

of military recruiting. Nonetheless, I wish to reaffirm my opposition to the military's policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and my belief that the policy should be discontinued, as well as my support for the 1st amendment rights of American universities.

H. RES. 149, SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 15, 2007*

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 149, a resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

International Women's Day is an opportunity for us to evaluate the status of the world's women. As we take time to reflect on our achievements, we must reaffirm our commitment to addressing the inequalities and injustices that women in our country and around the world continue to face.

For example, we must do more in the fight against poverty. As much as 70 percent of the world's poor are women, many of them subsisting on less than \$1 a day. Furthermore, according to the World Bank, women earn on average 22 percent less than men. To address these disparities, we must continue expanding micro-lending practices and other opportunities for women to start small businesses, as well as working to increase women's land and property rights.

Improving access to education for girls is also critical to expanding economic opportunities for women. Despite the fact that access to primary education is increasing around the world, girls compose two-thirds of the 130 million school-aged children who are not attending school. Investing in girls' education enhances the quality of life of women and families throughout the world. Increased education for girls results in numerous benefits including lower maternal, child, and infant mortality rates, lower rates of HIV/AIDS infection, and higher earnings.

Here at home, we celebrate Speaker NANCY PELOSI, the first female Speaker of the House, women's increasing educational attainment and participation in the workforce, and the growing number of women-owned businesses. While we have made incredible strides, challenges remain. Here at home, we must continue working to close the gender pay gap, increase access to appropriate health care, and protect Title IX, which provides opportunities for American girls and women in athletics.

I am committed to working for peace and justice for all the world's women. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MARRIED STUDENT DEBT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

**HON. LEE TERRY**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 15, 2007*

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Married Student Debt Relief Act

of 2007 to end the marriage penalty contained in the portion of the tax code allowing for the deduction of student loan interest.

Current tax law discriminates against married couples trying to pay down their educational debt while starting careers and families. Individual taxpayers are allowed to deduct up to \$2,500 in student loan interest from their taxes each year. However, once a taxpayer marries, they are only allowed to deduct the same amount—\$2,500—as a married couple, regardless of whether both spouses are paying back individual student loans.

Because the existing tax law limits married couples to the \$2,500 deduction even when both spouses carry student debt and could have each taken a \$2,500 deduction while single, I am introducing the Married Student Debt Relief Act of 2007 to correct this inequity. This legislation would double the student loan interest tax deduction to \$5,000 for married couples who file a joint tax return when both spouses hold student debt, ensuring tax law treats students fairly, whether they are single or married.

The average U.S. student graduates with \$19,000 in educational debt. The government should not make it more difficult for young married couples to payoff their debts as quickly as possible to increase their quality of life and begin making their dreams come true. I am joined by more than 25 bipartisan Members of Congress in introducing this legislation today. It is important to help married couples pay down their student loans as quickly as possible to support their families and futures.

This problem in the tax code was first brought to my attention by my constituent, Michael Currans of Omaha. He wrote to me about the inequity, and I drafted legislation shortly thereafter to correct it. After learning of the effort, he wrote:

First off, I'm very pleased that my simple email to Congressman Terry has resulted in such an enthusiastic response. This is the first time I've ever written to my representatives in Congress, and it has definitely helped me see the value of getting involved. I really wish that I had written about this years ago.

Ever since we were married in 2000 and began filing our joint tax return, my wife and I have struggled to understand the rationale for not allowing married couples to each take advantage of the student loan interest deduction to the same extent as two unmarried individuals. Between us, we had over \$70,000 of student loan debt, and while we diligently make all our payments on time, it is frustrating that the principal balances are reduced so slowly. We often discuss how we'd like to make additional payments to try to pay the loans down faster, but now that we've got kids in the picture, daycare expenses, and a house to maintain, extra cash to put toward the student loans seems hard to come by. We find some solace in knowing that we can at least deduct a portion of the interest we pay.

We are not complaining. The federal student loan programs have been good to us. We've both earned valuable undergraduate degrees, my wife at the University of Northern Iowa, and myself at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. Further, student loans allowed us both to attend the excellent law school at the University of Iowa where we met. Without student loans, we would not be where we are today, so even without the benefit of the full student loan interest deduction, our student loans are a positive investment.

Some might ask why a two-income family with both spouses being attorneys should

have any grounds to seek additional relief from income taxes. However, my wife is a public defender representing juvenile delinquents in Douglas County, Nebraska. She is most definitely using her law degree for the public good, earning much less than she might if she chose to pursue private practice. I'm sure for many married lawyer couples, the student loan interest deduction is a nonissue due to the phase-out at higher incomes, but for us, it is still an important deduction. I'm certain the deduction is important to the great many married couples of lesser means paying on student loans for both spouses, especially in cases where one spouse chooses to stay at home with children.

