

professionals knowledgeable about public policy and the legislative process. I look forward to continuing to work with AAAS fellows. Over the years, they have become an integral part of my staff. Thanks again to AAAS for maintaining this valuable resource for Congress.

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 279, recognizing the significance of the 30th anniversary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Congressional Science and Engineering Fellowship Program. I congratulate Mr. EHLERS for introducing it.

The AAAS has literally incalculable contributions to this institution and the nation. It has enabled scientists to have a better understanding of the governing process—both the fellows themselves and scientists with whom they interact—and it has improved the governing process by enabling Congressional offices to better understand scientific information and scientists.

The fellows program has also been an entry point for many of the best staff we have on Capitol Hill. We recognize the value of the AAAS program daily on the Science Committee, where ten of our staff members began their careers on the Hill as fellows. To take just three prominent examples, the minority chief of staff, Bob Palmer, and both my deputy chiefs of staffs, John Mimikakis and Peter Rooney, were AAAS fellows. Hopefully everyone will view that as an advertisement for the program.

I look forward to the speedy passage of this resolution and to the continued success of the AAAS program of the fellows themselves.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 279.

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.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE STUDENT LOAN ASSISTANCE ACT

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 926) to amend section 5379 of title 5, United States Code, to increase the annual and aggregate limits on student loan repayments by Federal agencies

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 926

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 "Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act".

SEC. 2. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENTS.

Section 5379(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking "\$6,000" and inserting "\$10,000"; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking "\$40,000" and inserting "\$60,000".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 926.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of S. 926, a bill introduced by my colleague, Senator VOINOVICH, to increase the annual and total limits of student loan repayments by executive branch agencies.

This is identical to a bill that I introduced on the House side, H.R. 3080. We are considering the Senate version of this bill, the Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act, which has already passed that Chamber in an effort to speed up approval of this important piece of legislation.

I want to thank the leadership for bringing this matter to the floor today. As the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, Census and Agency Organization of the Committee on Government Reform, I have raised the same questions at many of our hearings this year: How do we attract the most qualified people to government service and how do we keep them once they have started?

Recruiting, retraining, and rewarding talented and hardworking individuals are at the very core of making our civil service the best that it can be. Very clearly, having the ability to tell potential recruits, come work for the United States Government and we can help you repay your student loans, is an extremely valuable tool.

All of us are surely aware of how expensive a college or graduate-level education is. And it is the prospect of these daunting student loans, \$50,000, \$75,000, or even more than \$100,000, that can prevent public service-minded people from coming to work for the government. They simply cannot afford it.

Student loan repayment is at the top of the list for newly graduated students looking for jobs. To keep up with the higher salaries of the private sector and nonprofit organizations, the Federal Government must have an effective student loan repayment program. This legislation before us today raises the annual maximum amount that agencies could give towards student

loan repayment, from \$6,000 a year to \$10,000 a year. It also raises the total amount an agency can contribute toward an individual's loan, from \$40,000 to \$60,000. These changes reflect the increases in annual college tuition costs since the Federal Government's original Student Loan Repayment Bill was enacted in 1991.

All funds to pay for the repayment program come out of the agencies' own budgets, so this legislation has no negative impact on the current budget. It is the right thing to do and something that we must do in order to remain competitive in the job market. I strongly urge my colleagues to pass the Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act before us today.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, rising tuition rates force families to borrow thousands of dollars to fund their children's college education. The debt that these families and new graduates face after graduation is daunting. The majority of college students today will have more loans over \$20,000 by the time they graduate. Public and private employees who administer programs that could help employees reduce their college loan costs have a valuable recruitment and retention tool. The Federal Student Loan Program permits Federal agencies to repay federally insured student loans as a tool to attract or retain highly qualified employees.

Under current law, agencies may authorize a student loan repayment of up to \$6,000 for an employee in any year and up to a lifetime limit of \$40,000. An employee receiving this benefit must sign a service agreement to remain in the service of the paying agency for at least 3 years. If an employee leaves the agency before that time, he or she must reimburse the agency for the loan repayment. S. 926, the Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act, will increase the allowed annual loan repayment from \$6,000 to \$10,000 and the allowed life-time loan repayment allowed from \$40,000 to \$60,000. The increases reflect the rising college tuition costs since enactment of the original statute in 1991.

Several agencies have reported that the use of program has helped them achieve their recruitment and retention goals. However, the program is generally underutilized due to lack of agency funding caused by limited budgets. If government service is to become a viable and attractive option for college graduates and talented employees, the Federal Government must use all the tools and resources at its disposal to attract and retain these individuals. S. 926 is a step in the right direction; but without funding and without aggressive use of this and similar programs to promote Federal civil service,

the Federal Government will be left behind in the competition for top talents.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 926, the "Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act," which will increase the annual and aggregate limits on student loan repayments by Federal agencies.

