

In New Mexico, students and families are served by the New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation; a not-for-profit organization that doubles as a loan provider and a student service provider. As a not-for-profit organization, the New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation reinvests its revenue in students and the programs that serve them. That includes loan forgiveness programs, outreach, college planning and rate and fee relief. I want to be sure the services and programs by organizations like NMEAF are not hampered by this legislation; these programs make a real difference in the real lives of students.

College affordability should be at the top of our agenda. This bill does nowhere near enough in that regard. I hope we will have an opportunity to make a real difference for students as we move forward with discussions on how best to address the high cost of a college education in this country and encourage more young Americans to go to college.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, on motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Con. Res. 31, honoring the Mare Island 21ers, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 41, on motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 62, congratulating the Grand Valley State University Lakers for winning the 2006 NCAA Division II Football National Championship, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 40, on passage of H.R. 6, Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act, had I been present, I would have voted, "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 39, to table appeal of the ruling of the Chair on H.R. 6, Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 38, on motion to recommit with instructions H.R. 6, Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 37, on consideration of the bill H.R. 6, Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 36, on agreeing to the resolution, providing for the consideration of H.R. 6, Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 35, on ordering the previous question, providing for the consideration of H.R. 6, Creating Long-Term Energy Alternatives for the Nation Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 34, on motion to adjourn, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 33, on motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 58, to honor Muhammad Ali, global humanitarian, on the occasion of his 65th birthday and to extend best wishes to him and his fam-

ily, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 32, on passage of H.R. 5, College Student Relief Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 29, on ordering the previous question for H. Res. 65, providing for the consideration of H.R. 5, College Student Relief Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 30, on agreeing to the Resolution for H. Res. 65, providing for the consideration of H.R. 5, College Student Relief Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 31, on motion to recommit with instructions H.R. 5, College Student Relief Act, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 28, on motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 434, to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through December 31, 2007, and for other purposes, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

HONORING MS. LAUREN LAUSTERN

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Ms. Lauren Laustern for her academic achievement in receiving the Homeland Security Scholarship from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate. This scholarship will be used to further her studies in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Ms. Laustern and each of the other 200 scholars and fellows visited Washington, DC for an orientation in November of 2006 to formally introduce the Scholars and Fellows to the Department of Homeland Security and other DHS-affiliated organizations and facilities. The Department of Homeland Security Scholars and Fellows Program was developed to inspire, stimulate and support students conducting research relevant to homeland security. The DHS provides many opportunities and resources to a variety of students from all over the country. The program offers two years of support at the undergraduate level and three years of support at the graduate level. In addition the students are also required to complete a 10-week internship to complete their studies. Today I commend her for her hard work and dedication in furthering her education.

TRIBUTE TO BYRON WOOD

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to bring to my colleagues' attention the retirement of a man dedicated to the U.S. Space

program. The President of Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, Byron Wood, has announced his retirement after 44 years of service, not just to Rocketdyne, but to the people of the United States.

Byron has seen his career go full circle, from his early work on the J-2 engine for the Apollo moon program, to his leadership today in resurrecting the J-2 for America's return to the moon. In between, Byron was instrumental in the development of the space shuttle main engine, which has served our national space program flawlessly for 25 years. Byron is the proud recipient of two NASA awards; the Exceptional Engineering Achievement medal and the Public Service medal.

During his career, Byron also made valuable contributions to the national security needs of the United States. His leadership in the development of the RS-68 engine for the Delta IV launch vehicle will help ensure that America's military will maintain information superiority through the reliable launch and placement of our national space based assets. His continued support for the development of small liquid propulsion systems has greatly strengthened our missile defense capability through Rocketdyne's contributions to the Theater High Altitude Area Defense System.

America will miss Byron's service. As we refocus our efforts to return humans to the moon and beyond, and as space systems continue to become more vital to the national security of our country, wisdom and leadership of the type possessed by Byron will be ever more essential. Please join me in wishing Byron the best in his retirement and in thanking him for his work.

SUPPORT FOR THE SAFE COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, earlier this week I reintroduced legislation in the House of Representatives aimed at addressing the looming financial crisis facing the Nation, the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act. The bill would establish a national bipartisan commission that will put everything—entitlement spending as well as all other federal programs and our Nation's tax policies—on the table and require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the process set in 1988 to close military bases. Mandating congressional action on the panel's recommendations is what differentiates this commission from previous ones.

Support for the bill is coming from both sides of the aisle. I submit for the RECORD letters from several former Members.

This legislation will be good for the future of America.

THE BLACKSTONE GROUP,
New York, NY, June 28, 2006.

Hon. FRANK WOLF,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. WOLF: Thank you for sending me a summary of your bill creating a bipartisan commission on long-term fiscal policy and for the excellent statement you made in introducing the bill. I read both with great interest and I wholeheartedly approve of what

you are trying to do. I understand that George Voinovich has introduced a similar bill in the Senate.

While I would like to think that the economic and moral case for serious reform is compelling enough to spur action without resort to another commission, I fear that the reality is otherwise. Given the harsh partisan environment you note in your letter, I have come to believe that a new commission could serve a very useful trust-building purpose—so long as it is truly bipartisan and all policy options are on the table.

You clearly agree with these principles, which is one reason I think your bill could help break the political gridlock. It is an added bonus, in my view, that your bill would require the commission to hold public hearings around the country and compel congressional consideration of the commission's recommendations. As one who has sat on many commissions, including the Kerrey-Danforth entitlement and tax reform commission more than 10 years ago, I think all of these special attributes bode well for the success of a commission formed pursuant to your bill.

