
 Jones (OH)
 Kagen
 Kanjorski
 Kaptur

Keller
 Kennedy
 Kildee
 Kilpatrick
 Kind
 King (NY)
 Kirk
 Klein (FL)
 Knollenberg
 Kucinich
 Kuhl (NY)
 LaHood
 Lampson
 Langevin
 Lantos
 Larsen (WA)
 Larson (CT)
 Latham
 LaTourette
 Lee
 Levin
 Lewis (GA)
 Lewis (KY)
 Lipinski
 LoBiondo
 Loeb sack
 Lofgren, Zoe
 Lowey
 Lynch
 Mahoney (FL)
 Maloney (NY)
 Manzullo
 Markey
 Marshall
 Matheson
 Matsui
 McCarthy (CA)
 McCarthy (NY)
 McCaul (TX)
 McCollum (MN)
 McCotter
 McDermott
 McGovern
 McHugh
 McIntyre
 McMorris
 Rodgers
 McNeerney
 McNulty
 Meehan
 Meek (FL)
 Meeks (NY)
 Melancon
 Michaud
 Millender-
 Sullivan
 McDonald
 Miller (FL)
 Miller (MI)
 Miller (NC)
 Miller, Gary
 Miller, George
 Mitchell
 Mollohan
 Moore (KS)
 Moore (WI)
 Moran (KS)
 Moran (VA)
 Murphy (CT)
 Murphy, Patrick
 Murphy, Tim
 Murtha
 Nadler
 Napoleitano
 Neal (MA)
 Oberstar
 Oliver
 Ortiz
 Pallone
 Pascrell
 Pastor
 Paul
 Payne
 Pearce
 Pelosi
 Perlmutter
 Peterson (MN)
 Peterson (PA)
 Petri
 Pickering
 Pitts
 Platts
 Poe
 Pomeroy
 Porter
 Price (NC)
 Pryce (OH)
 Rahall
 Ramstad
 Rangel

Regula
 Rehberg
 Reichert
 Renzi
 Reyes
 Reynolds
 Rodriguez
 Rogers (AL)
 Rogers (KY)
 Rogers (MI)
 Rohrabacher
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross
 Rothman
 Roybal-Allard
 Royce
 Ruppertsberger
 Rush
 Ryan (OH)
 Salazar
 Sanchez, Linda
 T.
 Sanchez, Loretta
 Sarbanes
 Saxton
 Schakowsky
 Schiff
 Schwartz
 Scott (GA)
 Scott (VA)
 Serrano
 Sestak
 Shays
 Shea-Porter
 Sherman
 Shimkus
 Shuler
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Sires
 Skelton
 Slaughter
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smith (WA)
 Snyder
 Solis
 Space
 Spratt
 Stark
 Stearns
 Stupak
 Sullivan
 Tanager
 Tauscher
 Taylor
 Terry
 Thompson (CA)
 Thompson (MS)
 Upton
 Van Hollen
 Velázquez
 Visclosky
 Walberg
 Walden (OR)
 Walsh (NY)
 Wamp
 Wasserman
 Schultz
 Waters
 Watson
 Watt
 Waxman
 Weiner
 Welch (VT)
 Weldon (FL)
 Weller
 Wexler
 Whitfield
 Wilson (NM)
 Wilson (OH)
 Wolf
 Woolsey
 Wu
 Wynn
 Yarmuth
 Yeh
 Young (AK)
 Young (FL)

NAYS—71

NOT VOTING—8

□ 1735

So the bill was passed.
 The result of the vote was announced
 as above recorded.
 A motion to reconsider was laid on
 the table.

HONORING MUHAMMAD ALI ON
 HIS 65TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER. The pending business
 is the question of suspending the rules
 and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res.
 58.

The Clerk read the title of the resolu-
 tion.

The SPEAKER. The question is on
 the motion offered by the gentleman
 from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the
 House suspend the rules and agree to
 the resolution, H. Res. 58, on which the
 yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.
 The vote was taken by electronic de-
 vice, and there were—yeas 421, nays 0,
 not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 33]
 YEAS—421

Abercrombie
 Ackerman
 Akin
 Alexander
 Allen
 Altmire
 Andrews
 Arcuri
 Baca
 Bachmann
 Bachus
 Baird
 Baker
 Baldwin
 Barrett (SC)
 Barrow
 Bartlett (MD)
 Barton (TX)
 Bean
 Becerra
 Berkley
 Berman
 Berry
 Biggert
 Bilbray
 Bilirakis
 Bishop (GA)
 Bishop (NY)
 Bishop (UT)
 Blackburn

Blumenauer
 Blunt
 Boehner
 Bonner
 Bono
 Boozman
 Boren
 Boswell
 Boucher
 Boustany
 Boyd (FL)
 Boyda (KS)
 Brady (PA)
 Brady (TX)
 Braley (IA)
 Brown (SC)
 Brown, Corrine
 Brown-Waite,
 Cooper
 Costa
 Costello
 Courtney
 Cramer
 Crenshaw
 Crowley
 Cubin
 Cuellar
 Culberson
 Cummings
 Davis (AL)
 Davis (CA)

