

requirements currently found in the law. This provision would return to postsecondary institutions the ability to reward employees appropriately for their job performance, as long as they are not directly recruiting students.

This legislation provides much needed changes to the Higher Education Act that will allow all learners to take the fullest advantage of what the newest technologies can provide for their education. I thank the Chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. MCKEON, and Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee, Ms. MINK, for their help in crafting this legislation, and I urge the support of all the members of this body.

MEMORIAL DAY

HON. JIM RYUN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, as we approach Memorial Day, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the sacrifices that our veterans have made to keep us free.

This Freedom does not come without a price. It has been earned through the blood sweat, toil and tears of our military servicemen throughout history. Many of these men and women have paid the ultimate sacrifice on battlefields around the globe.

Now we must fulfill our promises to them. We must fulfill a promise of honor, respect and dignity today as we observe the sacrifices to services members.

I urge every American to pause and recognize that all of our liberties have been earned by thanking a veteran for their sacrifice.

Countless soldiers have died for our peace and stability. They knew the threat to their lives when they answered the call to stand up and fight for liberty.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to this dedicated group of heroic Americans. Let's honor them by giving them our thanks and praise this weekend.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, my "yea" vote (Rollcall No. 144) on May 23, 2001 was recorded in error. I intended to vote "no" and would like the RECORD to reflect my position on the Motion to Recommit.

TAX RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep and alarming concerns about the pending Tax Reconciliation Conference Report.

While the Senate, that now distinguished body across the divide, has managed to scale

back the size of the tax cut, Mr. Speaker it is still too large. We cannot afford this tax cut! If we are to meet our obligations to the nation's youth, elderly and impoverished, we must act responsibly.

However you slice it, Mr. Speaker, this is tax cut for the rich. This is a bank account builder for those in our country who least need the boost.

We are basing this tax cut on projected revenues which, even by the most liberal of estimates, may not materialize.

Mr. Speaker, the most irresponsible part of this tax cut is that it relies on, and threatens the Medicare and Social Security Trust Funds. It is an irresponsible tax cut because it totally ignores hundreds of billions of dollars in interests costs. It seeks to line the pockets of the rich while fleecing the poor on energy, education and housing.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to continue to expose this tax cut for what it really is, an irresponsible, poorly calculated and skewed to the wealthy budget buster.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES A. HARMON

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the departure of James A. Harmon as Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States and thank him for a job well-done.

I had the pleasure of working closely with Chairman Harmon on a number of Ex-Im Bank issues during my time as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. I know firsthand what a strong advocate he has been for the agency and its important mission of supporting U.S. jobs through exports. From making Ex-Im Bank financing available in new foreign markets, to making the Bank more customer friendly, Chairman Harmon has done much to make Ex-Im Bank a more effective tool to support U.S. exports and U.S. jobs.

Chairman Harmon brought to Ex-Im Bank nearly 40 years of private sector experience in investment banking. This gave him an acute appreciation of global capital markets and the challenges U.S. exporters face in obtaining financing to transact business in emerging market economies. He put this experience to work at Ex-Im Bank, developing innovative financing structures, implementing marketing programs to better reach out to small businesses and other exporters that cannot access private sources of financing, and streamlining transaction processing.

At the same time, Chairman Harmon has been a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. He has managed the Bank's portfolio and resources in a responsible manner, including through some difficult times in the global economy. When the Asian economies went into a tailspin early in Chairman Harmon's tenure, Ex-Im Bank was put to the test. He ably steered the Bank through this crisis, keeping losses on its Asian portfolio to a minimum by restructuring problem credits and aggressively pursuing claim recoveries. The Bank was also able to play a constructive role during this crisis by extending new financing to creditworthy

Asian businesses that helped restart stalled U.S. export trade with the region. Ex-Im Bank emerged from the crisis having stood by U.S. exporters and prudently managed its assets.

As Ex-Im Bank moves into the 21st Century, it faces new challenges from both competitor export credit agencies and from new emerging markets. Chairman Harmon has put the Bank on firm footing to face these challenges and continue its important mission.