As you may know, I serve as President of The Concord Coalition. Former Senators Warren Rudman (who I know you have spoken to about this) and Bob Kerrey are co-chairs of The Concord Coalition. We have been urging bipartisan action to bring about a more sustainable and generationally equitable fiscal policy for many years. Our executive director, Bob Bixby, has sent you a letter with our approval on behalf of The Concord Coalition expressing our appreciation and commanding you for your leadership in drawing attention to one of the nation's most daunting challenges. To that, let me add my personal thanks and encouragement.

Sincerely,

PETER G. PETERSON.

MANATT JONES,
GLOBAL STRATEGIES,
Washington, DC, June 26, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: Thank you for your letter and for sending me a copy of your legislation, H.R. 5552. I can't speak highly enough in commanding you for leading this much needed effort and for the comprehensiveness of your proposal.

As a former House Budget Committee Chairman who subsequently headed the American Stock Exchange among other business activities since leaving the Congress, I have been appalled and discouraged by the recklessness and disregard of our government's fiscal policy. These unconsciousable deficits and mounting federal debt load financed primarily by foreigners are an economic time bomb waiting to explode. If I were managing a private company this irresponsibly, the shareholders should demand my resignation.

We hear much talk about our national security and energy security. But to put our economic security so much in the hands of foreign interests is gambling at its worst.

In addition to the economic dangers, this is also a moral issue in that our generation is saddling our children and grandchildren with the responsibility for paying off our profligacy. That can only reduce the standard of living of future generations. How can we justify such immorality?

I am so proud that you are stepping forward to try to pass legislation with teeth to force both the Congress and the Executive Branch to make hard choices to get our fiscal house on a path to responsibility. I hope that you will make this a bipartisan effort. I will be pleased to support you in every way I can and to urge my fellow Democrats to join you in this effort.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES R. JONES.

THE URBAN INSTITUTE,
Washington, DC, June 22, 2006.

Representative FRANK WOLF,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WOLF: In response to your letter of June 16, I strongly support your bill to establish a national bipartisan commission on entitlement spending and tax policy. Although many are cynical about the prospects for the success of any commission, I think that you are right that the current political climate is not conducive to passing constructive legislation without some prod-
ing from the outside.

I also believe that the American public is not ready to accept the sacrifices necessary to avoid a crisis, because the dire nature of the situation has not been well communicated by policy makers. Therefore, I particularly commend your idea of holding town meetings across the country and I would hope that the commission has a large budget for this purpose, because I believe that we need lots of meetings. Ideally, the commission would first produce a white paper that could be discussed at the meetings. It would outline the problem in the most objective way possible and describe the major options for solving it.

It is interesting to note that Canada had such meetings prior to a significant reform of their social security system and Canadian officials will tell you that they were extremely helpful in finding a solution. Similarly, Britain is in the midst of reforming their public pension system and they used large focus groups to test their options. I would prefer a town meeting to a focus group format, but however one proceeds, the involvement of the public is absolutely crucial.

I wish you success in getting your idea enacted and would be willing to help in any way that I can.

Yours sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER.

WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL
CENTER FOR SCHOLARS,
Washington, DC, July 7, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,
Washington, DC.

DEAR FRANK: Thank you for sending along your excellent proposal to establish a national bipartisan commission on America's looming fiscal crisis. I agree that we must hastily address the very grave financial challenges before our Nation. You have laid out a thoughtful and effective way forward. In particular, it is important to put everything on the table—entitlement spending, federal programs, and tax policy. Mandating congressional action would also ensure that a prospective commission does not issue a report that gathers dust on a shelf.

On another note, the Iraq Study Group continues to make excellent progress, and I once again thank you for your leadership and support of our efforts.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

LEE H. HAMILTON.

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR FRANK: I am writing to express my hope your bill, H.R. 5552, Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Act, will be swiftly enacted. You and I have discussed this bill and the impending fiscal crises it is designed to avoid.

I am not able to detail in a single page all the fiscal difficulties we face, nor to list all the arguments in favor of H.R. 5552, but I believe it offers the Congress an opportunity

for a comprehensive fiscal solution, so the country will not have to face an ongoing series of crises, each demanding a patchwork, probably temporary, and certainly painful, response.

While the BRAC-type Commission necessarily forces Legislation action, H.R. 5552 does provide unusual, extra Legislative discretion by giving the Congress opportunities to enact alternatives not suggested by the Commission.

H.R. 5552 has my enthusiastic endorsement. I hope the House passes it first.

Sincerely,

BILL FRENZEL.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 33, H. Res. 58, "To honor Muhammad Ali, global humanitarian, on the occasion of his 65th birthday and to extend best wishes to him and his family."

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE NEGOTIATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to vote on H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007 because I had to travel back to California due to a death in the family. I would like the record to reflect that had I been here, I would have voted "no" on H.R. 4 and "aye" on the Motion to Commit. H.R. 4 will not, as some claim, save Medicare beneficiaries money on their prescription drugs. All that this ill-conceived bill will do is to restrict beneficiary access to necessary drugs, stifle medical advancements, and limit the pharmacies that seniors can utilize.

In the last year, seniors have been able to enjoy outpatient prescription drug coverage under Medicare for the first time in the program's history. Every Medicare-eligible senior now has access to a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit, with extra help available for low income seniors. Consumers in my state of California can choose from over fifty national, state and regional plans, which cover brand name and generic drugs. The hallmark of this program is choice. Under the current system, covered seniors can continue to visit their neighborhood pharmacies and have access to the medications that have been prescribed to them by their doctors.

Recent data indicates that the current system of incorporating private sector principles into the prescription drug plan is working to control costs, while providing prescription drug coverage to millions of seniors who did not have it previously. Independent estimates for the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit for Fiscal Year 2008 show that net costs are thirty percent less than were originally predicted when the benefit was created four