

This year, beginning at their neighborhood pools, residents will pick up thousands of pounds of litter near sidewalks, greenbelt trails and curbs.

These volunteer efforts are commendable and an inspiration for others to show pride in their communities.

I am proud to have Kingwood, Texas, in my district.

That's just the way it is.

THE COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER HOEKSTRA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in opposition of H.R. 5.

Today we are considering the College Student Relief Act of 2007. Democrats have claimed that this legislation will provide relief to students going to college. However, what they have done is propose a classic bait and switch.

This bill will not improve access to higher education for low- and middle-income Americans nor will it provide relief for students in college today. This relief, when fully phased in, will benefit college graduates for only 6 months.

H.R. 5 reduces interest rates for only undergraduate subsidized loans over 5 years from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent.

By the time the interest rate is cut in half, the 3.4 percent interest rate is only in effect for half a year. The student loan interest rate goes back to 6.8 percent permanently starting January 1, 2012. In other words, it snaps back just 6 months after it is fully phased in at a cost of \$7 billion.

The reality of the situation is that the Democrats could not follow through on their campaign promise to cut interest rates in half because they couldn't pay for it.

So first they narrowed the field down to one subset of student loans. Then, they phased the rate cut in. Then, they ended it after 5 years. What is left is this "bait and switch" benefit that will expire in a mere 6 months after it is fully phased in.

Democrats have talked about improving access to higher education for lower- and middle-income Americans. H.R. 5 does not provide relief to college students seeking to pay their tuition. It does not do anything to get more students into college.

This bill provides a back-end benefit to college graduates instead of a front-end benefit for those trying to get in the door of a university.

The bill will not help a single graduate student saddled with a heavy financial burden.

H.R. 5 is a boon to the Direct Loan Program. The Direct Loan Program's market share has fallen to 22 percent because schools have chosen FFEL. Cutting FFEL lenders is the only way to increase the competitive position of direct lending, a program that is withering on the vine through the voluntary attrition of colleges.

CBO estimates that cutting interest rates will cost taxpayers more than \$7 billion. In order to off-set the cost, the proposal before us will cut

government payments to loan providers. While reducing lender payments, I'm concerned that rate reductions, fee waivers, loan forgiveness and other benefits will be taken away from students seeking higher education loans.

Lowering interest rates for borrowers could result in schools increasing tuition. If that is the result, borrowers won't get any relief at all. The real issue is college cost, not student loan interest rates!

During the 109th Congress, we enacted policies that reduced student loan fees by allowing students to consolidate with lenders that best met their needs. Origination fees were reduced and loan limits were also increased, allowing more students to gain access to much-needed financial aid.

Supporting H.R. 5 will not help students achieve higher education affordability.

RECOGNIZING MS. SANDRA J. ELLIS FOR HER SERVICE AND DEDICATION ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Ms. Sandra J. Ellis for her loyal service to the United States of America.

Sandy's commitment to the armed services of our country and the Fort Lee community is to be highly commended.

Sandra J. Ellis was born in Petersburg, Virginia on June 16, 1948, which is Flag Day. The daughter of an Air Force officer, Sandy grew up in a military family that lived in Illinois, South Dakota, and years later returned to Virginia.

While Sandy's first roles at Fort Lee were as a stage performer with Special Services and as an entertainer at the hospital ward there, it was after high school that Sandy entered Petersburg General Hospital School of Nursing/Richard Bland College. In 1967 she decided to take a semester off and took a part-time position at Fort Lee. In a short while, she was offered a permanent position which she accepted. At a time when many young men and women were joining the Army during the build-up in Vietnam, Sandy chose to serve her country at Fort Lee; and so she did for 40 years.

Sandy began her dedicated service to the Army as a Military Personnel Clerk. During her career, she consistently earned more responsibility and took on positions as a Port Call Clerk, Secretary, Congressional Inquiry Specialist, Administrative Specialist, and Protocol Officer. Most recently, she has served as the Public Affairs Officer, where she has been the officer responsible for media and community relations at Fort Lee, an Army community of more than 12,000 and home of the Quartermaster Center and School. As the chief liaison to the surrounding community, Sandy played a central role in steering the installation and the community through the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process.

Sandy Ellis has shown a demonstrated commitment to the Army, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the nation that is rarely equaled. She has served during eight different Presidential administrations, and her loyalty to

the servicemen and women at Fort Lee deserves particular attention and admiration. Today, we salute her for her unwavering dedication to her profession and the American people. Furthermore, we salute her husband John Ellis, and her son, Jay, without whom Sandy's work would not have been possible nor as meaningful as it has been.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Sandy Ellis on her retirement from Federal service in the United States Army.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING HELEN BASS SMITH ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker, Whereas, Mrs. Smith has shown an extraordinary commitment to her community by volunteering at the Salvation Army in Cadiz, Ohio, and at the Harrison Community Hospital, where she has been president of the Hospital Auxiliary for 4 years; and

Whereas, Mrs. Smith has demonstrated values of hard work and service throughout her life, always maintaining a positive outlook; and

Whereas, Mrs. Smith has worked for the United States Department of Agriculture, the Scio Pottery Company, Lib Gray's Dressmaker Shop, and as a farmer for many years and still continues her active lifestyle by walking 2 miles every day; and

Whereas, Mrs. Smith's character has been praised by her hospital volunteer coordinator, who describes her as "nothing short of magnificent" and that her spirit is "not a day over 14;" Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I wish Helen Bass-Smith a happy and healthy 90th birthday. We recognize the tremendous impact she has had in her community and in the lives of all those people she has touched.

