

women. As I'm sure many of us here can attest, the aging process can be a daunting experience. This special group has refused to accept that life after a certain age means confinement to a rocking chair. Now, it is hard for me personally to imagine that someone who is merely 50—the minimum age for membership—could approach this spry age with reservation; however, these women tell me that this birthday can be somewhat traumatic.

As the story goes, several years ago Sue Ellen Cooper of Fullerton, California read the poem, "Warning" by British poet Jenny Joseph. The poem begins,

"When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat that doesn't go . . ."

So inspired was Ms. Cooper by this poem, that she decided to pass along a copy of it to a friend, accompanied by a vintage red fedora. Her friend loved the gift, and did the same for a friend of hers. On April 25, 1998, under the direction of Exalted Queen Mother Sue Ellen, The Red Hat Society first convened in a tea-room of ladies wearing purple dresses and—of course—red hats.

Although it took some convincing, these ladies had to explain to me that red and purple do not actually match. Nevertheless, this fashion faux pas stuck and is quite a sight to see indeed.

These wonderful women refer to themselves as a "dis-organization" determined to take on aging with a sense of humor, camaraderie and a fun-loving spirit. They organize social events, hold conferences and communicate with "hat-quarters" via their own webpage. This inclusive group even allows women of lesser maturity to join their ranks. To differentiate these "ladies in waiting" from full-fledged members, this sub-sect is confined to wearing lavender dresses with pink hats, reserving the truly outrageous garb for those who have hit "the big one." My wife Deborah tells me that lavender and pink do not go very well together either, but they are generally preferable to red and purple.

Sue Ellen Cooper realized that behind every woman, no matter how responsible and upstanding of a citizen she was in her youth, is a crazy old spirit waiting to get out and cause some trouble. Ms. Cooper and her friends found a way to connect these women, and since that day in 1998, they have seen nothing but success. Any woman who is of a certain age and willing to go out in public dressed in particular flare can start her own chapter of Red Hats. California, Florida, and Michigan lead the nation in Red Hat chapters, with the 15th Congressional District alone boasting 91. There are thousands more active chapters across the United States, and even some international chapters as far away as Egypt and Japan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues join me today in commemoration of the official first meeting of the Red Hat Society and honor these thousands of inspiring women who endeavor to remain young at heart and in soul.

RULE PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 609

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this restrictive rule and in opposition to H.R. 609.

First, I would like to state my support for specific provisions in the Manager's Amendment to H.R. 609 that eliminated the funding formula change to campus-based aid.

As introduced, H.R. 609 changed the formula for campus-based aid programs, including Work Study, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and low-interest Perkins Loans. This would have resulted in substantial losses of this aid to schools across the country with a history of participation in the program. Students at schools in my state of Massachusetts would have lost \$9.4 million in work study and other programs.

During Subcommittee and full Committee mark-ups, Mr. KIND and I offered amendments to ensure that students were not unfairly punished by the changes to the campus-based aid funding formula in H.R. 609. Our amendments gained support from both sides of the aisle and the votes were tied in both mark-ups. We were also joined by more than 80 of our colleagues in sending a letter to the Chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee asking for these funding formula changes to be taken out of the bill before floor consideration. I would like to express my thanks to the outgoing and incoming Chairmen for heeding our call. They realized that changing the distribution formula would harm thousands of students because it would have simply taken funds from one group of needy students and shifted those funds to another group of needy students. Unless we increased the appropriations for campus-based aid, Mr. KIND and I felt strongly that we could not in good faith change the funding distribution formula.

While I am extremely pleased that the Manager's Amendment eliminates the campus-based aid cuts, I must turn now to the Rule before us today.

I am disappointed, but not surprised, that this restrictive rule does not make in order the amendments I brought before the Rules Committee on Tuesday afternoon.

My amendments would have helped make college more affordable for low- and middle-income students and families across the country. After all, what is the point of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act if we aren't going to make college more affordable?

Ms. MCCOLLUM and I attempted to offer several amendments, including an amendment based on our bill, the College Affordability and Accountability Act. Quite simply, the amendments would make college more affordable by:

Renewing states' commitment to affordable college education by ensuring that they maintain their own level of college financing, so states will no longer be able to push higher tuition taxes onto students and families;

Providing incentives to make tuition affordable;

Engaging schools in cost containment strategies; and

Putting students and families in control by giving them access to accurate information about the cost of college and steps individual schools are taking to offer affordable rates of tuition.