We've joked on occasion about how we'd have been better off from a tax perspective if we'd just remained unmarried, lived together, and filed separate tax returns until our student loans were paid off. I doubt most couples would actually choose to live that way just for the additional student loan interest deduction. Nonetheless, why should a married couple be treated differently than two individual taxpayers? There is no good reason for this inequity, so I really hope this legislation goes through.

If I can be of help, please let me know. Thanks to Congressman Terry and his staff for taking up this issue.—Mike Currans.

I am grateful to Mike for bringing this inequity to my attention so we can work in this Congress to correct it. I urge more of my constituents to bring their concerns to my attention, and I encourage every American to communicate their views to their Congressional Representative. Your voice does make a difference.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope all of my colleagues will join my efforts by cosponsoring this legislation and working to bring it to a vote in the House of Representatives.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF RONNIE AND JANIS BOND

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 15, 2007*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is with great honor that I rise today to recognize Ronnie and Janis Bond for their retirement from Booker T. Washington High School in Pensacola, Florida.

Ronnie and Janis Bond have dedicated their professional careers to Booker T. Washington High School. Ronnie has been teaching at Washington for 38 years, and Janis retired in 2002 after 32 years of teaching. They worked everyday to challenge their students both in and out of the classroom. Ronnie served as an assistant coach for the football program for twenty-seven years, and Janis coached cross-country for five years. Together they have coached track and field for sixteen years and girl's basketball for the past thirty-two years.

When the State of Florida officially recognized girl's basketball as a high school sport in 1975, Ronnie and Janis truly made a home for themselves and began to develop what has become the best girl's basketball program in the state. They have devoted themselves to the players, and in return, the talented student athletes have made many tremendous achievements over the years. Under the leadership of Ronnie and Janis, the Washington

girl's basketball teams have won twenty-four district championships, four state championships, and were runner-up finishers for the state championship four additional times.

Reaching 700 career wins was a milestone in itself, so it was with even more excitement that Ronnie and Janis reached their 722nd career win on January 20, 2007. This victory carried a unique significance as the Bond's entered the Florida record books as having the most wins of any high school girl's basketball coaches in the State of Florida.

Their winning basketball program has been founded on solid principles of love, family, honor, and commitment. They have taught many young people about teamwork, the power of a shared vision, and one way to achieve success is to expect excellence.

It will be difficult to find two people more committed to helping students than Ronnie and Janis Bond. They have set a high standard in their dedication to their work and devotion to their students. A benchmark has been established for all other high school coaches. Teachers and coaches serve as role models for students, and the Bond's have without a doubt been a great role model for those who have played for them. They are sure to remain in the Florida record books for years to come.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to congratulate Ronnie and Janis Bond for their efforts in reaching out and touching the lives of thousands of our nation's young people.

WELCOMING GHANA'S AMBASSADOR DR. KWAME BAWUAH-EDUSEI TO CONNECTICUT

**HON. JOHN B. LARSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 15, 2007*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise today to welcome Dr. Kwame Bawuah-Edusei, Ghana's Ambassador to the United States, to the great State of Connecticut. Ambassador Bawuah-Edusei, who is visiting the State for the first time this weekend, will address Ghanaians from all across New England in honor and celebration of Ghana's independence.

Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, is a nation rich in history, culture and natural resources. Under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana became the first African country south of the Sahara to gain independence from European rule on March 6, 1957. This year marks 50 years of social freedom, and economic and political achievement. Ghana has contributed greatly to world affairs and has been the birth place of national and international leaders, among them former United Nations Secretary General and Nobel Peace Prize winner Kofi Annan.

Connecticut's Ghanaian population continues to grow and prosper. I am proud to have Mr. Nana Okoda-Darko, king of the Akim-Kusi traditional council in Ghana living in my district and hometown of East Hartford. I am also pleased to have learned a great deal about Ghana and the Ghanaian culture from a member of my staff Adwoa Ansah whose father is from Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

And so today, on behalf of Mr. Okoda-Darko, Adwoa Ansah, and the many Gha-

naians in my district and the great State of Connecticut, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ghana in its 50th Anniversary and welcoming Ambassador Bawuah-Edusei to the State of Connecticut.

“AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH”

**HON. ED WHITFIELD**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 15, 2007*

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the House an article published in the New York Times regarding former Vice President Al Gore's documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth.” As this documentary continues to shape the discussion on the controversial issue of global warming, I would like to highlight the following article, which identifies the inconsistencies of the film.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 13, 2007]

FROM A RAPT AUDIENCE, A CALL TO COOL THE HYPE

(By William J. Broad)

Hollywood has a thing for Al Gore and his three-alarm film on global warming, “An Inconvenient Truth,” which won an Academy Award for best documentary. So do many environmentalists, who praise him as a visionary, and many scientists, who laud him for raising public awareness of climate change.

