

the United States. The historical development of the mountainous states in North America, and Utah in particular, are of particular interest to them. The new involvement and interest of the Rocky Mountain States and Utah in sustainable mountain development could help many of the transitioning economies to develop and implement more successful, pro-market policies.

This is a rewarding and noble goal, especially now, when we are witnessing growing challenges to stability and development around the world from the growth of poverty and unemployment, two primary sources feeding terrorism and militancy.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
INDUSTRIAL HEMP FARMING ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Industrial Hemp Farming Act. The Industrial Hemp Farming Act requires the Federal Government to respect State laws allowing the growing of industrial hemp.

Seven States—Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, and West Virginia—allow industrial hemp production or research in accord with State laws. However, Federal law is standing in the way of farmers in these States growing what may be a very profitable crop. Because of current federal law, all hemp included in products sold in the United States must be imported instead of being grown by American farmers.

Since 1970, the Federal Controlled Substances Act's inclusion of industrial hemp in the schedule one definition of marijuana has prohibited American farmers from growing industrial hemp despite the fact that industrial hemp has such a low content of THC (the psychoactive chemical in the related marijuana plant) that nobody can be psychologically affected by consuming hemp. Federal law concedes the safety of industrial hemp by allowing it to be legally imported for use as food.

The United States is the only industrialized nation that prohibits industrial hemp cultivation. The Congressional Research Service has noted that hemp is grown as an established agricultural commodity in over 30 nations in Europe, Asia, and North America. My Industrial Hemp Farming Act will relieve this unique restriction on American farmers and allow them to grow industrial hemp in accord with State law.

Industrial hemp is a crop that was grown legally throughout the United States for most of our Nation's history. In fact, during World War II, the Federal Government actively encouraged American farmers to grow industrial hemp to help the war effort. The Department of Agriculture even produced a film "Hemp for Victory" encouraging the plant's cultivation.

In recent years, the hemp plant has been put to many popular uses in foods and in industry. Grocery stores sell hemp seeds and oil as well as food products containing oil and seeds from the hemp plant. Industrial hemp is also included in consumer products such as paper, cloths, cosmetics, and carpet. One of the more innovative recent uses of industrial hemp is in the door frames of about 1.5 million

cars. Hemp has even been used in alternative automobile fuel.

It is unfortunate that the Federal Government has stood in the way of American farmers, including many who are struggling to make ends meet, competing in the global industrial hemp market. Indeed, the founders of our Nation, some of whom grew hemp, would surely find that Federal restrictions on farmers growing a safe and profitable crop on their own land are inconsistent with the constitutional guarantee of a limited, restrained Federal Government. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to stand up for American farmers and cosponsor the Industrial Hemp Farming Act.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MOUNT
VERNON RECREATION CENTER

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the staff of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center in Alexandria, Virginia on receiving the Heart of Potomac West Award.

The Mount Vernon Recreation Center has been a key partner in the Del Ray Potomac West community of Alexandria for decades. The Center's staff has built long-lasting relationships with the community, including neighbors, businesses, and visitors, by ensuring that the Center's doors are open and that every community member is welcome.

Each year, the Center staff helps to organize and assist with numerous events for the residents and businesses of Del Ray. These include the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting, the Annual Halloween Parade, Art on the Avenue, Cinema Del Ray, First Night on New Year's Eve, and countless programs for seniors and youth.

Without the support of these dedicated, hardworking, and caring staff members, such events could never take place.

The staff of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center has stood side by side with the community during times of crisis. When Del Ray lost two of its citizens, Kevin Shifflet and Nancy Dunning, the Center staff acted as a support beacon for a community in mourning, providing a home where citizens turned for comfort and support. These devoted and committed staffers have always gone far above and beyond the call of duty.

The Mount Vernon Recreation Center is a marvelous asset of the City of Alexandria, and this has occurred through the hard work and dedication of the Center staff. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Center staff on being awarded this great honor.

TRIBUTE TO CLERK OF THE
HOUSE KAREN HAAS

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to rise and show my appreciation for Karen Haas, the outgoing Clerk of the House.

Karen is truly deserving of recognition for a job very well done.

It is a pleasure to know Karen, as she is one of the most thoughtful and considerate people on Capitol Hill. She has done an exceptional job running the Clerk's office, and knowing that Karen was in charge meant other members and I knew that things were getting done right.