We also offered an amendment to commission a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on college costs and the impact of state support for higher education on college costs. In my home state of Massachusetts and in other states around the country, state support for higher education has plummeted, pushing more of the burden of college on students and families.

I also sought to offer an amendment to commission a study by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance to review current student aid programs and recommend the steps that Congress must take in order to ensure that every qualified eligible student receives a sufficient comprehensive financial aid package. This financial aid package should come from a variety of sources, including the federal government, state governments, institutions of higher education and private sources, and it should cover at least the equivalent of a four-year public higher education.

All qualified high school graduates should be able to afford at least the equivalent of a four-year public higher education. Today, that is not the case. Many students are foregoing college, dropping out or incurring unmanageable levels of student loan debt.

Young people in their 20s and 30s are not only leaving college with much more personal debt—students graduate with an average of almost \$20,000 of student loan debt—but also are burdened by rapidly increasing health care, energy and housing costs. To make matters worse, according to recent studies, young people are working longer hours and still earning less money. We must do more for young people in America today. We must restore the American dream so that young people can achieve financial prosperity through hard work and determination.

The amendments I offered to the Rules Committee would have helped us make college affordable and accessible for students and their families.

Mr. Speaker, we had a real opportunity to help make college affordable today, but instead students and families will be left to struggle with sky-rocketing tuition costs and mounting debt on their own. H.R. 609 will not make college more affordable. I urge Members to oppose the restrictive rule and oppose final passage of H.R. 609.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF AZERBAIJAN

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Azerbaijan as a key ally in a region of significant importance and a valued partner to the United States. Azerbaijan has made important contributions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo and supports efforts to combat terrorism. The country has also taken effective steps to foster pro-democratic principles leading to fair and free elections.

I also would like to welcome President Ilham Aliyev to Washington this week for meetings with President Bush, senior Administration officials, and key Congressional leaders to discuss the need for continued democratic reforms, regional cooperation, energy security and diversification, and our nations' commitment to working closely together to advance freedom, security, and economic independence.

It is clear now more than ever that we must develop new sources of energy and partners not controlled by Middle East and South American dictatorships.

Azerbaijan has been identified as key to the East-West transit corridor from the Caspian Sea to international markets. Sharing a 379 mile border with Iran, we should recognize that Azerbaijan is important to the United States relations in the region. I encourage my colleagues in the House to support the opening of the one million barrel per day Baku-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and Baku-Erzurum (SCP) natural gas pipeline, set to increase energy exports and availability for the West.

I welcome President Ilham Aliyev upon his first official visit to Washington.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS AWARENESS WEEK

HON. KATHERINE HARRIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, as a Co-Chair of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, I rise to urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 378, in recognition of the goals of National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

In 2004, according to the Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey, approximately 24 million Americans became victims of a criminal action, including 5.2 million acts of violence.

While I celebrate the fact that this marks the lowest level ever recorded, I remain committed to providing a voice and a helping hand to those whose freedoms have been infringed.

In tribute to the more than 10,000 system- and community-based assistance programs that serve as a vital role in the recovery process, the theme of the 2006 National Crime Victims' Rights Week is "Strength in Unity."

Since the passage of the Victims of Crimes Act in 1984, more than \$7 billion in fines and other assessments have been collected from those who prey on some of the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society.

Each year thousands of volunteers selflessly contribute their time and energy that enables an individual to make the important transformation from "crime victim" to "crime survivor." Through various means of advocacy, we continue our work to ensure that no victim, nor family member, is forced to face a legal or medical appointment on their own; or, more importantly, left to face an anniversary alone.

Mr. Speaker, when the salacious interest of check-out stand voyeurs wanes, and the cable news programs turn their cameras to another sensational story, we must remain the crime victims' advocate and ally.

HONORING JUDY TRAMMELL AND THE MESQUITE WOMEN IN SERVICE AND ENTERPRISE

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, for the past five years, the greater Mesquite area has embraced the opportunity to honor many exceptional women in the community through the Women In Service and Enterprise (WISE) Award Luncheon and Style Show. Today I would like to honor this year's award recipient, Judy Trammell, who is a shining example of strong, capable and dedicated leadership. I would also like to recognize honorees Sammie Motley Coats, Officer Cheryl Gregg and JaLinda Grimland for their valuable service and commitment to their community.