NEW DIRECTION FOR IRAQ ACT OF 2007

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing, along with Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN and Congressman SAM FARR, the New Direction for Iraq Act, the first legislation introduced in Congress to deal comprehensively with the military, diplomatic, political, economic and humanitarian strategies needed to move forward in Iraq.

On November 7th, the American people sent a strong and clear message that it's time to change the course in Iraq. Unfortunately, President Bush is proposing more of the same. Instead of listening to the majority of Americans, Iraqis, and military experts, the President's stubborn adherence to a clearly failed strategy is undermining our security and putting more of our troops and Iraqis at risk. Our troops have performed valiantly, but

progress in Iraq now depends on a political solution.

It's time for a new direction in Iraq and a comprehensive shift in our Iraq policy. My legislation will: Bring our troops home within approximately one year; Refocus our assistance on creating jobs for Iraqis, supporting grassroots multi-ethnic civil society, and disarming militias; Authorize more aggressive efforts to punish war profiteering and reconstruction fraud; Require a new comprehensive diplomatic effort—internal, regional, and international—to provide support in stabilizing Iraq and promoting ethnic reconciliation; Strengthen efforts to address the Iraqi refugee crisis.

This is now about making the best of a bad situation; our military is breaking and our presence in Iraq is doing nothing to ease sectarian tensions or promote a democratic future. We must leave Iraq and we are going to do so before it's fixed. It will be painful for everybody: the innocent Iraqi victims who will get caught up in the maelstrom, as well as Americans who will be less safe for years, if not generations, to come.

The final costs of this war are not yet fixed, but we have a chance to influence just how high and how horrible through our actions. At this point, we can only try to make this terrible situation no worse and hope that, at some point, it might become marginally better for both Americans and Iraqis. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and look forward to working with them to advance a comprehensive plan to change the course in Iraq.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

SPEECH OF

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 22, 2007

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise once again with my colleagues to recognize the students, teachers, faculty and graduates of our nation's Catholic Schools.

As Bishop Donald Wuerl has stated "Catholic schools are a tremendous asset to our Church and our nation." What graduates of Catholic Schools offer to society is not only a commitment to achieving academic excellence but also of service to the community. These are traits I learned at an early age as a student at St. Barnabas Elementary School and Walsh Jesuit High School and I greatly value both my Catholic and public school education.

For instance, 86 schools, along with parishes, youth ministry and CCD programs, raised more than \$300,000 over the last nine years in support of the "Kids Share A Lunch Nutrition Project" for the Pittsburgh diocesan mission in Chimbote, Peru.

This year's theme for Catholic Schools Week (January 28–February 3) is "Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education," and the good news is strong in Pennsylvania. With a 15 to 1 student/teacher ratio, more than 97 percent of high school graduates from Pennsylvania's Catholic Schools (including both Catholic and non-Catholics) went on to a post-secondary education following graduation.

This year, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh celebrate 178 years of quality

education. Pennsylvania alone, has 650 Catholic schools with over 180,951 High School and elementary students. (47,079 High School Students: 133,872 elementary students).

Dr. Robert Paserba, Pittsburgh diocesan superintendent of schools has stated "parents are choosing our schools because they teach strong moral values in a disciplined environment—clearly a recipe for helping all children in our schools achieve their highest potential. As with our schools themselves, our graduates become a source of hope for the world."

I believe Catholic schools do promote social awareness and help make the world a better place to live. I am pleased to commend all those who teach and are students of Catholic schools.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF JUDGE SAM MONK

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask the attention of the House today to pay recognition to Judge Sam Monk who is retiring after 28 years of service. Judge Monk currently presides as Circuit Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit in Anniston, Alabama.

Judge Sam Monk graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1975. Prior to law school, Judge Monk served in the United States Army. Judge Monk has worked in both private practice and has served as Presiding Judge for the 7th Judicial Circuit, Circuit Judge for the 7th Judicial Circuit, and as District Judge for Calhoun and Cleburne Counties.

Judge Monk will officially retire on January 15, 2007, but a reception in his honor will be held on January 12, 2007 at the Calhoun County Courthouse.

I salute Judge Monk and congratulate him on his service to the legal field over the past 28 years. I wish him all the best on this important occasion.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2007

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Madam Speaker, every year, more high school seniors from the 11th Congressional District trade in varsity jackets for Navy pea coats, Air Force flight suits, and Army brass buckles than most other districts in the country. But this is nothing new—our area has repeatedly sent an above average portion of its sons and daughters to the nation's military academies for decades.

This fact should not come as a surprise. The educational excellence of area schools is well known and has long been a magnet for families looking for the best environment in which to raise their children. Our graduates are skilled not only in mathematics, science, and social studies, but also have solid backgrounds in sports, debate teams, and other

extracurricular activities. This diverse upbringing makes military academy recruiters sit up and take note—indeed, many recruiters know our towns and schools by name.

Since the 1830's, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating these superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve? In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. This was not an act of an imperial Congress bent on controlling every aspect of Government. Rather, the procedure still used today was, and is, a further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to unfettered nepotism and handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process—the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

The Academy Review Board is composed of six local citizens, several of whom are distinguished veterans, who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, to their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area. Though from diverse backgrounds and professions, they all share a common dedication that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as true for most volunteer groups, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to take a moment to recognize these men and women and thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Being on the Board requires hard work and an objective mind. Members have the responsibility of interviewing upwards of 50 outstanding high school seniors every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. High school seniors mail personal information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy once they become interested in attending. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other activities. At this time, they also inform my office of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In late November, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of two days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

This year the board interviewed 38 applicants. Nominations included 19 to the Naval Academy, 9 to the Military Academy and 5 to the Air Force Academy—the Coast Guard Academy does not use the Congressional nomination process. The recommendations are then forwarded to the academies by January 31, where admissions staff reviewed files