Many federal employees have undergraduate and graduate degrees, and due to the rising cost of higher education, most of these employees have incurred student loans with hefty payments. Many talented graduates are interested in federal employment, but due to loan repayment burdens, they are unable to seriously consider federal employment. In order to remain competitive with private agencies that offer higher salaries, the federal government must continue to offer additional incentives, such as loan repayment programs.

As tuition costs continue to rise yearly, we must factor this into the existing loan repayment program for federal employees. This bill, which will cost less than \$500,000 per year, will have a significant impact on both current and potential federal employees who are burdened with outstanding student loans. Increasing the yearly and total amounts of loan repayment allotted to individual federal employees helps the federal government to attract the best and the brightest employees, those who might otherwise opt out for higher salaries in the private sector.

This is a good bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 926, the "Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act," which will not only help to recruit quality federal employees, but will also encourage longevity and retention of these very same employees. These programs also serve as an excellent model for all employers, both public and private.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, S. 926, the Federal Employee Student Loan Assistance Act, would raise the annual and aggregate amounts that federal agencies can offer a qualified employee to assist in repaying a student loan. This legislation would raise the annual repayment amount for an employee from \$6,000 to \$10,000, and the aggregate repayment amount from \$40,000 to \$60,000.

The purpose of raising the annual and aggregate repayment caps is two-fold. First, higher education tuition costs have increased dramatically in recent years and are considerably higher than they were when the original statute was passed on November 5, 1990. Second, as the federal government works to recruit and retain the best and the brightest, an attractive student loan repayment program should be an effective recruitment tool to help government agencies compete with the private sector.

I would like to commend the Senate sponsors of this legislation for introducing this important legislation, and I would also like to commend the House Civil Service Subcommittee Chairwoman for introducing companion legislation in the House.

I urge all Members to support S. 926.

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

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1530

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 926.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DAVID BYBEE POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2744) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 514 17th Street in Moline, Illinois, as the "David Bybee Post Office Building".

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2744

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

SECTION 1. DAVID BYBEE POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 514 17th Street in Moline, Illinois, shall be known and designated as the "David Bybee Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the David Bybee Post Office Building.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), introduced H.R. 2744, a bill that honors the life of a diligent and admired member of the U.S. Postal Service family, David Bybee. Mr. Bybee served the Postal Service for 33 years as a letter carrier in Moline, Illinois. He was an active member of the National Association of Letter Carriers, representing thousands of postal employees in Illinois as the NALC's National Business Agent for the Chicago area. Away from work, Mr. Bybee

was a fire chief, school board member, Elks Club member, and he enjoyed, most of all, spending as much time as he could with his family.

Mr. Speaker, David Bybee sadly passed away on May 31, 2002. He is survived by his wife, Judy; his two sons, Michael and John; his mother, Marilla; his brother, Richard; and three grandchildren, Ryan, Brandon and Jennifer. I want to join with the gentleman from Illinois to offer the best wishes of this House to the family of David Bybee.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express gratitude to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) for his valuable work on H.R. 2744, and I urge all Members to support its passage.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

As a member of the Committee on Government Reform, I rise in support of H.R. 2744, legislation naming a postal facility located at 514 17th Street in Moline, Illinois, after David Bybee. H.R. 2744, introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) on July 15, 2003, was unanimously approved by our committee on October 8, 2003. The bill has met the Committee on Government Reform policy and has the support and cosponsorship of the entire Illinois State delegation.

Mr. David Bybee began his career with the Postal Service as a letter carrier. He was later elected president of the Letter Carriers Local 318. Mr. Bybee worked as the National Association of Letter Carriers' National Business Agent in Chicago, Region 3, for the last 25 years of his service, and in September of 2000, he retired after 33 years of working at the Moline Post Office.

A family man, David Bybee was active in the union and in his community. He served as a vice president of the Illinois AFL-CIO, was a fire chief, school board member and active in the Moline Elks Club. Sadly, he passed away on May 31, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for seeking to honor the legacy of David Bybee and urge the swift adoption of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he might consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS).

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2744, designating the post office in Moline, Illinois, after my good friend Dave Bybee, who passed away in May of last year.

Dave served as a letter carrier and union leader for 33 years within the very building I seek to name after him. He became a letter carrier for the postal service in 1967, and after only 2 years on the job, was elected president of Letter Carriers Local 318.

Dave Bybee held various positions within the Illinois State Letter Carriers Association from 1971 to 1977. He was elected National Business Agent for the National Association for Letter