

In 1991, an independent accounting study confirmed the debt. Regrettably, after promising to honor the results of the study, Prince Abdul Aziz never paid up.

Bob Burch had been a great friend to the Royal family, supporting them through medical and personal crises, college degrees and even a plane crash.

This is a time of great challenge in the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia. Never before have we asked the Saudis to work so closely with us to fight terrorism. It is in that spirit of cooperation that I urge the Saudi Ambassador to work to put this longtime dispute behind us.

INTRODUCING THE AFFORDABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 2003

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for the Affordability in Higher Education Act, legislation I authored to address the college cost crisis that is facing our Nation. This bill moves beyond the rhetoric, and offers real solutions that will hold colleges accountable and empower consumers as we all work together to keep higher education affordable.

For decades, the cost of higher education has been rising dramatically. Tuition increases have far outpaced increases in the rate of inflation and the growth in family incomes, and these skyrocketing costs are having a devastating impact on American students and families. This is not a new problem. Over half a decade ago I stood here and voiced these same concerns. And several years before that, Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG was leading a similar charge to keep college affordable. Yet in all that time, we have been unable to find solutions, and the cost of college just keeps going up.

According to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, cost factors are preventing 48 percent of college-qualified low-income students from attending a four-year institution, and 22 percent from having access to any college at all. At the rate we are going, by the end of the decade 2 million students will lose out on the chance to achieve the dream of a college education. This is unacceptable, and I believe we can no longer stand idly by while our Nation's students, the future of our country, are being priced out of the promise of higher education.

The Affordability in Higher Education Act is simple in its purpose, but monumental in its potential to help struggling students and families. The bill proposes to empower the consumers of higher education—students and parents—with significant information on higher education, and hold colleges and universities accountable for the dramatic cost increases that are hampering our Nation's ability to make the dream of higher education a reality for needy students.

The bill establishes a "College Affordability Index," a standard measure by which the consumers of higher education can understand and compare tuition increases in real terms. Using data already being reported by colleges and universities, the U.S. Department of Edu-

cation will make information about college costs, including the College Affordability Index, publicly available through a user friendly website.

The bill provides colleges and universities with ample time to meet the challenge of affordability, and beginning in 2008, schools will begin to be held accountable for their cost increases. Using the College Affordability Index, schools that increase their tuition and fees by more than twice the rate of inflation over a three year period will be required to provide more information and undertake actions to improve affordability.

I believe one of the most important factors in addressing the college cost crisis is the need to empower consumers. Parents and students simply do not have access to adequate information necessary to make informed decisions in the higher education marketplace. And as we empower consumers and encourage accountability, we must also embrace innovation.

That's why the Affordability in Higher Education Act includes a demonstration program that will encourage schools to look for innovative strategies to hold down costs without sacrificing quality. The bill would grant waivers to schools which apply and are chosen to participate—allowing these institutions to have the freedom to find new ways to improve affordability and ultimately, increase access.

The face of higher education has changed significantly in recent years, and while college costs are a formidable barrier, the fact is, today's students face other obstacles as they work to reach their higher education goals. One of the most needless and often frustrating obstacles is an inability to transfer credits among institutions.

Recent data from the Department of Education tells us that over half of the nation's postsecondary education students attend more than one college or university. Yet many of these students struggle to transfer their credits, and as a result must retake coursework which costs both time and money. The bill recognizes that students deserve to have freedom and flexibility, and would make it easier for students to transfer credits. Let me be clear—the bill does not mandate coursework, nor does it require that particular credits be accepted to or from particular institutions. It simply makes it clear that credits cannot be denied based solely on what organization accredited the institution, so long as it is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Such territorial or political practices are harming students, and must not continue.

As colleges and universities strive to meet the challenge of affordability, I also believe we must also do our part at the Federal level to make that possible. Schools often tell us that they are burdened by voluminous and often unnecessary regulations and paperwork requirements. We must ease that burden by eliminating such cumbersome requirements. Last year, through the FED UP initiative, we made great strides in reducing red tape and eliminating unnecessary and costly regulations. The bill I'm offering today will continue that effort, and help institutions as they work to increase affordability.

Taken together, the reforms in this bill will make a real difference to the millions of students and families who are counting on us. The future of our Nation—today more than ever—depends on our ability to educate our

students. We cannot allow the continued explosion of college costs to go unchecked. The time has come to find solutions, and today, I believe we are taking a step in the right direction.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this important measure, Mr. Speaker; and I look forward to a higher education system that is accessible to every single American student who strives for it, regardless of financial circumstances. Our students, and our Nation, deserve nothing less.