I can even say that I have had the privilege to "work" for Karen. When Karen ran the House floor operations, I would get calls at all times of the day asking if I could preside. I never hesitated to preside when Karen asked, nor did my colleagues.

Some people might have been surprised when Speaker HASTERT tapped Karen to fill the Clerk's position. I wasn't surprised; I knew he made a very good choice.

Karen has done a magnificent job as Clerk and we will truly miss having her in the Capitol. Karen, thank you for a job well done.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDENT
AID REWARD ACT OF 2007

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with Representative THOMAS PETRI to introduce the Student Aid Reward Act of 2007, the STAR Act, a bill that is a vital part of strengthening America's middle class.

Since 2001, tuition and fees at public colleges and universities have exploded, increasing by 41 percent—after inflation. Students are graduating with greater amounts of debt than ever before, and unfortunately as many as 200,000 prospective students each year decide not to go to college because they can't afford it.

Already in this Congress we have taken great strides toward making a college education affordable for all qualified students through increased grant aid and more affordable student loans.

The Student Aid Reward Act continues the mission of putting students and families first by providing additional need-based grant aid to students without any cost to the taxpayer.

This legislation is simple: It encourages colleges to use the less expensive of the federal government's two student loan programs, and puts the savings back into the hands of students through need-based grant aid.

In order to do this, the Student Aid Reward Act calls on the Secretary of Education to determine which of the two Federally backed student loan programs is more efficient. Schools that elect to use the more efficient program would then be rewarded with additional scholarship funds for and graduate fellowship money for low- and middle-income students—all paid for by the savings generated by the bill.

According to the President's recently released 2008 education budget, student loans made through the more expensive program in 2007 cost \$3 more for every \$100 lent than the same loans made with U.S. Treasury funds.

At a time when our Federal Government is facing an extreme deficit, this is a win-win bill

for students, families, and taxpayers. This bill will not only increase efficiency in the loan programs, but will also generate increased competition, resulting in increased benefits for students and families.

The Student Aid Reward Act has also been introduced in the Senate by Senators EDWARD KENNEDY and GORDON SMITH.

No qualified person should ever be prevented from going to college because of the cost. We must ensure that every student in this country has the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT SALUTES FATHER ROBERT DRINAN

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, last week, several of my colleagues and I memorialized the life and record of the late Father Robert Drinan, one of the most distinguished people to have served in this body. Father Drinan's political career began in 1970 when he ran for Congress as an opponent of American participation in the Vietnam War. He was a consistent fighter for peace throughout his life. When I returned to my district last weekend, I received from Father Drinan's sister-in-law, Helen Drinan, a woman who played a very important role in nurturing his political career, a copy of a letter she had received that meant a great deal to her and the Drinan family.

The letter is from the Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States, hailing Father Drinan "as a tenacious advocate for social justice and a resilient fighter for peace." Madam Speaker, I ask that this letter from the Government of Vietnam to the Drinan family be printed here.

EMBASSY OF VIETNAM,
Washington, DC, January 31, 2007.

Mrs. HELEN DRINAN,
Newton, MA.

DEAR MRS. DRINAN, On behalf of the people and Government of Vietnam, I would like to extend the most profound condolences to you and to your family on the passing of your brother-in-law, Father and Congressman Robert F. Drinan.

Father Robert F. Drinan will be always remembered by many as a tenacious advocate for social justice and a resilient fighter for peace. For the Vietnamese people, he will remain a staunch fighter who made significant contribution to ending to the Vietnam War in the 1970s, thus bringing peace to the country after so many decades of wars.

May your family overcome this most difficult time.

Respectfully,

NGUYEN TAM CHIEN,
Ambassador.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDENT AID REWARD (STAR) ACT OF 2007

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today I am again joining with my colleague, Chairman

GEORGE MILLER, to reintroduce our Student Aid Reward (STAR) Act, which would provide billions of dollars in additional aid to students at no additional cost to taxpayers. Now, more than ever, millions of low and middle-income families are struggling to help their children attend college in the face of rising tuition costs and limited financial assistance. The STAR Act is a fiscally-responsible plan that could help make college more affordable and accessible for these students.