Davis (IL)
 Davis (KY)
 Davis, David
 Davis, Jo Ann
 Davis, Lincoln
 Davis, Tom
 Deal (GA)
 DeFazio
 DeGette
 Delahunt
 DeLauro
 Dent
 Diaz-Balart, L.
 Diaz-Balart, M.
 Dicks
 Dingell
 Doggett
 Donnelly
 Doolittle
 Doyle
 Drake
 Dreier
 Duncan
 Edwards
 Ehlers
 Ellison
 Ellsworth
 Emanuel
 Emerson
 Engel
 English (PA)
 Eshoo
 Etheridge
 Everett
 Fallin
 Farr
 Fattah
 Feeney
 Ferguson
 Filner
 Flake
 Forbes
 Fortenberry
 Fossella
 Foxx
 Frank (MA)
 Franks (AZ)
 Frelinghuysen
 Gallegly
 Garrett (NJ)
 Gerlach
 Giffords
 Gilchrest
 Gillibrand
 Gillmor
 Gingrey
 Gohmert
 Gonzalez
 Goode
 Goodlatte
 Gordon
 Granger
 Graves
 Green, Al
 Green, Gene
 Grijalva
 Gutierrez
 Hall (NY)
 Hall (TX)
 Hare
 Harman
 Hastert
 Hastings (FL)
 Hastings (WA)
 Hayes
 Heller
 Hensarling
 Herger
 Herseth
 Higgins
 Hill
 Hinchey
 Hinojosa
 Hirono
 Hobson
 Hodes
 Hoekstra
 Holden
 Holt
 Honda
 Hooley
 Hoyer
 Hulshof
 Inglis (SC)
 Insole
 Israel
 Issa
 Jackson (IL)

Jackson-Lee
 (TX)
 Jefferson
 Jindal
 Johnson (GA)
 Johnson (IL)
 Johnson, E. B.
 Jones (NC)
 Jones (OH)
 Jordan
 Kagen
 Kanjorski
 Kaptur
 Keller
 Kennedy
 Kildee
 Kilpatrick
 Kind
 King (IA)
 King (NY)
 Kingston
 Kirk
 Klein (FL)
 Kline (MN)
 Knollenberg
 Kucinich
 Kuhl (NY)
 LaHood
 Lamborn
 Lampson
 Langevin
 Lantos
 Larsen (WA)
 Larson (CT)
 Latham
 LaTourette
 Lee
 Lewis (CA)
 Lewis (GA)
 Lewis (KY)
 Linder
 Lipinski
 LoBiondo
 Loeb sack
 Lofgren, Zoe
 Lowey
 Lungren, Daniel
 E.
 Lynch
 Mack
 Mahoney (FL)
 Maloney (NY)
 Manzullo
 Marchant
 Markey
 Marshall
 Matheson
 Matsui
 McCarthy (NY)
 McCaul (TX)
 McCollum (MN)
 McCotter
 McCrery
 McDermott
 McGovern
 McHenry
 McHugh
 McIntyre
 McKeon
 McMorris
 Rodgers
 McNeerney
 McNulty
 Meehan
 Meek (FL)
 Meeks (NY)
 Melancon
 Mica
 Michaud
 Millender-
 Hill
 McDonald
 Miller (FL)
 Miller (MI)
 Miller (NC)
 Solis
 Miller, Gary
 Miller, George
 Mitchell
 Mollohan
 Moore (KS)
 Moore (WI)
 Moran (KS)
 Moran (VA)
 Murphy (CT)
 Murphy, Patrick
 Murphy, Tim
 Murtha
 Musgrave
 Myrick

Nadler
 Neal (MA)
 Neugebauer
 Nunes
 Oberstar
 Oliver
 Ortiz
 Pallone
 Pascrell
 Pastor
 Paul
 Payne
 Pearce
 Pelosi
 Pence
 Perlmutter
 Peterson (MN)
 Peterson (PA)
 Petri
 Pickering
 Pitts
 Platts
 Pomeroy
 Porter
 Price (GA)
 Price (NC)
 Pryce (OH)
 Putnam
 Radanovich
 Rahall
 Ramstad
 Rangel
 Regula
 Larson (CT)
 Reichert
 Renzi
 Reyes
 Reynolds
 Rodriguez
 Rogers (MI)
 Rohrabacher
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross
 Rothman
 Roybal-Allard
 Royce
 Ruppertsberger
 Rush
 Ryan (OH)
 Ryan (WI)
 Ryan (WI)
 Salazar
 Sali
 Sánchez, Linda
 T.
 Sanchez, Loretta
 Sarbanes
 Saxton
 Schakowsky
 Schiff
 Schmidt
 Schwartz
 Scott (GA)
 Scott (VA)
 Sensenbrenner
 Serrano
 Sessions
 Sestak
 Shadegg
 Shays
 Shea-Porter
 Sherman
 Shimkus
 Shuler
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Sires
 Skelton
 Slaughter
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smith (WA)
 Snyder
 Solis
 Souder
 Space
 Spratt
 Stark
 Stearns
 Stupak
 Sullivan
 Tanager
 Tancredo
 Tanner
 Tauscher
 Taylor
 Terry
 Thompson (CA)