TRIBUTE TO DUB RITER

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truly great American, great leader and dear friend—A.W. "Dub" Riter of Tyler, Texas—whose passing on September 23, was mourned by friends and admirers from East Texas to the White House. Dub was admired and respected not only for his many civic contributions and professional success but also for his goodness, compassion and humility. Dub truly cared about people and wanted to make life better for everyone. He gave selflessly of his time, talent and financial backing to countless civic, business and educational causes locally, statewide and nationally, and in doing so he sought to help others—not call attention to himself.

Dub was my dear friend and advisor for many years. He was a highly recognized and successful banker, retiring from his 50-year banking career as senior chairman of the Board of NCNB in Tyler (now Bank of America) in 1988. Throughout his career and after his retirement, he was tirelessly devoted to a host of community and State activities and organizations.

Education was particularly important to Dub. In 1997 Gov. George W. Bush appointed him to serve as a member of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System for a six-year term ending Feb. 1, 2003. Gov. Rick Perry then asked him to extend his term through the legislative session this year. He was a vice chairman of the board and a member of the Finance and Planning Committee, Facilities Planning and Construction Committee and the Student, Faculty and Staff Campus Life Committee. Dub was currently serving as a member of the Governor's Select Task Force on Public Education.

Dub and his wife, Betty Jo, also were devoted to The University of Texas at Tyler, where Dub served as chairman of the development board. Dr. Rodney Mabry, UT Tyler President, said that Dub was the "heart and soul" of the university the past several years. Dub and Betty Jo donated a \$1.35 million gift to UT Tyler to create the Dub and B.J. Riter Millennium Carillon Tower and Plaza and were involved in many activities at the university.

Dub also served as chairman of the University of Texas Health Center at Tyler Development Board and was a past president of the

UT Tyler Educational Foundation, Inc., and the Texas Chest Foundation. At one time he served as president of the East Texas State Fair Association, East Texas Hospital Foundation, East Texas Symphony Association, Mother Frances Hospital Foundation, Texas Rose Festival Foundation, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Economic Development Council, Tyler Industrial Foundation and United Way. He was a board member of the East Texas Communities Foundation, East Texas Medical Center Regional Healthcare System, Regional East Texas Food Bank, Salvation Army and Tyler Junior College Foundation.

As a testament to his lifetime of service, he received the W.C. Windsor Award as Tyler's Most Outstanding Young Man of the Year in 1958 and the T.B. Butler Award as Tyler's Most Outstanding Citizen of the Year in 1968. In 1987 he received the Patriot of the Year award from UT Tyler, and in 1994 he and his wife received the All Saints Episcopal School Flame of Excellence award. This year he received the Business Hall of Fame honor from Junior Achievement of Greater Tyler, of which he was a charter member.

At the State level, Dub was a life board member of the Texas Research League, serving as treasurer for six years, and served two terms as president of the Texas Association of Taxpayers. He was a past board member of the Texas Chamber of Commerce, which named him East Texan of the year in 1992. In 1989 Gov. Bill Clements appointed him to the Texas Growth Fund Board of Trustees, and in 1990 he was appointed to the Teacher Retirement System Board of Trustees. He was a member of the Governor's Business Council Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of the Chancellor's Council for The University of Texas System.

This legacy of outstanding achievement speaks to the dedication and leadership of this incredible man—and underlying his remarkable lifetime of service was his basic goodness and kindness. His gentle spirit, positive attitude and belief in others were evident in all that he did. Dub inspired, guided and served as a mentor to so many. He had an abiding faith in God and was a leader in the First Presbyterian Church of Tyler, where he served as elder, trustee, deacon and Sunday School teacher.