Once again, I'd like to thank Chairman Harmon for his four years of service to Ex-Im Bank and wish him well in his future pursuits.

STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION FOR BAH REDUCTION LEGISLATION

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation aimed at improving the quality of life for our military personnel.

Last Year, Congress began funding an important Department of Defense initiative to reduce the out-of-pocket housing costs for service members residing in off-base housing. That program envisioned decreasing the out-of-pocket costs from almost 18.9 percent of housing costs incurred by our servicemen and women in 2000 down to zero in 2005. The average E-6 will receive about \$175 more a month in BAH by 2005, while the average E-4 will receive about \$111 more, allowing them to seek better housing options.

This is a great initiative that will have real benefits for almost 750,000 military personnel. However, I believe that we can and should do more.

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations Randall Yim recently testified before the House Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee that up to 60 percent of all DoD housing is substandard. Two-thirds of this inventory is over 30 years old and requires a substantial annual investment to meet the maintenance requirements. In the barracks, over 50 percent of the inventory is over 30 years old. While we are taking many steps to eliminate this substandard housing through increased funding and several privatization initiatives, it will still be 2010 before most services have eliminated their poor quality housing—2014 for at least one service.

Our men and women in uniform risk their lives to protect the freedoms that we enjoy today. We owe it to those servicemen and women, and their families, to do everything we can to improve their living conditions.

It is for that reason, that I am introducing this legislation today. The legislation is very simple. Rather than waiting five years to buy down the out-of-pocket housing costs of our military personnel, this legislation would reduce out-of-pocket costs to 7.5 percent by the end of 2002, and zero by the end of 2003. By more rapidly reducing the costs associated with living off-base, more of our military personnel will be able to move into quality housing for them and their families.

I urge my colleague to join me in supporting this important legislation to improve the standard of living for those bravely serving in our Armed Forces.

INTRODUCTION OF INTERNET EQUITY AND EDUCATION ACT OF 2001

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, today I join Representative ISAKSON in introducing the Internet Equity and Education Act of 2001.

The proposed amendments to the Higher Education Act are modest, but will provide an immediate benefit to students and improve the ability of postsecondary institutions to offer instruction over the Internet.

I will focus my comments on the issue of incentive compensation. There has been widespread acknowledgment within the higher education community and at the Department of Education that this provision and the implementing regulation that mimics the statute are unclear and the cause of much confusion with respect to allowable activities. The language included in this legislation attempts to clarify the intent of Congress, while recognizing that this particular provision needs to be regulated in a clear and concise manner with input from all interested parties.

For example, the reference to "other incentive, non-salary payment" in this bill clarifies that the statutory prohibition on certain monetary compensations extends only to bonuses, commissions, and similar payments. It does not prohibit setting or prospectively adjusting salary from time to time, based on performance of legitimate job functions.

The reference to payments "based directly on success" in securing enrollments clarifies that institutions may compensate admissions personnel based on their performance of legitimate recruiting activities and are commonly undertaken by recruiters on behalf of institutions of higher education prior to enrollment and the start of classes. Such activities and practices include, but are not limited to, recruiting visits to high schools; telephone calls and similar communications (including written letters and e-mail) aimed at recruiting prospective students; personal interviews of prospective students; tours for prospective students; providing various academic and general, school-related information to prospective students; and obtaining certain information from prospective students, including but not limited to applications, transcripts, high school diplomas, and other documentation needed to complete an application to enroll at an institution of higher education.

In addition, the change in language is intended to clarify that employee and owner participation in the profits of an institution is permitted.

The reference to persons or entities "directly engaged" in recruiting or awarding financial aid clarifies that the statutory prohibition applies only to those whose primary function is to recruit students or award financial aid. It is not intended to apply to supervisors or higher-level executives who, although they may supervise such persons or be above them in the institution's organizational chart, do not recruit prospective students or award financial aid. In addition, this change clarifies that the statutory

prohibition is not intended to apply to contractual arrangements with third parties, such as web services providers marketing companies, or other service providers that have no control or authority over admissions or enrollments at the contracting institution.

