

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

seeks to increase parent involvement in their child's education.

Out of her passion for teaching and her love for children, Nicole Mayhew sets high standards for all of her students and works with them to achieve their individual goals and the desired results of the overall academic performance of the class. She is the positive force behind each student's growth of mind, by giving them the confidence, knowledge, and inspiration needed to succeed.

The Teacher of the Year recognition highlights one year of teaching, but the proof of greatness lies well beyond the title—it lies in the hearts and minds of the students who have been deeply affected. Through her hard work and dedication, the impact she has had on her students and the community has proven her to be among the great teachers in Northwest Florida, and Santa Rosa County is honored to have her as one of their own.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, I am proud to recognize Nicole Mayhew on this outstanding achievement and her exemplary service in the Santa Rosa County School District.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SOUTH FLORIDA'S HOLOCAUST DOCUMENTATION AND EDUCATION CENTER

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor and pay tribute to all victims of the Holocaust and to congratulate South Florida's Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, its founders and museum curators for their fine work in educating and reminding the public about the Holocaust and remembering and honoring its victims.

An important part of the Center's permanent exhibits is one of only eight authentic World War II railcars that transported Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Nazi death camps.

An estimated 3 million Jews were packed into the cars like the one on display in Hollywood, FL, which has a faded swastika still painted on the side. The persecuted Jews were often kept inside for days without food or water before being murdered. This railcar was used during the world's darkest time when over 6 million Jews were murdered along with approximately 3 million more victims of Nazi aggression, including; Christian Poles, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexual men, and people with disabilities.

This railcar will be placed on an unused track near the Holocaust Museum, which is located in my district at 2031 Harrison Street in Hollywood, FL, the center of the second-largest population of Holocaust survivors in the Nation.

To the residents of South Florida, the students enrolled in area schools, and to the millions of visitors to the region, I encourage you to visit the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center to study, understand and contemplate the consequences of man's inhumanity to man which occurred in Europe prior to and during World War II.

That the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center is one of four Holocaust muse-

ums in the country where these railcars are on display demonstrates that the Jewish community in South Florida is among the strongest in the Nation, forever committed to preserving the memory of the 6 million Jews who tragically were killed during the Shoah.

This railcar will undoubtedly serve as a reminder for eternity that the poignant expression "Never Again" will never ring hollow again.

I congratulate the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center for attaining and displaying this railcar, and for helping to teach the entire South Florida community lessons of tolerance and understanding.

STATEMENT RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY AS NATIONAL MARFAN AWARENESS MONTH

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in observance of February as National Marfan Awareness Month and to recognize the hundreds of thousands of Americans who are living with Marfan syndrome and related connective tissue disorders.

I am proud that the Nation's premier organization supporting the Marfan syndrome community, the National Marfan Foundation, is headquartered in my congressional district in Port Washington, NY. The NMF was founded 25 years ago by Priscilla Ciccariello, a woman of enormous compassion and vision. For the past quarter-century, the NMF has been dedicated to saving lives and improving the quality-of-life for Marfan patients through research, support services, education, and advocacy.

This year marks the 16th observance of National Marfan Awareness Month which is designed to educate the general public and healthcare providers about this challenging condition. Marfan syndrome is a genetic disorder of the connective tissue that can affect many body systems, including; the skeleton, eyes, heart, nervous system, lungs and blood vessels. Of primary concern to patients is the impact the syndrome can have on the aorta. In Marfan patients, the aorta (the large artery that carries blood away from the heart) is weakened and prone to enlargement and rupture, which is often fatal. Currently, there is no cure for Marfan syndrome but with early diagnosis, proper treatment and careful management, patients can live a normal lifespan.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that we are at an unprecedented time of hope in the field of Marfan syndrome research. Just last month, the National, Heart, Lung and Blood Institute at the National Institute of Health, working closely with NMF, initiated a groundbreaking clinical trial on Marfan syndrome. This trial seeks to determine the efficacy of a medication currently used to control high-blood pressure for treating aortic growth in children with Marfan syndrome. The blood-pressure medication has shown a remarkable ability to halt and even reverse aortic growth in pioneering basic research conducted by Dr. Hal Dietz of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. I applaud NHLBI Director Dr. Elizabeth Nabel, and Dr. Gail Pearson, Chief of the NHLBI's Heart Development and

Structural Diseases Branch, for their leadership in supporting this promising trial.

Madam Speaker, February was chosen as National Marfan Awareness Month in part to coincide with Abraham Lincoln's birthday. President Lincoln is believed to have been affected by Marfan syndrome based on the many outward signs of the disorder he portrayed. Marfan syndrome patients are frequently taller than non-affected members of their family and have disproportionately long limbs, fingers and toes. In addition, they often have an indented or protruding chest-bone, curved spine, high-arched palate, and loose joints. Other well known individuals who were afflicted with the Marfan syndrome include Jonathan Larson, the Tony Award winning playwright of the Broadway musical Rent, Flo Hyman, captain of the U.S. Olympic volleyball team that won a gold medal in 1984, Charles de Gaulle, the composer Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff, and Mary, Queen of Scots.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 14,000 people die each year of aortic aneurysms and dissections, 20 percent of which can be contributed to genetic disorders such as Marfan syndrome. Unfortunately, a lack of awareness about Marfan syndrome continues to result in patients dying before being properly diagnosed and treated. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me and the National Marfan Foundation in raising awareness of this life-threatening disorder so we can prevent future unnecessary tragedies.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY MCNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 12, 2007

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in proud support of H.R. 798, which will instruct the General Services Administration to install photovoltaic panels on the roof of the Department of Energy in Washington D.C.

As a country, our energy needs continue to grow, and yet we are still heavily dependent on foreign sources of oil. The Federal Government is the country's single largest energy consumer and is in a unique position to demonstrate a commitment to taking on the challenge of global warming through the use of sustainable energy technology.

The installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof of the Energy Department headquarters in Washington D.C. is a first—and important—step in that direction. Doing so will help demonstrate the power and promise of solar energy.

It is critical that we continue to push forward on this front and expand the menu of renewable energy solutions available for use. I have recently formed the Bipartisan Freshman Caucus on Energy and Climate and am committed to working with members on both sides of the aisle to move forward with more common-sense solutions like photovoltaic panels. I urge my colleagues to do the same.