But part of his scientific audience is uneasy. In talks, articles and blog entries that have appeared since his film and accompanying book came out last year, these scientists argue that some of Mr. Gore's central points are exaggerated and erroneous. They are alarmed, some say, at what they call his alarmism.

“I don't want to pick on Al Gore,” Don J. Easterbrook, an emeritus professor of geology at Western Washington University, told hundreds of experts at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America. “But there are a lot of inaccuracies in the statements we are seeing, and we have to temper that with real data.”

Mr. Gore, in an e-mail exchange about the critics, said his work made “the most important and salient points” about climate change, if not “some nuances and distinctions” scientists might want. “The degree of scientific consensus on global warming has never been stronger,” he said, adding, “I am trying to communicate the essence of it in the lay language that I understand.”

Although Mr. Gore is not a scientist, he does rely heavily on the authority of science in “An Inconvenient Truth,” which is why scientists are sensitive to its details and claims.

Criticisms of Mr. Gore have come not only from conservative groups and prominent skeptics of catastrophic warming, but also from rank-and-file scientists like Dr. Easterbrook, who told his peers that he had no political ax to grind. A few see natural variation as more central to global warming than heat-trapping gases. Many appear to occupy a middle ground in the climate debate, seeing human activity as a serious threat but challenging what they call the extremism of both skeptics and zealots.

Kevin Vranes, a climatologist at the Center for Science and Technology Policy Research at the University of Colorado, said he sensed a growing backlash against exaggeration.

While praising Mr. Gore for “getting the message out,” Dr. Vranes questioned whether his presentations were “overselling our certainty about knowing the future.”

Typically, the concern is not over the existence of climate change, or the idea that the human production of heat-trapping gases is partly or largely to blame for the globe's recent warming. The question is whether Mr. Gore has gone beyond the scientific evidence.

“He's a very polarizing figure in the science community,” said Roger A. Pielke Jr., an environmental scientist who is a colleague of Dr. Vranes at the University of Colorado center. “Very quickly, these discussions turn from the issue to the person, and become a referendum on Mr. Gore.”

“An Inconvenient Truth,” directed by Davis Guggenheim, was released last May and took in more than \$46 million, making it one of the top-grossing documentaries ever. The companion book by Mr. Gore quickly became a best seller, reaching No.1 on the New York Times list.

Mr. Gore depicted a future in which temperatures soar, ice sheets melt, seas rise, hurricanes batter the coasts and people die en masse. “Unless we act boldly,” he wrote, “our world will undergo a string of terrible catastrophes.”

He clearly has supporters among leading scientists, who commend his popularizations and call his science basically sound. In December, he spoke in San Francisco to the American Geophysical Union and got a reception fit for a rock star from thousands of attendees.

“He has credibility in this community,” said Tim Killeen, the group's president and director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, a top group studying climate change. “There's no question he's read a lot and is able to respond in a very effective way.”

Some backers concede minor inaccuracies but see them as reasonable for a politician. James E. Hansen, an environmental scientist, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and a top adviser to Mr. Gore, said, “Al does an exceptionally good job of seeing the forest for the trees,” adding that Mr. Gore often did so “better than scientists.”

Still, Dr. Hansen said, the former vice president's work may hold “imperfections” and “technical flaws.” He pointed to hurricanes, an icon for Mr. Gore, who highlights the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and cites research suggesting that global warming will cause both storm frequency and deadliness to rise. Yet this past Atlantic season produced fewer hurricanes than forecasters predicted (five versus nine), and none that hit the United States.

“We need to be more careful in describing the hurricane story than he is,” Dr. Hansen said of Mr. Gore. “On the other hand,” Dr. Hansen said, “he has the bottom line right: most storms, at least those driven by the latent heat of vaporization, will tend to be stronger, or have the potential to be stronger, in a warmer climate.”

In his e-mail message, Mr. Gore defended his work as fundamentally accurate. “Of course,” he said, “there will always be questions around the edges of the science, and we have to rely upon the scientific community to continue to ask and to challenge and to answer those questions.”

He said “not every single adviser” agreed with him on every point, “but we do agree on the fundamentals”—that warming is real and caused by humans.

Mr. Gore added that he perceived no general backlash among scientists against his work. “I have received a great deal of positive feedback,” he said. “I have also received comments about items that should be changed, and I have updated the book and slideshow to reflect these comments.” He gave no specifics on which points he had revised.