Finally, this provision is being deleted from Section 487 and placed in a new Section 484C. It was never the intent of Congress that this provision should be deemed an element or condition of institutional, programmatic, or student eligibility. In changing the placement of the provision, it will give the Secretary the discretion to levy appropriate sanctions, in the event an institution is found to have violated the statutory ban.

I believe this clarification of the incentive compensation provision, along with the provisions addressing the 12-hour rule and correspondence education limitations, will provide postsecondary institutions with much needed relief from "outdated regulations that impede innovation," and will allow the institutions to provide students with approaches to education "that embrace anytime, anywhere, any pace learning." It will do so within the context of maintaining the integrity of our student financial aid programs. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT KEPT FAITH WITH OUR NATION'S VETERANS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, on Monday we will commemorate Memorial Day. We will pause to humbly and gratefully remember the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served in uniform and have defended and preserved our shared ideals.

Shamefully, on Memorial Day 2001, hundreds of thousands of disabled veterans and their families continue to wait for action on claims for veterans benefits now pending before the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). To his credit, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Principi, has been candid with veterans and their advocates about the crisis that exists today in veterans' claims adjudication. Repeatedly, Secretary Principi has stated that addressing the backlog of 513,309 claims currently pending before regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is his number one priority. In acknowledging the claims adjudication crisis, Secretary Principi recently stated in an interview with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, "In the short-term, we will train more specialists. The staff will be increased to assist in clearing the backlog."

Secretary Principi is to be commended for recognizing the size and scope of the problem. He has taken action to authorize the hiring of additional staff needed to begin addressing the claims crisis. He has made known the need for additional resources to resolve this crisis successfully.

However, President Bush and his Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have failed to promptly take actions needed to ameliorate

the burgeoning veterans claims adjudication crisis. For its part, OMB established a significant roadblock by refusing to submit to Congress a supplemental funding request for less than \$30 million needed to pay for the critically needed additional VA staff Secretary Principi is hiring.

Early this year, VA requested a supplemental appropriation of \$29.1 million for this fiscal year to pay for the additional staff needed to address the backlog of compensation, pension and education claims. Despite the evident need for this

Those who have taken the time to talk with and listen to veterans understand that the time veterans are forced to wait for medical care is long and excessive, especially for certain specialized care form many VA medical facilities. The Committee on Veterans' Affairs submitted a bipartisan request to the Budget Committee pointing to a more than \$1 billion shortfall in the Administration's 2002 budget.

Since the Bush Administration took office, the backlog of veterans' claims has increased by more than 100,000. The number of claims awaiting a decision for more than six months also continues to grow—from 95,680 on January 19, 2001, to 143,777 on May 16, 2001.

A number of factors have caused the increased backlog. The processing of VA claims is a complex and labor intensive job. Recent legislation requires VA to obtain records in the custody of the federal government, including military records and medical evidence, before deciding a claim for service-connected compensation. This assistance to veterans supported by President Bush is intended to assure that veterans' claims would be treated with fundamental fairness and result in an accurate and fair decision. I am under no illusion that by bringing in additional staff, the backlog will disappear overnight. Similarly, I understand the backlog of claims will not be reduced while quality decision-making is maintained and improved unless and until additional resources are made available—resources needed to hire additional personnel and train them appropriately.

Critically needed additional funding must be requested by the Administration. Alternatively, the backlog will continue to increase and the time taken to resolve it will likewise continue to increase. Surely this will not honor our veterans.

The question today is how soon will VA exhaust funds to pay for the costs of needed additional staff? What other programs are being cut to cover the costs of the additional employees desperately needed to adjudicate claims? How many

Mr. Reyes and I have today introduced H.R. 1980. This bill would authorize an emergency supplemental appropriation to provide the funding needed to address the crisis in VA claims adjudication that exists today. I call on President Bush to support this legislation or submit a similar request to the Congress now.

This Memorial Day, our Nation's veterans will be the subject of many finely crafted speeches delivered to honor them. Words, however, are not enough. Our deeds are a better measure of how well we truly honor our veterans. The need for additional resources is