

Put simply, I want everyone who possibly can to have the opportunity to pursue higher education, but I fear that college may be eluding many Americans because of the costs of attending. College tuition is one of the most important determinants of student access. Unfortunately, it has been rising at an astronomical rate. Over the last 3 years tuition costs have been rising at roughly 6 percent or twice the rate of inflation, which is a vast improvement over prior years. Years of unchecked growth and not entirely necessary growth have left a legacy of inefficiency in many of our colleges and universities which should be reviewed.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 914 authorizes a short-term commission to study the rising costs of higher education and to recommend possible solutions. I would hope that this commission focuses on identifying plausible solutions rather than identifying the problem. I think that anyone who has spent time looking at this issue knows what the problem is and could identify causes. That is the easy part. The tough part is asking the tough questions and developing creative and reasonable policies to fix the problem.

Do colleges and universities need to examine and refine their mission? What is a critical mass of academic programs, of professors, of support staff and of students necessary to sustain a college or university as a viable institution? What can colleges and universities learn from the numerous examples of corporate restructuring in the 1980's? Can they grow smaller without compromising the richness and depth of their academic programs? Should they carve out a niche and specialize in a few areas? What exactly are the components of a quality education?

As a former Governor I know well the challenges facing presidents of colleges and universities who seek to restructure the system, make it more efficient and reduce costs while maintaining support from their constituencies professors, administrations, and students. It is no easy task, and I would urge us all to support the commission bill.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE].

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

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, today higher education is a virtual necessity, but there is a tremendous difficulty in achieving that necessity, and that is the significantly increased cost of higher education. If my colleagues go back over either a 10-year or a 20-year period, they will see that the costs of higher education have increased at both public and private colleges and universities at a rate of approximately two to three times that of the rate of inflation. If my colleagues look at the increase in the cost of higher education and the increase in median income, they will see that higher education

costs have again increased at about two to three times the increase in the median income.

So how can individuals afford a higher education? They cannot afford to go to school; they cannot afford not to go to school. They are in a bind. What happens? More and more often, students are borrowing money, they are going into deep debt, and it is not unusual today for a college student to graduate with a minimum of \$10,000 in personal indebtedness, but very, very frequently considerably more: \$20, \$30, \$40, \$50,000. This imposes a huge burden on their entire future.

Mr. Speaker, at the very least we should examine a number of issues, and I congratulate the gentleman from California on his initiative. This is necessary. All we are doing by this commission is saying let us look at this problem, let us find out why costs have increased two to three times the median income, two to three times the cost of inflation, et cetera. We have got to do something.

Who is we? Everybody. We in the Congress, yes, of course; in the States, yes, of course; administrators at school, yes; boards of trustees, faculties, yes. The easy answer is to just say, well, increase tuition to whatever it might be because the students must go to college and they will borrow more and more and more. They have been doing this. We must bring that to a halt. We must analyze the possibility of tying future financial assistance to some leveling off of these constant increases in the costs of higher education. That is further than the bill goes, but it might well be necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman once again for his initiative, and I urge everyone to support it.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers, but I yield myself such time as I may consume to take just a minute to thank those on the other side who have been so helpful in bringing us to this point. As my colleagues know, we have been working on this committee in a bipartisan nature. The gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KILDEE], the ranking member, has been very supportive, even though he does have some concerns on this. He has worked with us to make this bill better, to bring it to the floor, and supports it at this point. The gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. LUTHER] has been very helpful and very supportive on this bill, and I would like to thank him, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. FORD], and others.

Once one starts naming names, it is a danger because they always leave out some people that have been so helpful, but I would like to thank those Members and others who have been helpful, and especially our staff who have worked night and day to get this to this point, because it is urgent that we get this bill passed quickly so that we

can get the results back in time to use them for the higher ed reauthorization.

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Impact Aid Technical Amendments to H.R. 914. I have long been a supporter of the Impact Aid Program, and I believe these amendments add necessary clarifications to ensure the integrity of the section 8002 funding disbursement.

As we all know, States and localities provide approximately 94 percent of education funding in the United States. The largest source of this funding is local property taxes. When a school district loses 10 percent of its taxable property, the local schools are severely impacted.

In 1950, Congress responded to this problem by creating the Impact Aid Program. The 1950 statute requires that the Federal Government reimburse each section 2 school district for each year in "such amount as * * * is equal to the continuing Federal responsibility for the additional burden with respect to current expenditures placed on such school district by such acquisition of property." The meaning of this language is very clear to me—the Department of Education should reimburse each section 2 school district by the amount which the Federal presence negatively impacts the school district.

My district in Illinois is home to a number of school districts eligible for assistance under section 8002. These funds help guarantee that the quality education they provide to their students will not be adversely affected due to the loss of tax revenue on federally-owned property.

Technical corrections authorization legislation enacted by Congress in 1996, had the impact of directing a large portion of the Impact Aid section 8002 funds to one school district. I am pleased at the way the House has chosen to address this inequity. Technical amendments enacted today will ensure that all funds appropriated to the Impact Aid section 8002 program will be allocated on the basis of the formula, ensuring that schools are allowed to compete on a level playing field. I strongly support this provision which will ensure an equitable disbursement of funds to all eligible schools who receive funds under section 8002.