The STAR Act is rooted in my longstanding belief that we have a fundamental obligation to our constituents to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending wherever it exists. Our legislation would encourage colleges and universities to utilize the less expensive of the federal government's two main student loan programs. In doing so, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the STAR Act would save taxpayers \$13.4 billion in wasteful subsidies—which would instead be devoted to increase student aid to low and middle-income students who need it most.

The real opportunity in this legislation is that it would allow for an increased investment in education while not costing taxpayers a single penny more. In fact, under the STAR program, there would be enough savings not only to return half to schools that switch to the more cost-effective program, but also to provide an additional 25 percent of those savings to schools that were previously enrolled in the cost-effective program and thus already saving taxpayers money. The final 25 percent would be devoted towards deficit reduction.

All these savings are to be made possible due to the startling difference in the cost between the two federal student loan programs. For the current fiscal year, the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program costs more than the exact same loan administered under the Direct Loan (DL) program. According to President Bush's 2008 education budget, student loans made through the more expensive program in 2007 cost \$3 more for every \$100 lent than the same loans made with U.S. Treasury funds.

Beyond the Office of Management and Budget, other budget experts continue to confirm this cost difference. Earlier this week, the Congressional Budget Office released a score that projected savings from this amendment in the amount of \$13.4 billion over the next 10 years—and that's if only 15 percent of colleges choose to participate in the Student Aid Reward program by switching from the FFEL to the DL program. Those savings would be even more substantial with increased participation.

It is important to note that the STAR Act would not mandate that schools select the most cost-effective program, although we hope that they would. Under this bill, each college retains their ability to choose their student loan program. Those who choose to be more responsible with taxpayers money would be rewarded with a portion of the savings. Those that decide to continue with the more expensive program face no penalties, other than a missed opportunity to use taxpayer savings to boost their students' Pell Grants. Furthermore, each school would have the choice to leave the STAR program at the end of their 5-year contract if they are not satisfied with the results for their students.

A critical component of this program is that it is budget neutral. Any reward payments to

schools are contingent upon actual taxpayer savings that year. We are confident that these savings not only exist, but amount to several billion dollars annually. Both the CBO and OMB continue to confirm this year after year.

The overarching reason that the FFEL program is so much more expensive than the DL program is the excessive subsidies paid to lenders each year to issue loans. As all lenders are guaranteed the exact same subsidies, regardless of their costs and efficiency, lenders do not compete for the benefit of taxpayers, only among themselves for market share. This practice is not only unnecessary but it is irresponsible—especially when the DL program has no similar costs.

The taxpayers not only pay interest subsidies to private lenders, they also subsidize the 13 guaranty agencies that purchase loans from the lenders after a certain period of time has passed. This is also a wasteful practice—especially when the DL program has no similar cost.

I would like to reiterate that this legislation would in no way mandate that schools choose the DL program over the FFEL program, or even that the DL program will always necessarily be the most cost-effective program. Instead, the legislation stipulates that the Secretary of Education shall determine each year which program is most cost-effective to taxpayers and that schools who participate in that program receive some of the savings. The Secretary would do this by making use of the best data available each year.

Madam Speaker, I believe that as stewards of taxpayers' money, Congress should always seek to make government more efficient and more accountable. Our legislation is smart policy: voluntary for schools, fiscally-responsible, and would provide over \$10 billion in additional aid over the next 10 years. I encourage my colleagues to join Rep. MILLER and me in cosponsoring this legislation.

RECOGNIZING NICOLE MAYHEW AS SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize Nicole Mayhew as Santa Rosa County's Teacher of the Year.

As a native of Northwest Florida, Nicole Mayhew joined the Santa Rosa County School District administration in 1996, after graduating from the University of West Florida with a degree in Primary/Elementary Education. Mrs. Mayhew has proudly served the School District for over 10 years, where she currently teaches first grade at West Navarre Primary School in Navarre, Florida. On January 26, 2007, with her husband Steven and her daughter Erin by her side, Nicole Mayhew was announced Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Mayhew serves as a mentor to beginning teachers and supervises teachers from the University of West Florida. She is a member of the Santa Rosa County, Florida Reading Council and West Navarre Primary School's Parent-Teacher Organization, PTO, an organization of Parents and Teachers that