Judy Trammell is a personal friend and is actually one of the first people I met in Mesquite. She has always been extremely helpful to me and I have had the chance to work firsthand with her on several occasions. Recently the Mesquite Service League was the recipient of a very kind charitable donation, and I was able to be there, with Judy, to witness the generosity and appreciation of the Mesquite community.

Judy is the Business Development/Marketing Director for Jefferson Bank in Mesquite. Since moving to Mesquite in 1985, she has held positions with Mesquite Savings and Loan, Mesquite National Bank and Colonial Bank.

Judy has served on numerous boards in the greater Mesquite community including: American Heart Association Mesquite, Exchange Club of Mesquite, Mesquite Chamber of Commerce, Mustang Chamber of Commerce, Mesquite Service League, Advisory Board of Boys and Girls Club of Dallas—Mesquite Division, member of Main Street Mesquite and Mesquite Social Services.

In addition to being active in the community and holding leadership roles, Judy has also been recognized for her service. She has received the American Heart Association Regional Volunteer of the Year award in 1998, the Distinguished Service Award in 1999, and was awarded a research grant in her honor. She received the Mesquite Chamber of Commerce 2002 Volunteer of the Year award and the 2005 Committee Chair of the Year award.

Judy is not only constantly on the go at work and with community service activities, but she is also an energetic mother of two daughters and the proud grandmother of grandsons, Mason and Cameron. Judy truly embodies the ideals of a great volunteer; she knows how to lead, encourage others to follow and "get her hands dirty." Judy's impact on our community is great and far-reaching and exemplifies an outstanding woman in service and enterprise.

Past WISE Award winners have served in a variety of ways, but they are united by the long-lasting impact they have made on their community. Their service, community involvement and dedication to enterprise also inspire younger generations. This year, Mesquite Social Services and the Mesquite Service League are, once again, partnering to honor six Junior WISE scholarship recipients: Phylecia Burk, Christine Nguyen, Renu Mat-

thews, Cari Wheat, Bianca Rodriguez and Makiala Fivecoat. These six young ladies, who are graduating from local high schools in Mesquite, have all indicated their desire to attend college and enter a service-oriented field of study.

Today, I would like to recognize Judy Trammell and all of the WISE honorees for their outstanding service and congratulate them on their awards. Thank you, ladies, for helping make our community and country a better place.

TRIBUTE TO JANE JACOBS

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we lost one of New York City's greatest champions and a pioneer in the world of urban planning when Jane Jacobs died at the age of 89.

Millions of people visit New York every year, and many are overwhelmed by its sheer size. The hulking skyscrapers. The bustling crowds. The bright lights.

But the dynamism of Manhattan during rush hour is just a piece of the story.

A more complete picture of the Big Apple is colored by the scores of local communities that are defined not by big business of the world's economic capital, but rather by the rhythm of parents walking kids to a local elementary school, families attending religious services at a local church or synagogue, and mothers and fathers shopping along the neighborhood shopping strip.

While the Manhattan skyline may spring to mind when someone mentions New York, the DNA of the City's everyday life is defined much more by each local neighborhood. Forest Hills in Queens. Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn. Throgs Neck in the Bronx. Stapleton on Staten Island. Jacobs' beloved West Village in Manhattan. There are so many others.

It was Jacobs' masterpiece—"The Death and Life of Great American Cities"—that argued that the health of the City as a whole depended on the vibrancy of its urban neighborhoods. At a time when grand visions of urban renewal were spurring planners to pave over entire communities, Jacobs stood at the forefront of a movement to preserve the City's most fundamental building blocks.

And today, as a result in part of Jacobs' efforts to preserve New York's neighborhoods, New York City is as vibrant as ever. We are a magnet for what Richard Florida has termed the "Creative Class"—the highly-educated, highly-motivated young people who are key to economic growth.

And while scholars like Robert Putnam worry about the deterioration of social capital—afraid that Americans are interacting less and more likely to "bowl alone"—the neighborhoods of New York City continue to have dynamic communities that interact on the street with a swirl of new and old faces.

In fact, today, Jacobs' successes have left New Yorkers with a new set of challenges. Because so many people want to live in New York, property values have skyrocketed, and tax bills along with them. Because so many people are using our public transportation systems to get to work, we're forced to invest in