I thank the chairman and ranking member for their work on this bill and urge Members to support H.R. 914.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. MCKEON] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H.Res. 145.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.Res. 145.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 49) authorizing the use of the Capitol grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 49

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring).

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF SOAP BOX DERBY RACES ON CAPITOL GROUNDS.

The Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as the "Association") shall be permitted to sponsor a public event, soap box derby races, on the Capitol grounds on July 12, 1997, or on such other date as the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate may jointly designate.

SEC. 2. CONDITIONS.

The event to be carried out under this resolution shall be free of admission charge to the public and arranged not to interfere with the needs of Congress, under conditions to be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board; except that the Association shall assume full responsibility for all expenses and liabilities incident to all activities associated with the event.

SEC. 3. STRUCTURES AND EQUIPMENT.

For the purposes of this resolution, the Association is authorized to erect upon the Capitol grounds, subject to the approval of the Architect of the Capitol, such stage, sound amplification devices, and other related structures and equipment as may be required for the event to be carried out under this resolution.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

The Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board are authorized to make any such additional arrangements that may be required to carry out the event under this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. KIM] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. KIM].

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

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 49 simply authorizes the use of the Capitol grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby races to be held on July 12, 1997. This free event is sponsored by the All American Soap Box Derby and its local affiliate, the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association. Its participants are young girls and boys from 9 to 16 who reside in the greater Washington metropolitan area. Winners in the various age groups will advance to the national championship in Akron, OH. Pursuant to this resolution the association will assume full responsibility for any expenses or any liability related to the event. This association also agrees to make any necessary arrangements for

the races with the approval of the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board.

Mr. Speaker, for over 50 years the soap box derby races have taken place in Washington, DC. It is truly an exciting event for the family, and I support the resolution and urge my colleagues to pass the resolution.

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

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

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Mr. Speaker, I join the gentleman from California [Mr. KIM] in supporting H. Con. Res. 49. I would like to just compliment Rick Barnett and Susan Brita, the staff, for all of the work they do on many of these things that are more laborious than seem to be substantive, but they do serve a good purpose.

The 1996 event produced three winners, who then went on to win the National Derby held in Akron, OH. Two of these winners were brother and sister. The Washington event has grown in size and now has become one of the best attended in the country.

The derby organizers will work with the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police to ensure that appropriate rules and regulations are in place. It is a good initiative. I join Mr. KIM in supporting it.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise enthusiastically today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 49, a resolution authorizing the use of the grounds of the U.S. Capitol for a truly wonderful and family-oriented event: the Greater Washington Soapbox Derby. For the past 6 years, I have sponsored this legislation, and I would like to offer my very sincere thanks to the chairman and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Economic Development—Mr. KIM and Mr. TRAFICANT—and to the chairman and ranking member of the full Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure—Mr. SCHUSTER and Mr. OBERSTAR—for their commendable work in bringing this legislation to the floor in so timely a manner.

This resolution authorizes the use of Constitution Ave. between Delaware Ave. and Third St. for the 56th running of the Greater Washington Soap box Derby on July 12, 1997. The competition is part of the All-American Soap box Derby which will be held later this year.

The resolution also authorizes the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police to negotiate a licensing agreement with the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association ensuring full compliance with the rules and regulations governing use of the Capitol Grounds.

I am happy once again to have the support of Members from the Washington metropolitan region as cosponsors. Ms. NORTON, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WOLF, Ms. MORELLA, and Mr. WYNN have been enthusiastic supporters in years past and they are again this year.

This event provides young boys and girls, ages 9 to 16, with an invaluable opportunity to develop and practice both good sportsmanship and engineering skill. This year, there will

once again be over 50 participants from Washington, DC, and the surrounding communities of northern Virginia and Maryland participating in the derby events. I am especially pleased that boys and girls representing four of the five counties in my district will be competing in this year's derby.

The Soap box Derby promotes a fun, positive and character-building activity for our young people to participate in. At a time when our newspapers are filled with stories about the transgressions and negative conduct of our youth, and at a time when Congress has been forced to confront juvenile crime as an issue of national scope and magnitude, it is certainly a pleasure to be involved in an event which provides a positive outlet for kids and teenagers from the region.

I like to recall a statement made to me by Ken Tomasello, director of the Greater Soap Box Derby Association, when I introduced the first resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for this event. Ken said, in short, "The derby doesn't keep kids off the street; it gives them a drug-free activity on the street."

The young people involved in this event spend many months preparing for this race—building their derby cars from the ground up. The day they actually compete provides a genuine sense of accomplishment and camaraderie—for the participants, and their families and friends alike. This worthwhile event also provides visitors to the Capitol and local residents with a safe and enjoyable day of activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere congratulations to all of this year's participants for their hard work and dedication and I wish them all well in this year's race.

Again, I want to thank the Transportation Committee for its consistent support of the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby and I encourage all of my colleagues to attend this year's race.

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. KIM] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 49.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 49.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.