There was an outpouring of sympathy following Dub's death. The President and Mrs. Bush sent their condolences. National, State and local dignitaries attended his memorial service, and hundreds in the community expressed their love and support to his family—his beloved wife of 53 years, Betty Jo; son A.W. "Whit" Riter III and daughter-in-law Cynthia; daughter Melinda Shoemaker and son-in-law Tom, six grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Dub touched and enriched so many lives, and in his absence there will be a void that will be difficult to fill. But Dub also leaves a powerful legacy of service and selflessness that will be felt for years to come. Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn today, let us join his family and many friends in celebrating and honoring the life of this great Texan and great American—A.W. "Dub" Riter—whose exemplary life we will remember and cherish.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed rollcall votes Nos. 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, and 531 during the week of September 30 through October 2. Had I been present, I would have voted the following:

Rollcall vote No. 524: Sandlin Motion to Instruct on H.R. 1—"no"; rollcall vote No. 525: Pallone Motion to Instruct on H.R. 1308—"no"; rollcall vote No. 526: H. Res. 357—"yes"; rollcall vote No. 527: Dicks Motion to Instruct on H.R. 2691—"no"; rollcall vote No. 528: Case Motion to Instruct on H.R. 1—"no"; rollcall vote No. 529: Davis (AL) Motion to Instruct on H.R. 1308—"no"; rollcall vote No. 530: Adoption of the Conference Report on S. 3—"yes"; rollcall vote No. 531: Obey Motion to Instruct on H.R. 2660—"no"; rollcall vote No. 532: H. Con. Res. 274—"yes"; rollcall vote No. 533: Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 1—"no"; and rollcall vote No. 534: Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 1—"no."

HONORING LAURA BERG

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I rise today to honor one of my constituents from Santa Fe Springs, California, Laura Berg, who has recently been named to the U.S. Olympic Women's Softball Team. Laura has been a member of this team in the 1996 and 2000 Olympic games, winning gold medals both times. She is one of four two-time Olympic champions on the current team which will compete in the 2004 Olympic games in Athens, Greece. Berg started as a centerfielder in all 10 games in the 2000 Olympics and will play outfield for the team in 2004.

Berg has been a part of the USA Softball national system since 1994 when she was member of the USA Team that captured gold at the ISF Women's World Championship in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. In addition to her Olympic glory, Laura has won numerous accolades for her softball skills at the high school, college, national and international levels, including two gold medals at the Pan American Games and three World Championship gold medals. A graduate of Santa Fe High School and Fresno State University, she is of three players at Fresno State to ever boast 300 or more career hits and post a 160-game defensive errorless streak. She also spent 4 years as an assistant coach for the Fresno State Bulldogs team.

Laura firmly believes in setting challenging goals for herself and working hard to achieve them, whether she is practicing softball and studying in school. Her commitment to her sport, positive attitude, and strong work ethic have led to her extraordinary success and make her a role model for other young women.

Laura began playing softball as a child, tagging along to a program in which her parents

had enrolled her twin sister, Randi. She continues to be inspired by the challenges of the game and has become a veteran leader for her teammates.

Laura is married to Rob Peterson, the Assistant Athletic Director at the University of South Dakota. The two met when Peterson was Director of Facilities at Fresno State.

For the next 11 months, Laura and her teammates will be working hard in preparation of defending their Olympic title. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Laura and the other outstanding women who make up the team and in wishing them great success.

RECOGNIZING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. HELENA HOSPITAL IN ST. HELENA, CA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Helena Hospital of Napa County as it celebrates its 125th Anniversary.

On June 1, 1878, the Rural Health Retreat opened its doors to the public. 125 years later, the Rural Health Retreat has a new name and a new look but its commitment to quality healthcare remains the same. Today, the St. Helena Hospital is the world's oldest continuously operating Seventh-day Adventist hospital.

The hospital has grown substantially over the years, both in its ability to heal and in its physical space. What began as a small two-story building has matured into a state-of-the-art facility, which includes a 24-hour emergency room, a heliport, and top-of-the-line surgical suites.

Mr. Speaker, among other services, the St. Helena Hospital offers a wide range of facilities to assist our community members in overcoming their illnesses including addictions. Specifically, the hospital has a mental health unit, an alcohol and chemical recovery program and it houses wellness programs such as the Nicotine Addiction Program.

In 1974, a team of surgeons performed the first open-heart surgery in the North Bay, paving the way for St. Helena Hospital to become a leader in cardiac care. Today, history continues to be written and St. Helena Hospital has been named among the Top 100 Cardiovascular Hospitals in the country.

Mr. Speaker, during its 125 years of existence, the St. Helena Hospital has been a medical sanctuary for thousands of people from both in and out of our community. The hospital has a wonderful tradition of providing for the sick. Regardless of who you are or where you are from, you will receive the best medical assistance possible at the St. Helena Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, for maintaining such a high standard of excellence and for healing our community for over 125 years, it is appropriate that we honor the St. Helena Hospital as they recognize their 125th anniversary.